CHILDREN'S EQUITY PROJECT

Building More Accessible, High Quality, & Fair Systems for our Youngest Children

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START WITH EQUITY

FROM THE EARLY YEARS TO THE EARLY GRADES

Data, Research, and an Actionable Child Equity Policy Agenda

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Bipartisan Policy Center

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The CEP is a center housed at Arizona State University and operated with 15 other universities

Work focused on closing opportunity gaps and building equitable child serving systems

Research - Policy - Practice

National - State - Local

Research Tells Us....

High quality early ed is associated with positive developmental and academic outcomes

But we also know that kids need more, especially in pandemic times.

They <u>also</u> need nutritious food and quality healthcare, mental health support, safe and stable housing, and healthy, economically secure families.

Research Also Tells Us....

Children have differential access, experiences and outcomes, associated with how they look, where they live, and where they're from.

Our systems aren't fair.

How do we build a universal pre-K system that IS fair? That affords opportunity to all?

IN PARTNERSHIP WITH

NBCDI
National Black Child
Development Institute

COUNCIL
for
PROFESSIONAL
RECOGNITION

The Education Trust

EQUITY
RESEARCH
ACTION
COALITION
UNC Frank Porter Graham
Child Development Institute

naeyc®
National Association for the
Education of Young Children

NHSA
NATIONAL HEAD START ASSOCIATION

Build
INITIATIVE
Strong Foundations For
Our Youngest Children

NICCA
National Indian Child Care Association

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Equitable learning systems provide access to resources, opportunities, and experiences to children and families that result in positive outcomes that are not associated with children's demographic characteristics. They actively and continuously identify and intentionally eliminate manifestations of systemic racism and other forms of oppression.

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14 PRORITIES TO DISMANTLE SYSTEMIC RACISM IN EARLY CARE AND EDUCATION

What Does an Accessible, Quality, Fair EC System Look Like?

Access

Who gets in the door? Who has access? What barriers are in the way?

Experiences

What type of experiences do they have in the system? Relationships? Discipline? Language of instruction? Inclusion?

Outcomes

What do outcomes look like when we look across groups?

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14 Priorities

1. **Allocate Funds Equitably**

2. **Promote Authentic Integration**

3. **Ensure Accountability for Advancing Equity**

4. Advance Equity for the Workforce

5. Center Equity in Professional Preparation & Development

6. Embed Equity in QRIS

7. Require Culturally Affirming Pedagogy and Curriculum

8. Embed Equity in Global Quality Measurement

9. **Eliminate Harsh Discipline**

10. **Protect the Rights of Children w/ Disabilities**

11. Implement Data Driven Equity Quality Improvement

12. Fund Family Leadership

13. Prioritize Family Child Care

14. **Expand Access to bilingual learning**

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Access

- Access for whom?

- Access to what?

- Access to what, for whom?

- Caution against growing access without attention to, funding for, accountability for **quality and equity**

- **Targeted universalism**

- Building universal access using multiple funding streams- lean on the highest common denominator, not the lowest

THREE KEY POLICY AREAS

that strongly influence children's experiences in the classroom:

HARSH DISCIPLINE
and its disproportionate
application in
learning settings

LACK OF INCLUSION
of young children
with disabilities in
learning settings

INEQUITABLE ACCESS
to high-quality learning
opportunities for dual
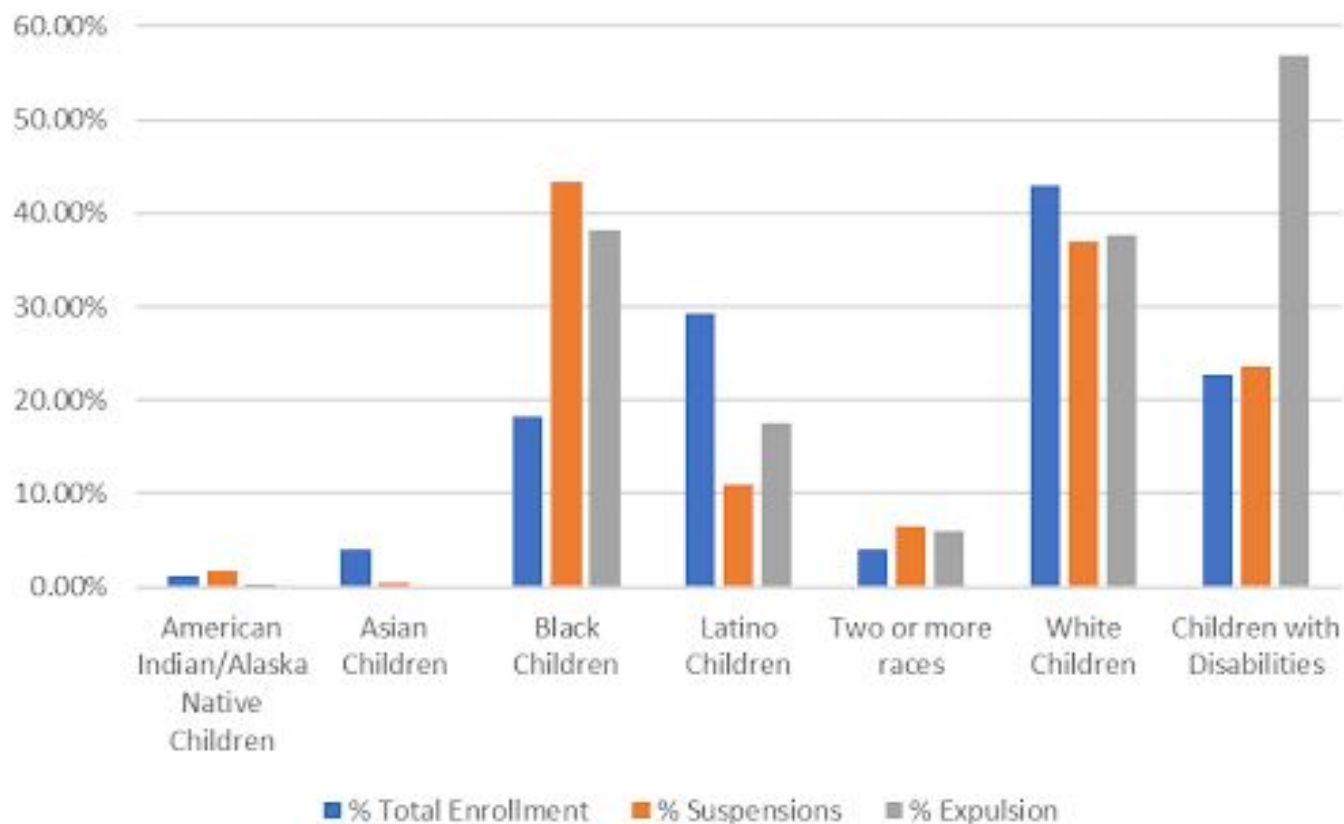language & English learners

PIVOTAL POLICY AREA 1:

HARSH DISCIPLINE

AND ITS DISPROPORTIONATE APPLICATION IN LEARNING SETTINGS

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Preschool Enrollment, Suspensions, and Expulsions by Race and Disability 2017-18

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On average, the rate at which young Black students are excluded is more than double that of their peers.

DISPARITY RATES IN THE EXCLUSION OF YOUNG BLACK STUDENTS

Disparity rate of 100 or greater
Disparity rate of 70–99
Disparity rate of 30–69
Disparity rate of 0–29

2015-2016 CRDC Data*
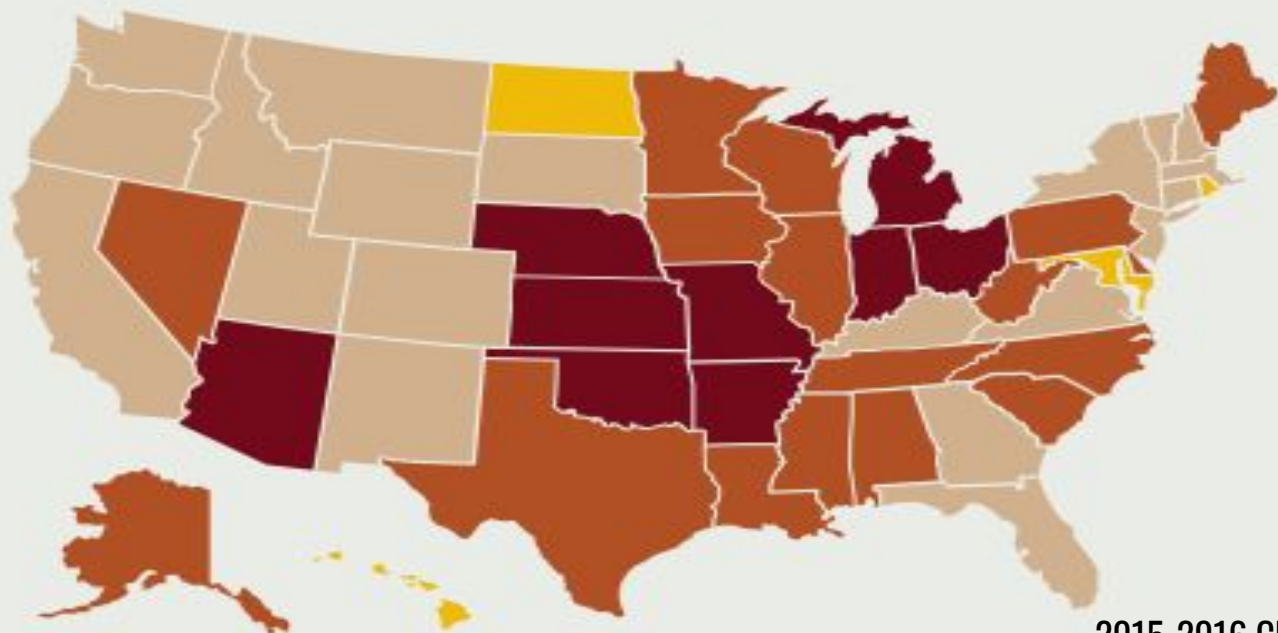
- **Black children do not behave worse.**

- **Income does not** explain racial disparity

- Gilliam et al. have identified three factors significantly associated with risk for expulsion/suspension:

- **"The 3 Bs": Big, Black, Boy**

Do any of them have to do with challenging behavior?

Do any of them have to do with the *perceptions* of challenging behavior?

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Bias Manifests in Many Ways

- Research finds that adults overestimate the age of Black boys by up to 4.5 years.

- Data indicate that Black girls are rated as needing less comfort and support.

- Study found that early educators are more likely to look at Black boys when instructed to identify challenging behavior in a video.

- Study found that teachers given two fictitious identical behavioral records were more likely to recommend suspending child named Jamal than Jake.

Wright & Counsell, 2018

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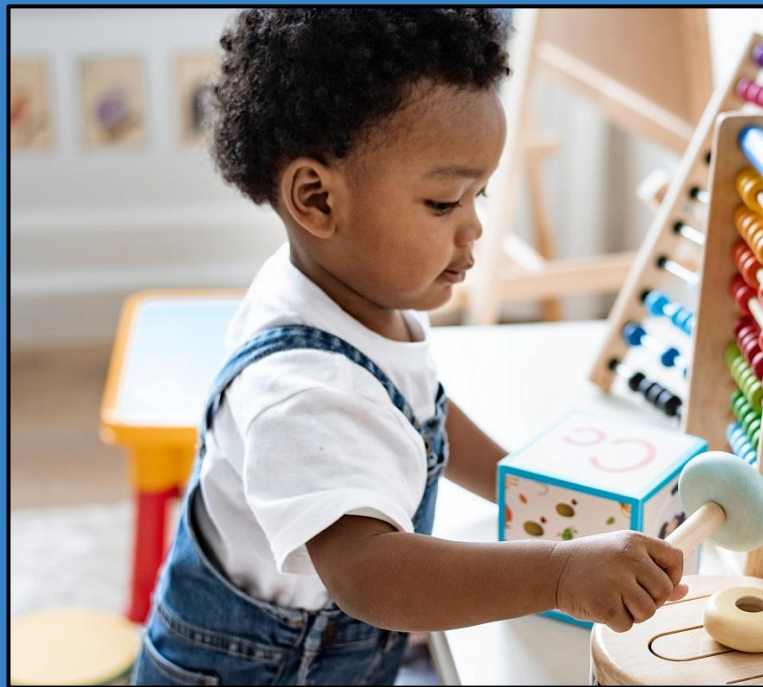
A Holistic Approach to Ending Exclusionary Discipline for Young Learners

A REVIEW OF THE DATA, RESEARCH, AND MULTIDIMENSIONAL SOLUTIONS

☑ **1** Policy and Accountability

☑ **2** Professional Preparation and Development

☑ **3** Classroom Climate and Flow

☑ **4** Teacher Compensation and Working Conditions

☑ **5** Universal Developmental and Behavioral Screening

☑ **6** Linkages to Early Intervention, Special Education, and Mental Health Supports

☑ **7** Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation and PBIS

☑ **8** Strong Family Partnerships

☑ **9** Data Systems and Feedback Loops

☑ **10** Whole Family Wellness

PIVOTAL POLICY AREA 2:

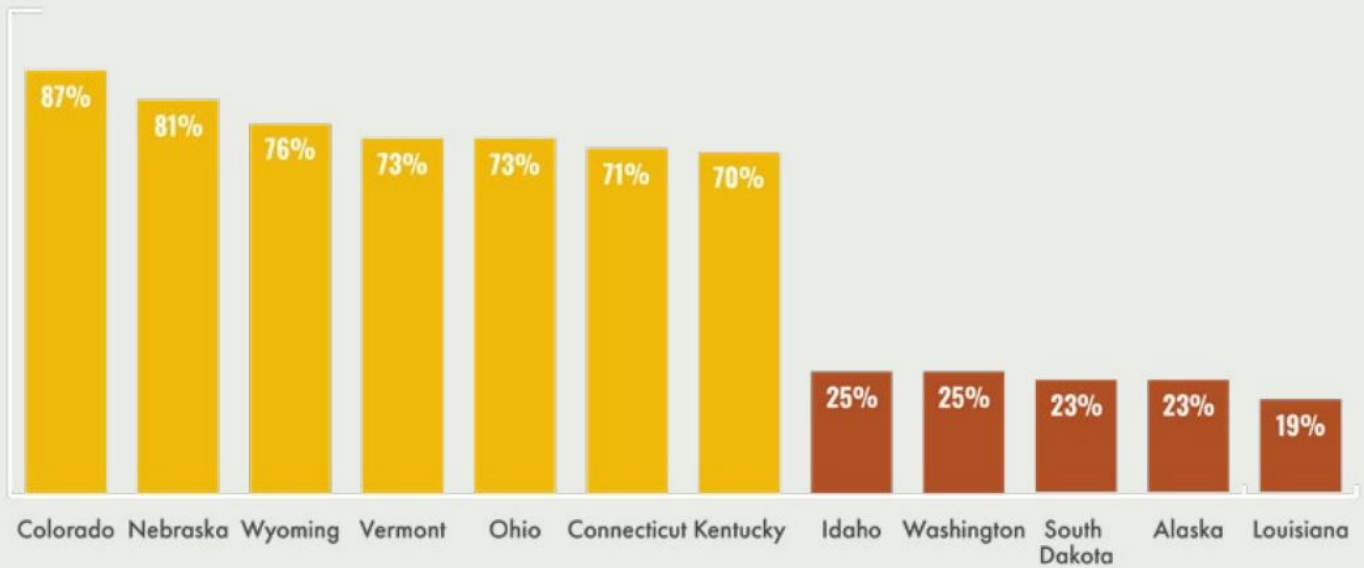# SEGREGATED LEARNING

FOR YOUNG CHILDREN
WITH DISABILITIES

"Inclusion in early childhood programs refers to including children with disabilities in early childhood programs, together with their peers without disabilities; holding high expectations and intentionally promoting participation in all learning and social activities, facilitated by individualized accommodations; and using evidence-based services and supports to foster their development (cognitive, language, communication, physical, behavioral, and social-emotional, friendships with peers, and sense of belonging. This applies to all young children with disabilities, from those with the mildest disabilities, to those with the most significant disabilities."

Inclusion Policy Statement, U.S. Departments of Education and Health and Human Services

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Inclusion

- ✔ **Strong** research & policy base

- ✔ Progress has been **slow**

- ✔ Inclusion **varies** by disability, age, race, and location

- ✔ **Most** infants/toddlers are served in a natural environment

- ✔ Nationally, **less than 50%** of preschoolers receive services in regular EC programs.

- ✔ Barriers = ableism, perceived policy/financial barriers, lack of workforce preparation, lack of oversight & accountability, uncoordinated systems

- ✔ Public Pre-K expansion has not resulted in more inclusive slots

- ✔ **Public Pre-K is an underutilized tool to expand inclusion**

States provide services to preschool children in regular early childhood programs at widely varying rates.

State	Rate
Colorado	87%
Nebraska	81%
Wyoming	76%
Vermont	73%
Ohio	73%
Connecticut	71%
Kentucky	70%
Idaho	25%
Washington	25%
South Dakota	23%
Alaska	23%
Louisiana	19%

The Research Landscape

Recommended Practices Assessed in the Inclusive Classroom Profile[195]

☑ **Practice 1:** Adaptations of space, materials, and equipment

☑ **Practice 2:** Adult involvement in peer interactions

☑ **Practice 3:** Adults' guidance of children's free-choice activities and play

☑ **Practice 4:** Conflict resolution

☑ **Practice 5:** Membership

☑ **Practice 6:** Relationships between adults and children

☑ **Practice 7:** Support for communication

☑ **Practice 8:** Adaptations of group activities

☑ **Practice 9:** Transitions between activities

☑ **Practice 10:** Feedback

☑ **Practice 11:** Family/professional partnerships

☑ **Practice 12:** Monitoring children's learning

- Inclusion is beneficial for children with and without disabilities.

- CWD in inclusive settings is associated with greater cognitive, communication, social-emotional, reading, and math gains and better attendance.

- Benefits depend on meaningful inclusion. Greater benefits when inclusion starts early and continues

- Research has identified key inclusion indicators

- Several barriers- ***none of which have to do with children***- have been cited in research.

PIVOTAL POLICY AREA 3:

INEQUITABLE ACCESS

TO HIGH-QUALITY LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES FOR DUAL LANGUAGE AND ENGLISH LEARNERS
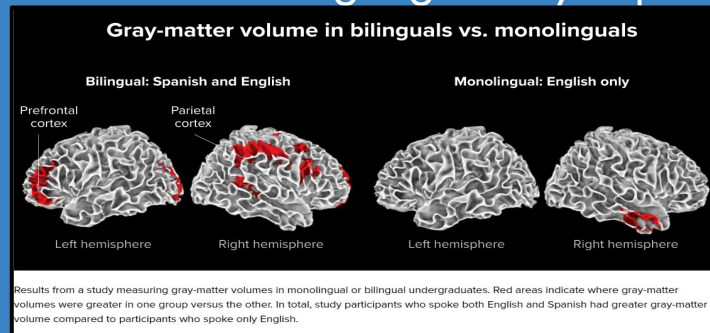
What We Know

- ✔ 0-8 DLLs: 11 million or 32% of children under 8 y/o

- ✔ ELs: 4.9 million or 9.6% of the total K—12 population; larger numbers in early grades

- ✔ Major data gaps exist

- ✔ Diverse by every measure

- ✔ DLLs have cultural, linguistic, & cognitive strengths, including cognitive advantages associated with bilingualism

- ✔ DLLs & ELs do better in high-quality DL or bilingual models, compared to English dominant models

- ✔ Limited data show that ELs may be under-represented in dual language models

- ✔ Segregated learning is harmful and ineffective

- ✔ Major gaps exist in child and global classroom quality assessments

- ✔ Policies and standards vary by system, state

- ✔ Head Start has the most comprehensive standards

- ✔ No state Pre-K program has comprehensive, high-quality standards for DLLs- 18 have no policies specific to DLLs

- ✔ Funding for ELs is insufficient. Title III has been stagnant & has not kept up with inflation or increase in EL population

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The Power of Language & the Bilingual Advantage

- Infants are born with the capacity to learn an unlimited number of languages

- Neuroscientists have observed advantages in bilingual babies in problem-solving, executive functioning skills, attention shifting, perspective-taking, & self-regulation

- Bilingual exposure = greater neural plasticity & grey matter density

- Grey matter contains most of the neurons in the brain & the brain regions involved in memory, emotions, speech, decision making, and other cognitive functions

- Switching back and forth between languages may explain it, in part

Gray-matter volume in bilinguals vs. monolinguals

Bilingual: Spanish and English   Monolingual: English only

Prefrontal cortex   Parietal cortex

Left hemisphere   Right hemisphere   Left hemisphere   Right hemisphere

Results from a study measuring gray-matter volumes in monolingual or bilingual undergraduates. Red areas indicate where gray-matter volumes were greater in one group versus the other. In total, study participants who spoke both English and Spanish had greater gray-matter volume compared to participants who spoke only English.

Dual Language Immersion (DLI): Two languages of instruction, split across day or week.

The goal is bilingual/ biliterate development

Dual language instruction creates lasting, wide-ranging benefits for all students.

DUAL LANGUAGE LEARNERS ENROLLED IN THESE INSTRUCTIONAL MODELS ARE ARE MORE LIKELY TO:

Become **proficient in English more quickly**

Outperform peers in both **math and reading**

Reach national **academic performance norms**

Become **biliterate**

How can we align science and policy for DLLs?

- Expand access to DLI models, including and especially for DLLs with disabilities.

- Intentionally craft equitable enrollment policies.

- Adopt Head Start DLL standards in ECE settings.

- Incorporate standards into monitoring and accountability.

- Invest in producing the workforce necessary to support DLLs.

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BUILDING A UNIVERSAL PRESCHOOL SYSTEM AROUND HEAD START

GUIDING AN EQUITABLE PANDEMIC RECOVERY

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THE CENTURY FOUNDATION

AUGUST 2021

The US has **one** major program that's been doing much of what we've discussed so far for **over 60 years** in **every zip code in the US**

We typically see Head Start as a federal program for children living in poverty.

But what if we see it as a *model* that states can **build on, align with, scale?**

A model for holistic, child- centered education—from the early years & throughout the ed continuum.

Core Dimensions of the EHS/HS Model

- Small group sizes/ratios

- Mental health supports

- Developmental and health screenings

- Nutritious meals

- Job embedded coaching, consultation & PD

- Connections to services for families, e.g. job training, higher ed, housing assistance

- Tribal and Migrant/ Seasonal programs

- Full inclusion of children with disabilities

- Bilingual learning & staff for DLLs

- Infant and early childhood mental health consultation

- Limits on suspension and prohibitions on expulsion

Building a universal preschool system around Head Start

Every kid gets *some* things.

Some kids get *additional services,* as needed.

Building off Head Start can mean:
- More socioeconomically diverse classrooms
- Fewer suspensions
- Greater mental health support
- Targeted supports for CWD and DLLs
- Parent leadership with built in infrastructure
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Building Supply,
Enhancing Quality,
and Advancing Equity:
The Early Head Start-Child
Care Partnership Series

POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

TO GROW EHS-CCP IN STATES

Building Supply,
Enhancing Quality,
and Advancing Equity:
The Early Head Start-Child
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A STATE ROADMAP

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SPOTLIGHT ON EHS-CCP GRANTEES

DURING THE PANDEMIC

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Champions for Early Learning