

# The Blame Game: The Media "Explains" the Preschool Expulsion Study

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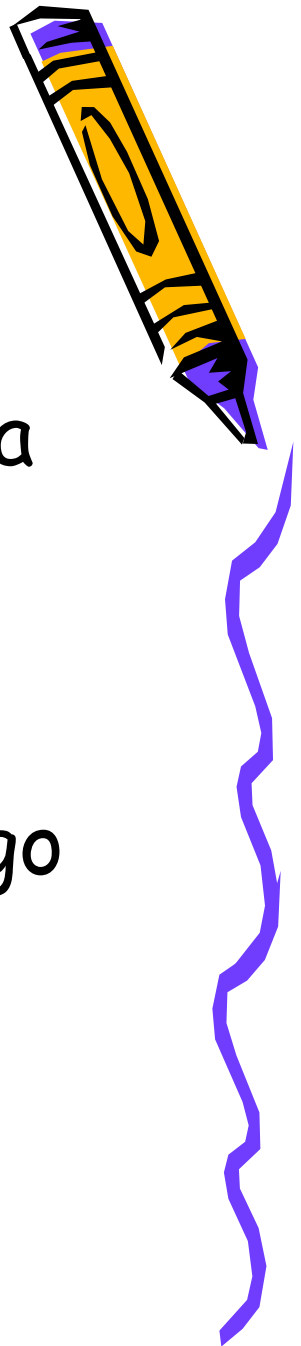


"Toddlers of Terror"  
"Tossing the Terror Tots"  
"Little Troublemakers Land in Big Trouble"  
"Pint Size Terrors..."  
"When Toddlers Get Fired"



# Overview...

- Pre-Kindergarteners Left Behind: a look at the study
- 3 major trends in media coverage
- Effects of Media-Spinning: What does it all mean, and where do we go from here?
- Questions & Discussion

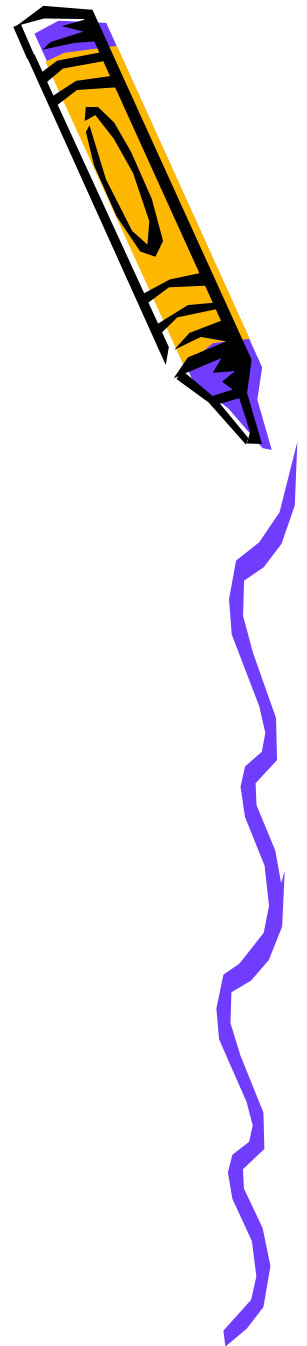


# A bit about the study...



- Part of National Prekindergarten Survey - 4,000 preschool teachers were asked how many children they had expelled in the previous year
- Gilliam then compared these numbers with K-12 expulsion data collected in *Elementary and Secondary School Survey: 2000* (NCES)
- Nationally: 6.67 per 1,000 preschoolers expelled, 2.09 per 1,000 K-12 students expelled





# Some stats on the states

- At the top:
  - New Mexico (24.31 per 1,000)
  - Maine (14.73 per 1,000)
  - Alabama (14.12 per 1,000)
- At the bottom:
  - Kentucky (0 per 1,000)
  - South Carolina (2.04 per 1,000)
  - Kansas (2.13 per 1,000)
- California: 16<sup>th</sup> with 7.49 per 1,000



# Demographic findings



- **Gender:**
  - Boys: 10.46
  - Girls: 2.26
- **Race/Ethnicity:**
  - African-American: 10.04
  - White: 5.77
  - Latino: 4.22
  - Asian-American: 1.82
- **Classroom Setting:**
  - School: 9.19
  - Head Start: 11.71
  - For-Profit Child Care: 14.55
  - Faith-Affiliated: 18.06
- **Mental Health Consultation Access**
  - On-site or regular visit: 7.97
  - On-call: 10.29
  - No access: 14.34



# Effects of expulsions/conclusions



- Gilliam's conclusion: teachers need more ECMH consultation, support, and resources available on consistent basis
- Gilliam:  
"When we fail to provide these supports, we place children and their families in a very difficult situation - where some children are bounced from one program to the next and parents may end up viewing their child as an educational failure well before kindergarten."



# Next Steps...

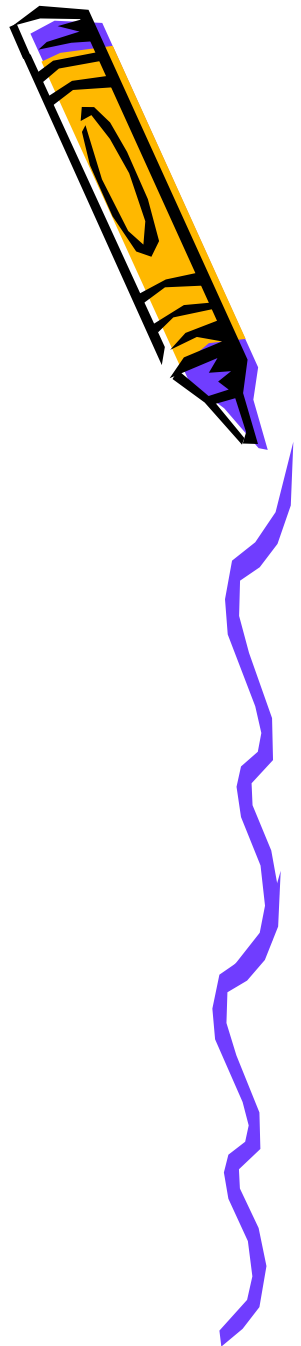


- Kentucky, SC, Michigan, Illinois programs
  - All include increased teacher training and availability of mental health resources
- Preschool for All Initiative -  
"Sec. 14117. (a) Within six months of the effective date of this Act, the Superintendent of Public Instruction shall adopt initial regulations to:  
(10) Limit the expulsion of children from Preschool for All programs;"



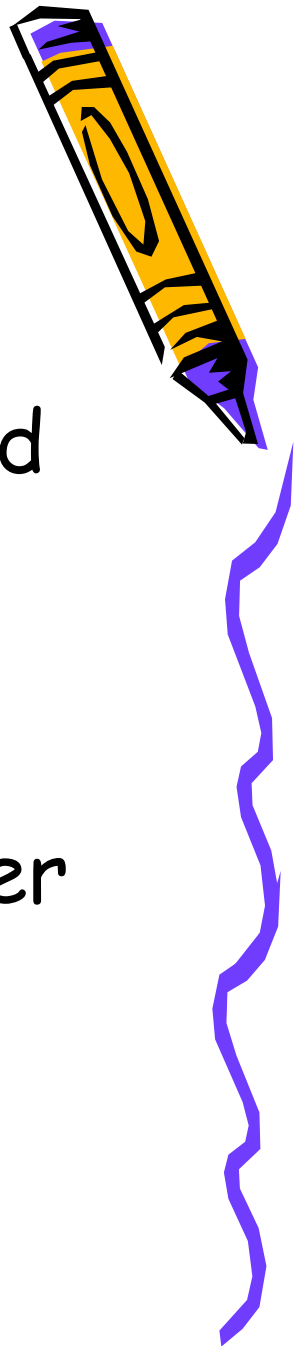
# 3 trends of the media:

1. Just the facts, ma'am
2. Spreading the blame
3. Anecdotes & appeals to emotion



# Round 1: The Facts

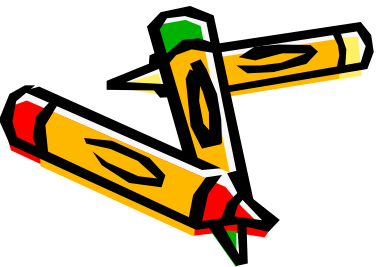
- Focus on summarizing the facts and findings of the Yale study
- Main conclusion: access to mental health consultation decreases preschool expulsion, creating better environment for both children and teachers

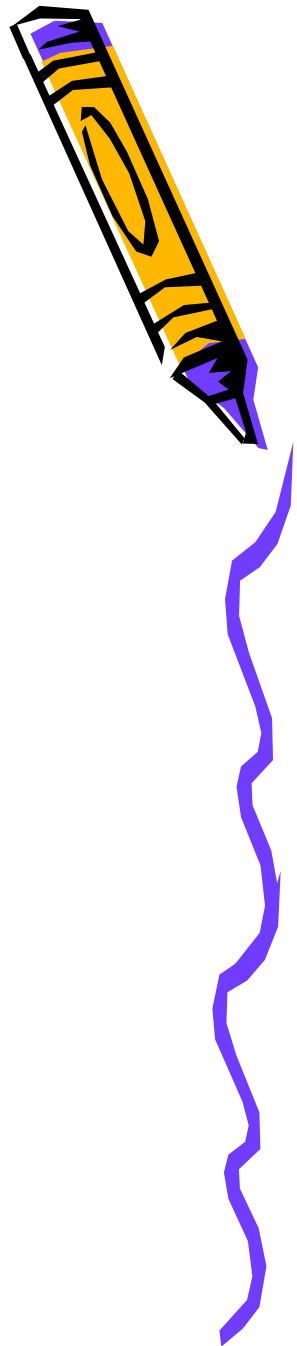


# Round 2: Who to Blame?



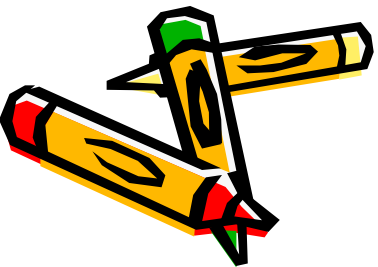
- Articles begin to place blame on:
  - Teachers - lack of adequate training and qualifications for teaching preschoolers
  - Preschools - too much emphasis on academics and standards, inappropriate developmental expectations (NCLB)
  - Parents - too selfish and permissive, not taking responsibility for raising children





## Round 3: Anecdotal Appeals

- "My teachers hate me, they don't want me."
- "Elijah needs a spanking, and quite frankly so do his parents."



# What does it all mean?

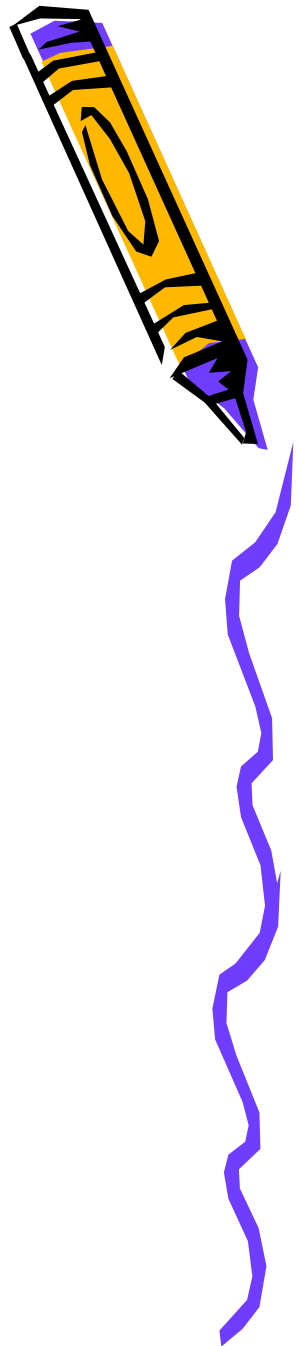


- Media co-opted story, in favor of sensationalizing data and introducing more controversies
- Child care field must fight the media taking control of story - it's your story, make sure you're heard! Write letters, hold discussions, talk to the community.

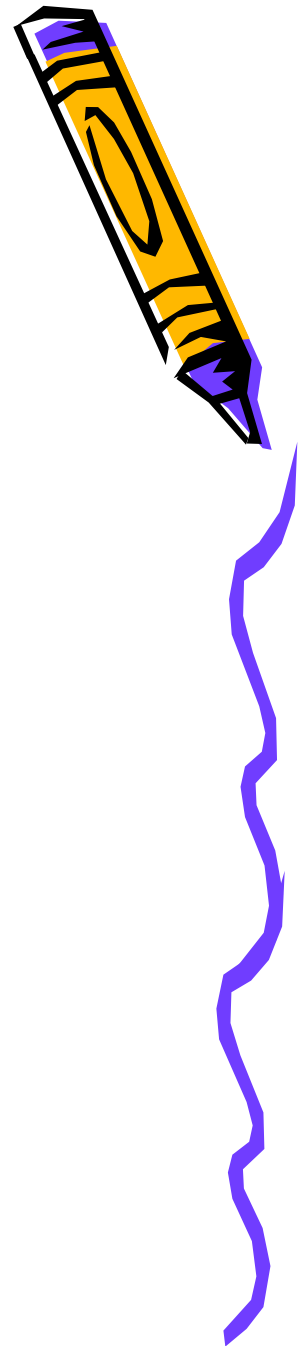


# Local reactions...

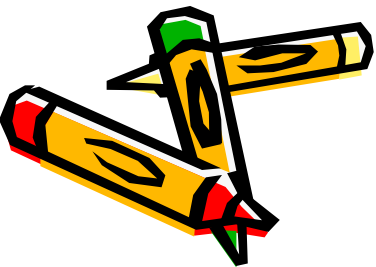
- Grace Manning-Orenstein gave an interview on TV and was quoted in the *San Francisco Chronicle* ("Preschool expulsions explained" - link on handout)
- Other child care advocates submitted letters to the editor



# In the end, we looked at...



- Prekindergarteners Left Behind
- 3 waves of media spinning
- Effects on parents, teachers, preschools, child care field



# What do you think?

- What was your personal experience with this story?
- What should we do to act?
- How do you feel the media has covered early care and education issues in the long term?

