

Student Discipline Fast Facts – Early Childhood Education

Early Childhood students (ages 3-5 years old) and Kindergarten students are beginning to gain self-understanding and self-regulation of their emotions in an expanded social context. It is essential that positive social and emotional behaviors are explicitly taught in the classroom and students are given scaffolded support to understand, practice and develop these skills. These aspects of development must be given the same level of focused attention and planning as is given to the development of children's literacy skills and understanding of mathematical concepts.

The overarching principle of the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) states, "Above all we shall not harm children. We shall not participate in practices that are emotionally damaging, physically harmful, disrespectful, degrading, dangerous, exploitative, or intimidating to children."

The following statements refer to Board of Education policies JK-R and JK-F. Detailed information can be found on the Board Docs tab at www.dpsk12.org.

1. Early Childhood Education (ECE) classrooms are to follow the respective school's code of conduct and Board of Education policy JK-R. There is not a separate policy for ECE or Kindergarten.
2. To the maximum extent possible, each school's code of conduct shall be made available to parents of students in ECE/KG classrooms in the preferred language of the parent.
3. The Division of Student Services provides school partners that can assist with helping to address significant behavior needs of ECE/KG students. Contact the Early Education Department, the Office of Social Emotional Learning and/or the Special Education Department to access these supports.
4. Denver Public Schools prioritize discipline strategies that are rooted primarily in therapeutic interventions or restorative practices. For serious misconduct, administrative practices (including out of school suspension) may be employed by the building principal. Prior to any out of school suspension involving an ECE/KG student, the principal is required to consult the appropriate Instructional Superintendent.
5. Teachers and paraprofessionals in ECE/KG classrooms should familiarize themselves thoroughly with the Discipline Ladder, which can be found in BOE policy JK-R. The Office of Social Emotional Learning provides supports that can assist in answering questions as they relate to the Board Policy.
6. School-initiated removals from the ECE/KG classroom to the home constitute a suspension and are to be done only through the school's disciplinary process. Prior to any out of school suspension involving an ECE/KG student, the principal is required to consult the appropriate Instructional Superintendent.
7. Teachers in ECE/KG classrooms should not call parents to ask them to pick up their ECE/KG students due to behavior concerns, as this constitutes an out-of-school suspension. If behavior concerns are significant, teachers should follow their school's code of conduct and relevant Board of Education policy.
8. All suspensions, whether in- or out-of-school, of an ECE/KG student are to be documented by the school leader responsible, in the same fashion as suspensions for elementary school students. Further, this documentation is to be submitted centrally to ensure compliance with annual state reporting requirements.
9. An expulsion from school for students in an ECE/KG classroom is exceedingly rare and is only done through a formal request by the school principal to the Office of Social Emotional Learning. Teachers in ECE/KG classrooms do not have the authority to initiate or authorize consideration of an expulsion from an ECE/KG classroom.
10. Discipline for students with disabilities in ECE/KG classrooms is to be in accordance with the student's Individualized Education Program (IEP), Section 504 Plan and Board of Education Policy JK-F (Discipline of Students with Disabilities). For guidance, contact your school's Special Education Support Partner and the Early Education Department.