



Dr. Rosemarie Allen
Metropolitan State University of Denver
President & CEO
Institute for Racial Equity & Excellence

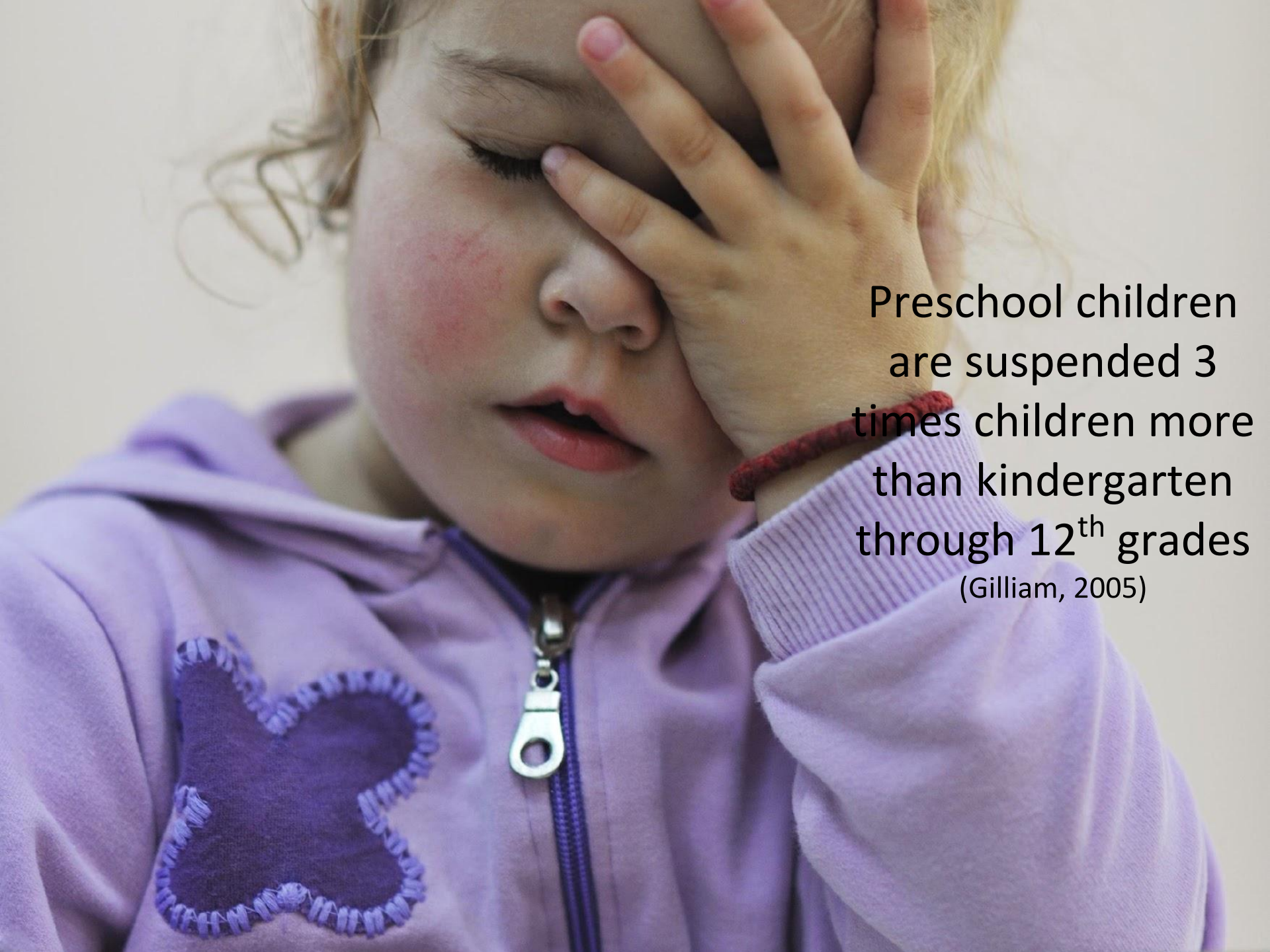
The Disproportionality in Suspensions and Expulsions: Why We Should All Care

These are all our
children. We will
profit by, or pay for,
whatever they become.

James Baldwin



Young children
are being
suspended and
expelled from
preschool at
alarming rates.



Preschool children
are suspended 3
times children more
than kindergarten
through 12th grades
(Gilliam, 2005)

Suspension: a “disciplinary action that is administered as a consequence of a student’s inappropriate behavior, requires that a student absent him/herself from the classroom or from the school for a specified period of time” (Morrison and Skiba, 2001, p. 174).



What is a suspension?



- Excluding a child from the learning process; from the classroom; from the school premises
- Student is sent home early
- Child is placed on a modified schedule
- Student is not a “good fit” and asked to leave the school/program



What is Disproportionality?

Disproportionality occurs when one group is overrepresented or underrepresented in a particular situation or category, compared the percentage of that group in the general population (Coutinho, 2006).



The OCR (2016) Patterns of racial and gender disproportionality:

- Boys represent 54% of the preschool population but 78% of those suspended.

(United States Department of Education, 2016)

The OCR (2016) Patterns of racial and gender disproportionality:

- African American preschoolers are 3.6 times more likely to be suspended than their White peers.

(United States Department of Education, 2016)





The OCR (2016)

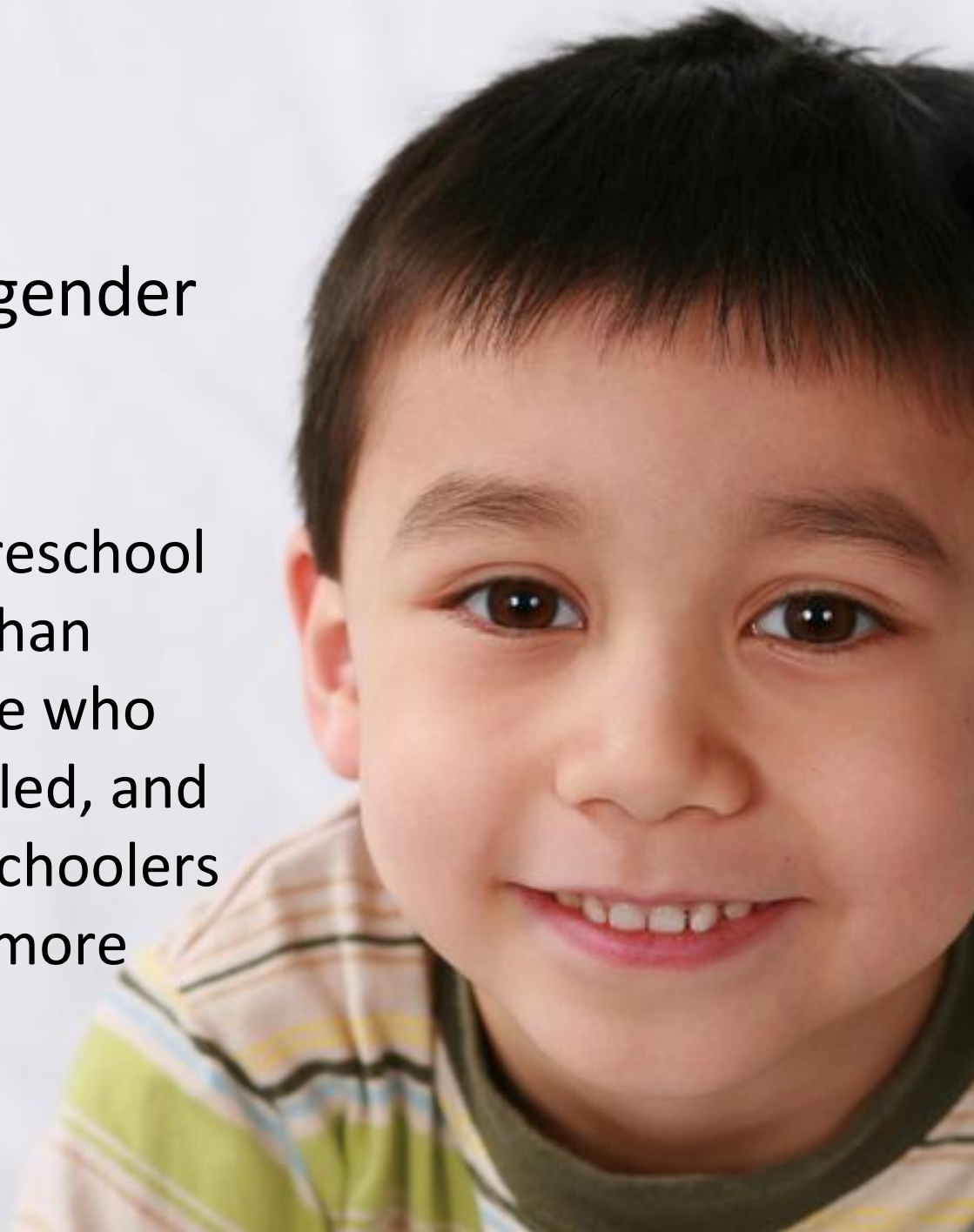
African American girls are 20% of preschool female population but 54% of girls suspended from preschool

(United States Department of Education, 2016)

The OCR (2018)

Patterns of racial and gender disproportionality:

- Boys are 54% of the preschool population but more than three-quarters of those who were spanked or paddled, and 81 percent of the preschoolers who were suspended more than once.



The New OCR (2018) Patterns of racial and gender disproportionality:

- **African American preschoolers are 19% of the preschool populations and comprise 46% of suspensions.**



In Illinois, 40% of
child care providers
reported
suspending infants
and toddlers.
Those are babies
that are still in
diapers!

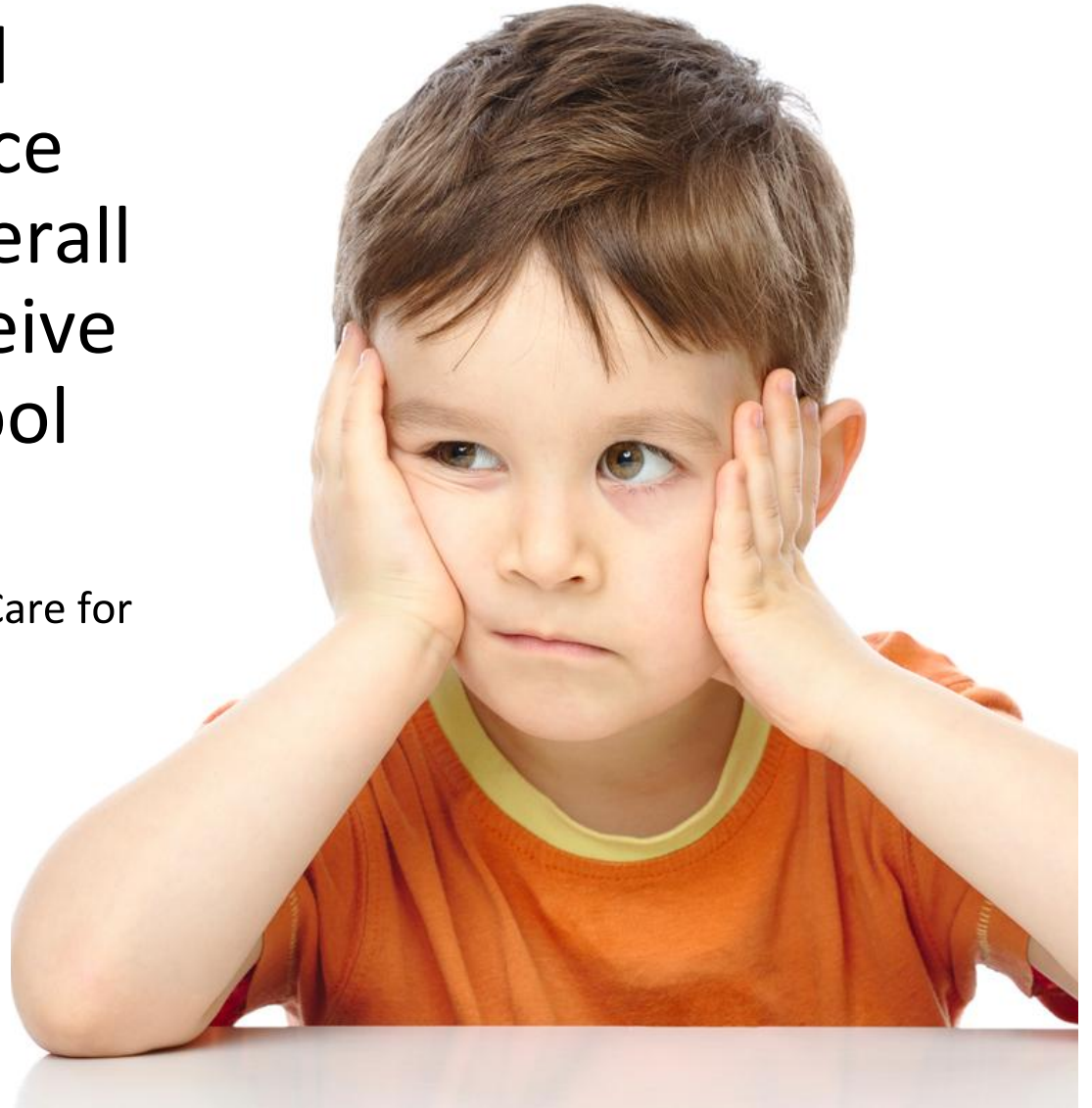


In North Dakota,
20% of ECE
programs expelled
children. Of those
expelled, 53% were
infants and toddlers
and 31% were
preschool children.

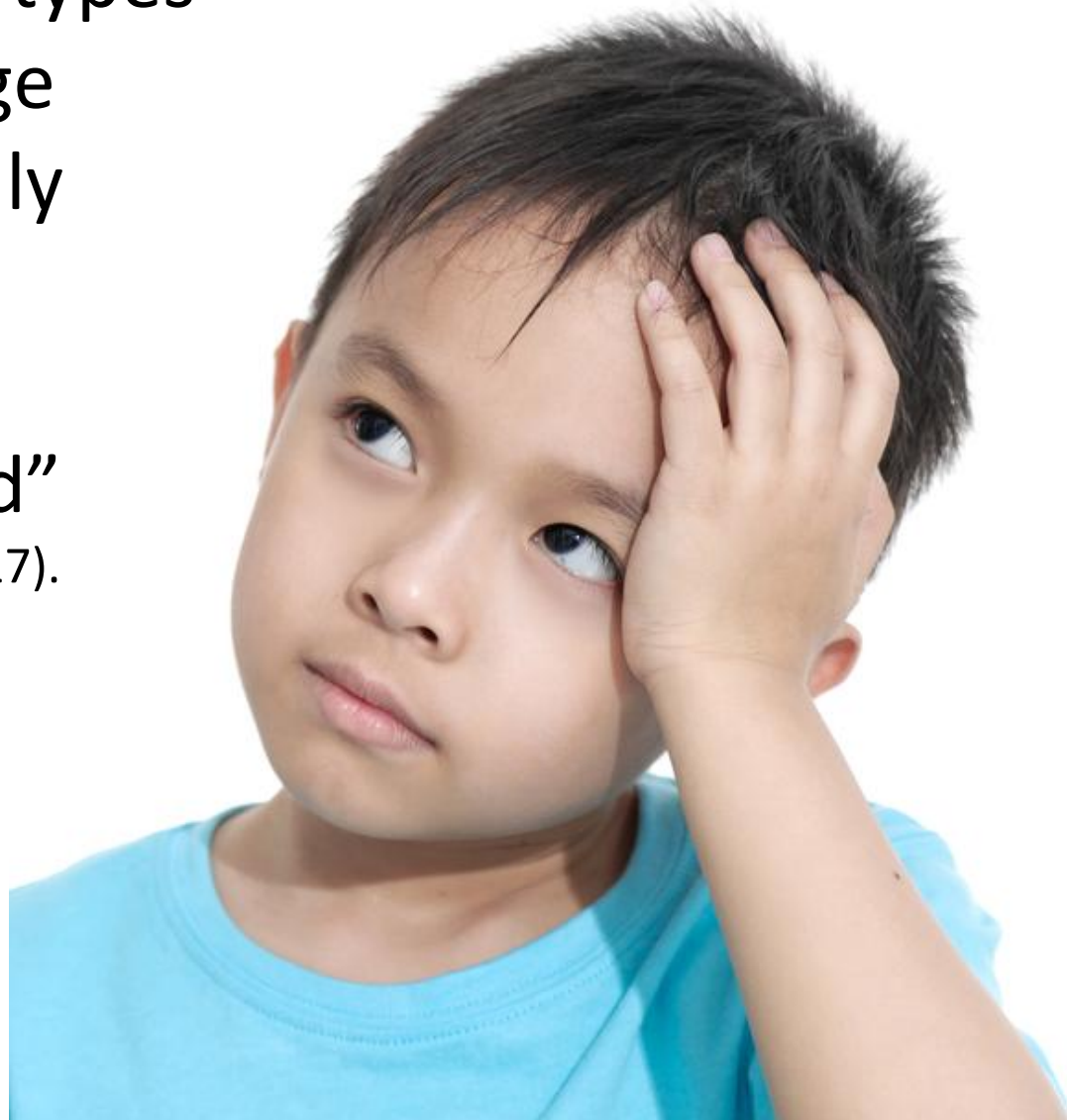
(North Dakota State Data Center,
2008).



Children in special education are twice as likely as the overall population to receive either out-of-school or in-school suspensions (Texans Care for Children, 2018).



Nationally, “across all types of settings, the average school day sees roughly 250 instances of a preschooler being suspended or expelled” (Center for American Progress, 2017).



Why Does This Happen??



Teachers do not feel
they have the tools to
address challenging
behaviors in early
childhood classrooms

(Hemmeter et al., 2006; Joseph, Strain, &
Skinner, 2004).





Let's look at
behaviors-

What do children do
when they get
upset?





What do adults do when they
get upset?

We can
expect
children to
be children

As adults,
what's our
excuse?

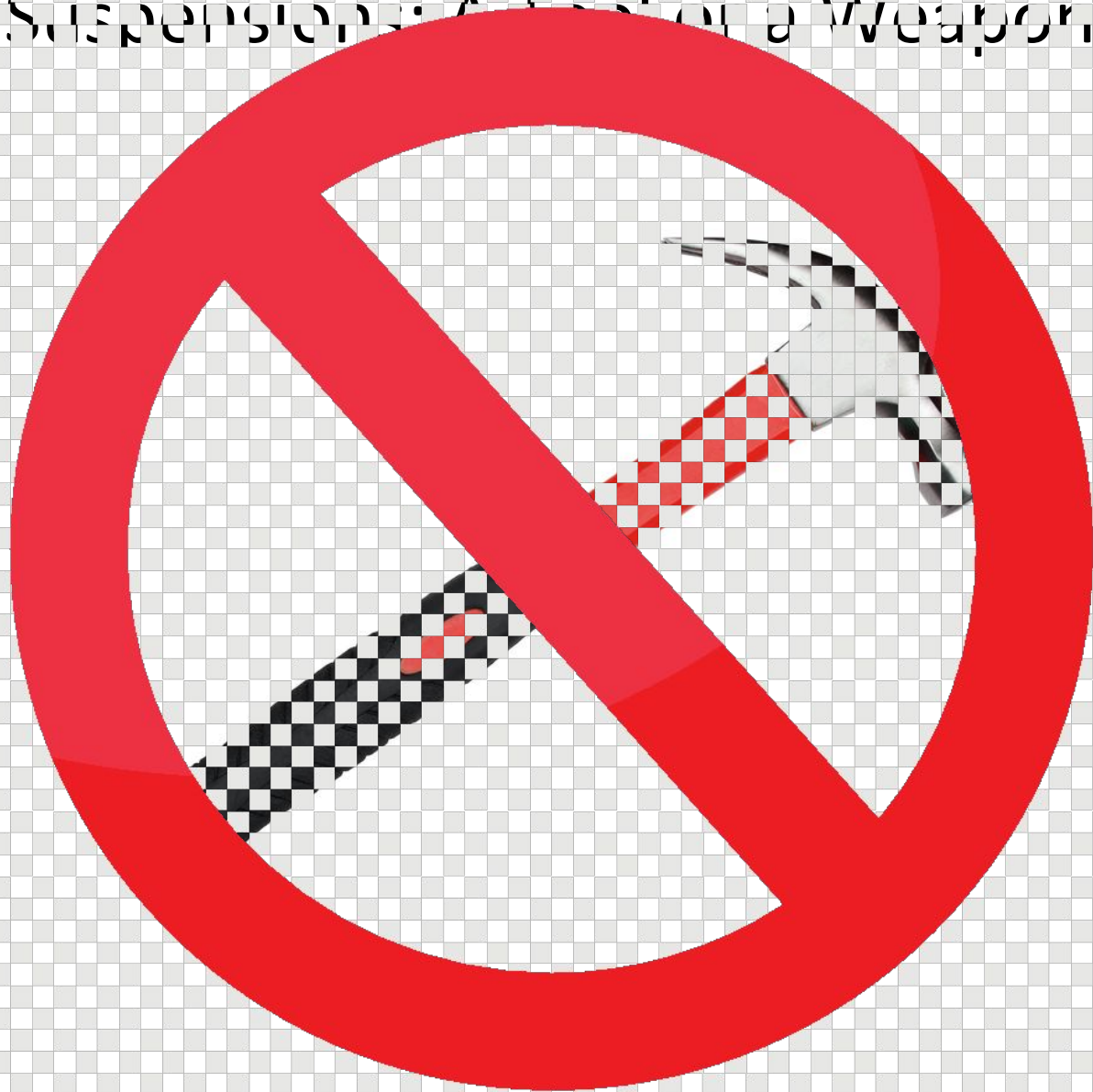


What if we shift our focus from
children's behaviors to the behavior of
adults.



Photo Credit:

Suspensions: A Fine or a Weapon?





Young children who are suspended are

- 10 times likely to end up in the juvenile justice system.
- Drop out of school,
- Become disengaged from the learning process,
- And are likely to be suspended again and again.

And THIS is where the
Preschool to PRISON pipeline
begins

(Center for American Progress, 2017).

What About Disproportionality? Why Does This Happen?



Implicit Bias



IMPLICIT BIAS

Implicit bias is the mental process resulting in feelings and attitudes about people based race, age and appearance.

It is an unconscious process and we are not consciously aware of the negative racial biases that develop over the course of our lifetime.



THE LADDER OF INFERENCE



Peter Senge - from *The Fifth Discipline*

*** Our beliefs affect what data we select next time.**

Ladder of Inference

I draw conclusions and take action based on my beliefs ►

High Level Inference

We will never be treated fairly by Rosemarie

I make assumptions ►

Rosemarie thinks she is better than us.

I add meanings and labels ►
(Personal/Cultural)

Rosemarie has an attitude and doesn't like me.

I select data ►
(Conscious/Unconscious)

Low Level Inference

Rosemarie rushes past me without speaking.

Directly Observable Data
Rosemarie walks in and does not speak to me

Ladder of Inference

I draw conclusions and take action based on my beliefs ►

High Level Inference

I know we're going to have to put him on a behavioral plan

I make assumptions ►

He's probably aggressive with the other children.

I add meanings and labels ►
(Personal/Cultural)

I think he has an attitude, I'd better watch him.

I select data ►
(Conscious/Unconscious)

Low Level Inference

This child is pretty big and rough

Directly Observable Data

Implicit Bias

Hidden

- Implicit racial bias resides in our “unconscious mind,” the part of the brain that many researchers believe is beyond our direct control

Less
Egalitarian

- Unconscious attitudes are less egalitarian than what we explicitly think about race

Self-reinforcing

- Our refusal to talk about and confront issues of race reinforces implicit racial bias

**Tom Rudd, Kirwan Institute for the
Study of Race and Ethnicity**

Risk Factors for Being Suspended

Big
Black
Boy
Disability
(Gilliam, 2018)





Why Don't We Want to Talk About Race?

“We have become so politically correct that we don't know what to say and when to say it. We don't know what to say to anyone anymore.”

Lee Jones, Florida State University.

- Racial Etiquette: Not polite to discuss that which makes us uncomfortable (Omi and Winant, 2002).
- Saying “We’re all the same”, or “I don’t see color” fails to acknowledge difference others experience (Harries, 2014).





Black

Negro

Colored

Afr. Am.

Danger of Color-blind ideology



Color Blind Ideology:

Issues of equity
are often
avoided by
adopting a
colorblind
ideology



Cultural Disconnects



Lead to
disproportionality in
disciplinary practices



**Hey girl and then I told him,
is you crazy?**



- How do we ensure this little girl's sweet spirit is embraced?
- How do we honor who she is in our classrooms?

Building Community



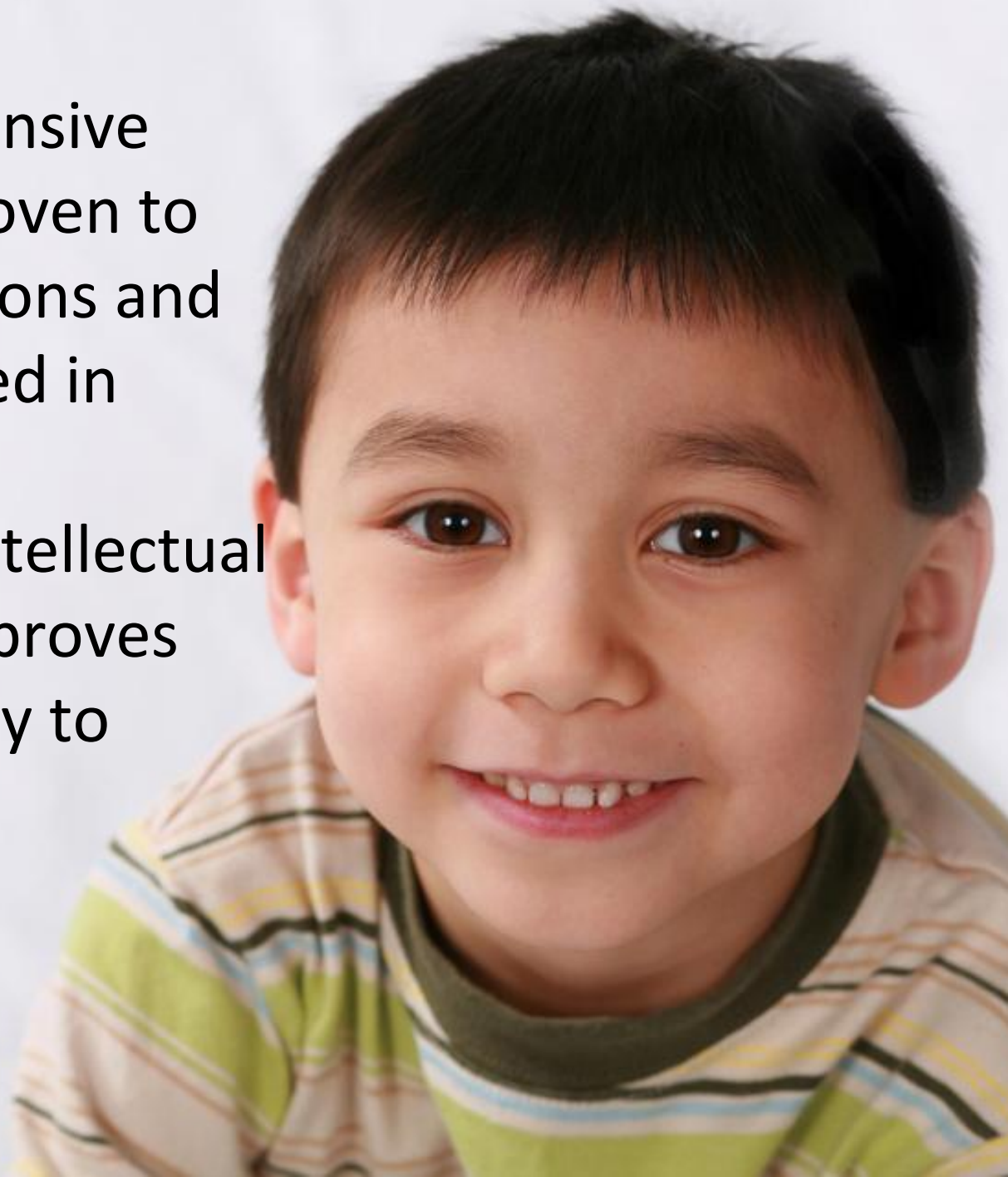
Kristine Squitieri Fitzpatrick/Facebook



Culturally Responsive Practices are proven to reduce suspensions and are deeply rooted in brain science.

CRP increases intellectual capacity and improves the brain's ability to absorb complex information

(Hammond, 2015)



A person's hands are visible holding a white rectangular sign. The sign has bold red text that reads "IT'S ALL ABOUT RELATIONSHIPS". The background is out of focus, showing various colored bokeh lights, primarily red and green.

**IT'S ALL
ABOUT
RELATIONSHIPS**

Nurturing and Supportive Relationships

