

NEWS BREAK

Sunday's News Break selects an article from Sunday, May 22, 2016 of The Seattle Times e-Edition for an in-depth reading of the news. Read the selected article and answer the attached study questions. **Please remember to always preview the content of the article before sharing with your students.**

Article: Kicked out at age 4: a preschool problem (Main, A1)

Pre-Reading and Vocabulary

- Just from the title, what do you think the article will be about? Did you realize this was such a big problem? Why or why not?

Vocabulary: Match the words to the numbered definitions in the chart below.

A. advocate	1. deprive (someone) of membership of or involvement in a school or other organization
B. disbelief	2. refuse to allow (something)
C. expel	3. not making or conducted primarily to make a profit
D. experimental	4. a means of solving a problem or dealing with a difficult situation
E. evidence	5. a person who publicly supports or recommends a particular cause or policy
F. forbid	6. set right (an undesirable situation)
G. non-profit	7. support (an organization or activity) financially
H. remedy	8. (of a new invention or product) based on untested ideas or techniques and not yet established or finalized
I. solution	9. the available body of facts or information indicating whether a belief or proposition is true or valid
J. subsidize	10. inability or refusal to accept that something is true or real

Comprehension

1. What group of students gets kicked out at three times the rate of kids in elementary, middle or high schools — a fact that still shocks many, even though it came to light about a decade ago?
2. Teachers don't want to expel disruptive children, but the teachers often feel overwhelmed by what?
3. "It's a huge issue in our programs and it's a growing challenge," said Katy Warren, deputy director of the Washington State Association of Head Start/ECEAP, a nonprofit based in Bellevue that advocates for preschool providers and families. What is the number one training request?
4. Before 2005, it was easy to shrug off anecdotes about preschool expulsion as isolated cases. Why?
5. That study also found that preschool boys were expelled more than girls. What other important statistics did they find?
6. Consistent with the troubling pattern among older kids — what is the reason Seattle Public Schools and other school districts are under federal investigation when it comes to what problem?
7. But as troubling as the study's results were, there was a bright side — a remedy that was already in place in Connecticut when Gilliam did his study. What was the effective remedy?
8. The Denise Louie Education Center, a private nonprofit in Seattle's Chinatown International District is part of a new program which _____ expulsions.
9. How does the one-on-one coaching work in the classroom? What questions are used to find the root problem of the child's behavior?
10. What are "challenging behaviors" that these teachers are faced with?
11. In Connecticut, that program costs about \$_____ million a year to operate, which includes training and maintenance of a database that has helped fine-tune details such as how often a coach should visit to provide the most effective help.

Additional Activities

Using the Seattle Times e-Edition, please research more about school expulsion rates here in Seattle? Is there a problem? What are the statistics? What surprised you the most?

In the same 2005 national study, Gilliam found that preschool teachers who had a regular, ongoing relationship with such a coach expelled kids at half the rate of the teachers who had no help at all.

- Why would this approach work for teachers?

Boys were expelled at more than 4½ times the rate of girls, and African Americans were expelled at about twice the rate of preschoolers of European descent. The overall prekindergarten expulsion rate was more than three times higher than in K-12.

- Why do you think the statistics are so high for African-American children?

Many find it hard to believe that a preschooler could do anything that would warrant expulsion. “I would talk to assemblymen and explain the need to them,” Gilliam said, “and they would say, ‘Well, if they’re acting up, just tell them to be quiet.’ Or they would say, ‘If the teacher can’t control the kids, fire her and get a new one,’ as if there’s a long list of people who want to work in child care because the pay is so good.”

That study not only raised an alarm, but helped Gilliam promote Connecticut’s solution of providing teachers with regular visits from mental-health professionals, and avoiding setting many kids on a path that often leads to more expulsions from other schools and, eventually, dropping out.

“Children don’t get expelled because of their behavior problems,” Gilliam said. “They get expelled because of an adult’s perception of how bad that is. So if I can change even that perception and make it feel not quite so bad because you’ve got support — that probably is a help.”

- Do you think it’s easy for people who don’t work with kids to justify in-school problems with these types of responses? “Well, if they’re acting up, just tell them to be quiet.” Or, “If the teacher can’t control the kids, fire her and get a new one.”
- What do you think about the coaching system for teachers?
- Do you think teaching is a hard profession? Why or why not?

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Answer Key to Vocabulary

- A. 5
- B. 10
- C. 1
- D. 8
- E. 9
- F. 2
- G. 3
- H. 6
- I. 4
- J. 7

Answer Key to Comprehension Questions

1. Preschoolers
2. The mental health needs of some of the families they serve.
3. Behavior
4. Because no one kept track of how often they occurred.
5. African Americans were expelled more than any other race, and African-American boys had the greatest chance of being booted from their preschool classrooms.
6. The suspension and expulsion of black students.
7. When preschool teachers have access to a good coach — a mental health professional who can, in real time, help them work with the kids who are giving them fits — expulsions go way down.
8. Forbids
9. She turned on the wireless device that let her speak directly into Perry's ear, like a coach calling plays from the sidelines into a quarterback's helmet. Knight suggested Perry take the boy to the music corner of the room for some one-on-one attention, and listened in.

Perry asked the boy what he wanted to do instead of making self-portraits, but he didn't respond. She asked him if he needed a hug, but that didn't work, either. Knight suggested Perry ask him how much energy he had (he said he had none) and what happened to his energy (it all went away) and why did it all go away?

Then Perry placed her hand gently on his chest and asked him how he felt. "Yucky," he said, and then spilled out his story. He had been promised that he could make cookies at home over the weekend and that didn't happen. As he unloaded his frustrations, his body loosened and he calmed down.
10. "Challenging behaviors": hitting, shoving, biting, screaming, bolting out an open door, having violent fits.
11. \$2 million