

Behavioral Help for Early Childhood Programs in Pennsylvania to Prevent Suspension & Expulsion

Pennsylvania early childhood programs are committed to reducing and eliminating the use of exclusionary discipline practices (suspension and expulsion).

Definitions and Program Descriptions

OCDEL

The Office of Child Development and Early Learning (OCDEL) is a collaborative effort between the PA Departments of Education and Human Services focused on creating opportunities for the commonwealth's youngest citizens to develop and learn to their fullest potential.

ELRC

An Early Learning Resource Center (ELRC) is a partner with the PA Office of Child Development and Early Learning. The ELRC provides quality supports for early learning programs and helps families access high quality early learning programs.

Suspension/Expulsion

Suspension is an action administered as a consequence of a child's inappropriate behavior and requires that a child not be present in the classroom or the program for a specified period of time. Expulsion is the complete and permanent removal of a child from an early childhood program because of challenging behavior or non-infectious health condition.

Keystone STARS

Keystone STARS is Pennsylvania's Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS). Keystone STARS is a responsive system to improve, support, and recognize the continuous quality improvement efforts of early learning programs in Pennsylvania.

Head Start

Head Start is primarily a federally-funded program that provides education, health and social services to families with children aged 3, 4 and 5. Head Start programs cannot expel or unenroll a child because of a child's behavior. Head Start programs must prohibit or severely limit the use of suspension due to a child's behavior.

PA Pre-K Counts

Pennsylvania Pre-K Counts provides quality half-day and full-day pre-kindergarten. Pre-K Counts is designed for children who: Are between age 3 and until the entry age for kindergarten; Are at risk of school failure and living in families earning up to 300 percent of the federal income poverty level; who may also be English language learners or have special needs.

Early Intervention (EI)

Children from birth to age five who have special needs due to developmental delays and disabilities are eligible to receive Early Intervention services. This includes children with persistent challenging behaviors who have not responded to Tier 1 and Tier 2 supports.

IFSP

An Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP) is a plan that identifies services and supports so that family members and early education programs are actively engaged in promoting the child's (ages 0-2) learning and development.

IEP

The Individualized Education Program is a plan that identifies services and supports so that family members and early education programs are actively engaged in promoting the child's (ages 3-5) learning and development.

Home Visiting

Home Visiting in Pennsylvania is voluntary, family-focused services for pregnant and parenting families with new babies and young children. There are multiple statewide programs available including: Early Head Start, Family Check-Up, Healthy Families America, Nurse-Family Partnership, and Parents as Teachers.

IECMH

Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health (IECMH) Consultation is a free resource that supports children's social-emotional development from birth through age 5 within early learning programs participating in Keystone STARS. Learn more about IECMH at www.pakeys.org/iecmh

Behavioral Health

The Office of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services System (OMHSAS) Children's Bureau, in conjunction with your local Children's Behavioral Health office, is responsible for developing and implementing a comprehensive plan for serving children with behavioral health needs in the Commonwealth.

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Is your child at-risk of losing their place in a Pennsylvania Early Childhood Program due to challenging behavior?



Information for Families

Contact your Early Learning Resource Center

Early Learning Resource Centers (ELRCs) are the hub of child care information in your area. ELRCs provide information on quality child care and personalized child care referrals to child care providers based on your specific needs or preferences.

Find your ELRC at
[raiseyourstar.org](https://www.raiseyourstar.org)

Call the Child Care Works Helpline
1-877-4-PA-KIDS

PA Infant Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation

Attend Infant Early Childhood Mental Health (IECMH) Virtual Office Hours

IECMH Virtual Office Hours is a short-term, collaborative, problem-solving conversation to help you find next steps for: Child Social-Emotional Concerns | Child Behavioral or Developmental Concerns. [Register for Virtual Office Hours.](#)

Request Expulsion/Suspension Support

[Complete this form](#) or call 1-800-284-6031 to request support for children who are at high risk of being suspended or expelled due to behavioral or health challenges.

Do you have developmental concerns for your child?

Contact Early Intervention Program directly and request an evaluation. CONNECT Helpline at 1-800-692-7288 or email help@connectpa.net

Does your child have an IEP or IFSP?

A team meeting must be requested before any suspension and/or expulsion may occur.
Contact your Early Intervention Program directly and request a meeting.

Behavioral Health Services

If behavioral concerns are persistent, contact your local [Children's Behavioral Health Specialist](#) (i.e., CASSP, System of Care, Children's Coordinator, etc.) and request services.

Parent to Parent of Pennsylvania

[Parent to Parent of Pennsylvania](#) connects families of children and adults with a disability or special need to a Peer Supporter (mentor) for purposes of emotional support and information.

PA Families Inc. (PFI)

[PA Families Inc. \(PFI\)](#) is a Statewide Family Network providing support to families raising children and youth with emotional, behavioral, and special needs, as well as serving as an advocate in the different child serving systems.

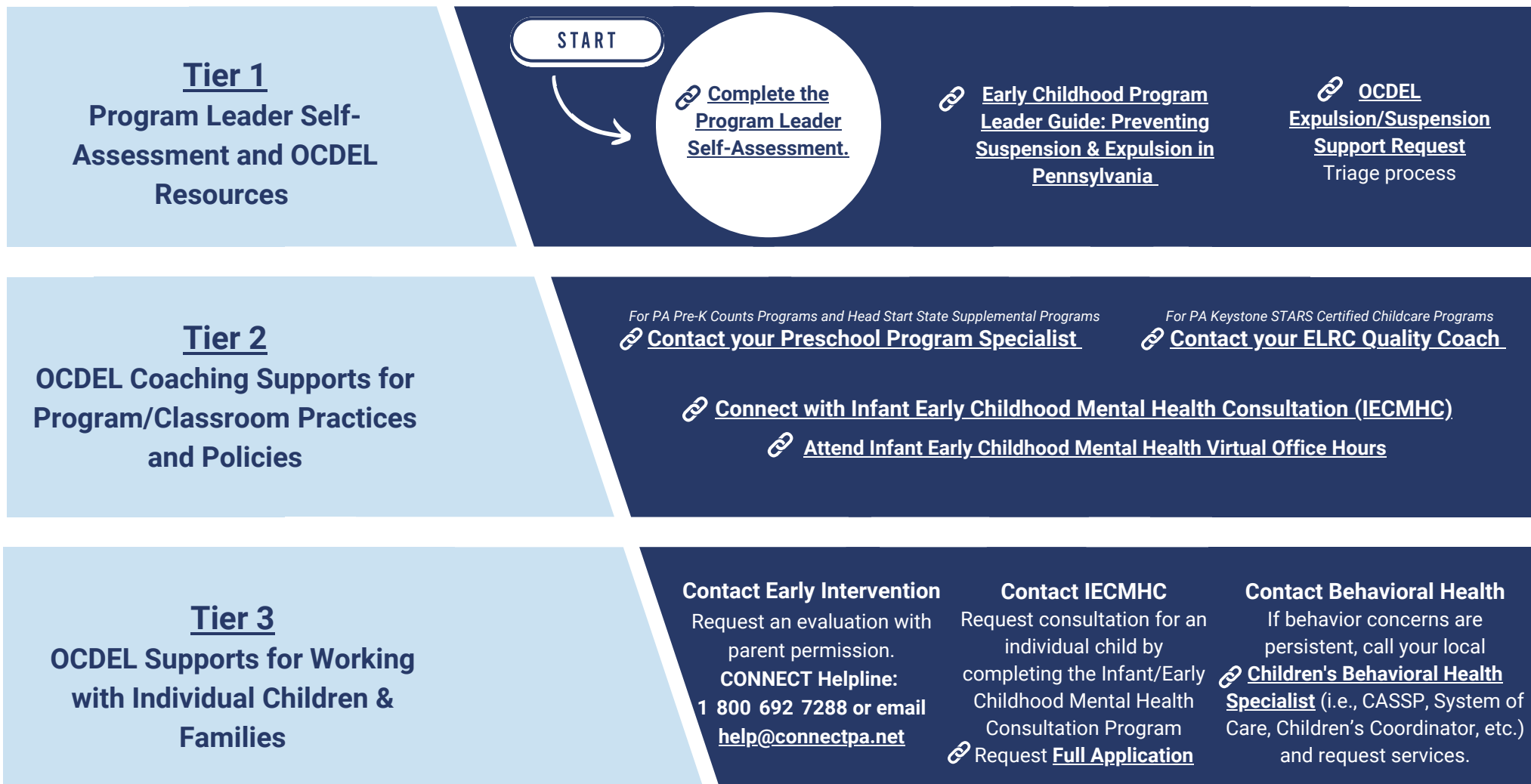
PA Parent and Family Alliance

[PA Parent and Family Alliance](#) provides 1-on-1 support to parents and caregivers whose children (including those 18+) may be experiencing social, emotional, behavioral and/or mental health struggles, including learning and attention issues and substance use disorders. Even if you're not sure what's going on with your child, reach out.

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The Office of Child Development and Early Learning (OCDEL) has an organized system of supports for programs needing assistance in addressing behavior concerns with young children*. Beginning with the self-assessment in Tier 1, it is essential to reflect on program and classroom practices and policies. Once complete, access the Early Childhood Program Leader Guide to address program and classroom policies, practices, and procedures for improving positive behavior supports and reduce the use of exclusionary discipline. If behavior concerns persist, investigate Tier 2 & 3 supports.



*If the child has an Individualized Education Program (IEP) or Individualized Family Support Plan (IFSP) A team meeting must be requested before considering exclusionary discipline practices such as suspension and/or expulsion. Contact the child's Early Intervention program or CONNECT Helpline (see Tier 3 above).