



## PEL Inclusion and Retention Policy

**Preschool for All (PFA) prohibits the exclusion, suspension, or expulsion of any child enrolled in a PFA slot.** The following policy is part of the agreement between Multnomah County's Preschool for All and all contracted preschool providers.

PFA preschool providers are expected to be continually learning, as well as evaluating the effectiveness of their inclusive practices to ensure that all children can thrive in their program.

### Inclusion Definition

**Inclusive** preschools implement policies and practices to ensure that all children are provided the same level of education and are fully included in all classroom instruction and activities alongside their peers, regardless of their abilities or disabilities. Inclusion is a core value; it is a way of thinking and doing, and the goal of inclusion is to create supportive, least restrictive preschool environments where all children can thrive.

#### Examples of Inclusion:

- Welcoming families regardless of children's needs and abilities This is especially important during initial calls and visits from families interested in learning about your program
- Developing ongoing anti-bias and anti-racist policies and classroom practices
- Collaborating with families and partner organizations, including Multnomah Early Childhood Program (MECP), to understand each child's unique strengths and needs
- Being flexible and willing to adapt classroom materials and activities to accommodate children's individual learning needs
- Encouraging preschool staff to participate in professional development focused on inclusion
- Modifying and rearranging indoor and outdoor environments, as much as possible, to ensure that all children can engage in all activities with their peers
- Creating learning environments that include daily routines and schedules, limit transitions and offer opportunities to build relationships with caring adults

Inclusion definition adapted from [NAEYC/DEC](#)

**Exclusionary** policies and practices deny children access to day-to-day classroom activities and inhibit their ability to learn and play alongside their peers.

Examples of Exclusion:

- Separating children from their peers based on their disabilities, behaviors, or toileting needs
- Telling a family or implying to a family that you will not be able to serve their child based on their child's disabilities, behaviors, or toileting needs
- Having a specific staff member work one-on-one with a child for all or most of the day, unless specified in a child's special education plan/individualized family service plan (IFSP). This is exclusion because it restricts a child from engaging:
  - With the regular classroom teachers
  - In regular classroom activities
  - With their peers
- Centering or teaching to the "typically developing child" and expecting the other children to catch up or adapt
- Being unwilling to adapt curriculum, classroom routines, and the classroom environment to accommodate all children in the class

**Suspensions** are practices that temporarily remove a child from the classroom and their peers.

Examples of suspension:

- Sending a child to "time out" or the administrator's office for extended periods of time
- Having a child stay home because there are not enough staff/trained staff to support the child based on their disabilities or behaviors
- Removing a child from regular class activities or sending a child to a classroom other than their normal classroom, including for safety or behavior concerns

**Expulsions** are practices that permanently remove a child from the program. **Soft Expulsions** are practices that make the program unwelcoming or unviable for a child to remain enrolled.

Examples of expulsion:

- Frequent discipline of a child, including suspensions, that results in a family removing their child from the program
- Unenrolling a child from the program

Examples of soft expulsion:

- Providing constant negative concerns and feedback to families that result in a family removing their child from the program
- Encouraging a family to find another program that's a "better fit"

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Modifying a child's start time or sending a child home early or for extended periods of time</li> </ul>	
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Definitions from <https://preventexpulsion.org/overview/>

### **PFA Pilot Sites**

Preschool for All is committed to working with our preschool providers and partners to support safe and healthy alternatives to exclusion, suspension, and expulsion.

### **PFA Inclusion Expectations & Supports**

- Welcome families regardless of children's needs and abilities
- Be flexible and willing to learn new skills to teach children with different and complex needs
- Work with families using strengths-based, solution-focused approaches
- Request additional support and consultation from your PFA coach, the Early Learning Inclusion Coordinators, and the Early Childhood Consultants
- Seek support and consultation from community partners, especially those currently working with the family
- Partner with MECP and accept their services in your program
- Request inclusion support funding from PFA when additional resources are needed to provide appropriate accommodations
- Work with Preschool & Early Learning Division staff and PFA coaches to review and adapt policies, practices, and curriculum that may contribute to suspension and expulsion
- Participate in – and support your team with participating in – professional development focused on inclusion
- Allow ample time for inclusion strategies and practices to work, based on best practices and/or consultant recommendations

### **PFA Actions:**

**Preschool for All (PFA) prohibits exclusionary practices, suspension, and expulsion of all enrolled preschoolers.**

Failure to comply with this Inclusion and Retention Policy and the expectations may result in a reduction of PFA slots or termination of contract.