



DATE: March 13, 2019

TO: Early Childhood Policy and Finance Committee
Chair: Representative Dave Pinto

RE: HF 1785

Think Small supports HF1785 and its intent to prohibit dismissal of children in prekindergarten programs.

Accumulating evidence shows that access to quality early childhood experiences will result in positive outcomes for young children, both in regards to kindergarten readiness and lifelong success. Children have to consistently attend high-quality programs in order to reap these benefits, and dismissals make that difficult.

Preschool children are expelled at higher rates than children in K-12. Racial disparities are prevalent in preschool discipline as well. According to a 2014 report from the U.S. Department of Education Office for Civil Rights, black children represents 18% of preschool enrollment, but 48% of preschool children receiving more than one out-of-school suspension; in comparison, white students represent 43% of preschool enrollment but 25% of preschool children receiving more than one out-of-school suspension.

To support the full potential for every child, Think Small commits to championing policies and practices of equity that empower a just, inclusive, and equitable care and education system for children in their crucial early years. This includes a holistic approach to supporting child development with robust and developmentally appropriate social and emotional supports. Preschool expulsions are not developmentally appropriate.

Think Small supports HF1785 and prohibiting preschool dismissals as one way to support equitable access to high-quality early education experiences.