



Child Care Dismissals in North Dakota

Child care providers sometimes have to tell a parent that his/her child can no longer be cared for in their child care setting.

Dismissal of the child, also known as expulsion, is considered an educational program's most severe disciplinary action.¹ North Dakota Child Care Resource and Referral commissioned a study in 2007 of licensed child care providers across North Dakota to learn more about how often children are dismissed from child care, the reasons contributing to dismissal, and resources that could help keep the children in stable, quality child care. It is important to not lay the blame on individual families or providers, but rather to see this as a community-wide issue that should be solved collectively.



It's About Quality Child Care for All Children

About the Child Care Dismissal Study

In September 2007, staff at the North Dakota State Data Center conducted a study for North Dakota Child Care Resource and Referral that explored the extent to which, and reasons why, children are dismissed from child care programs across the state.

This survey was mailed to all licensed child care providers in North Dakota (N=1,518). The response rate was 38%, with a total of 583 completed surveys. Our assumption is that nonrespondents are a random selection of the total, and therefore, we are generalizing the results of the survey to the whole population.

Providers were asked whether they had dismissed children from their organization in the "last year" or the "previous year." They were asked about the characteristics of the dismissed child, the reasons for dismissal, and resources that would help prevent a child's dismissal.

Some providers with two or more dismissals combined the information and treated it as a single case. About 10% of the cases discussed represented multiple children; thus, data should be viewed as numbers of dismissal cases rather than numbers of individual dismissed children.

83% of providers were family/group providers and 9% worked in centers. 72% of providers had at least some college education.

The full report, *Licensed Child Care Dismissal Study*, and additional resources about expulsion and other child care issues in North Dakota can be found at: www.ndkidscount.org/childcare/childcare.htm.

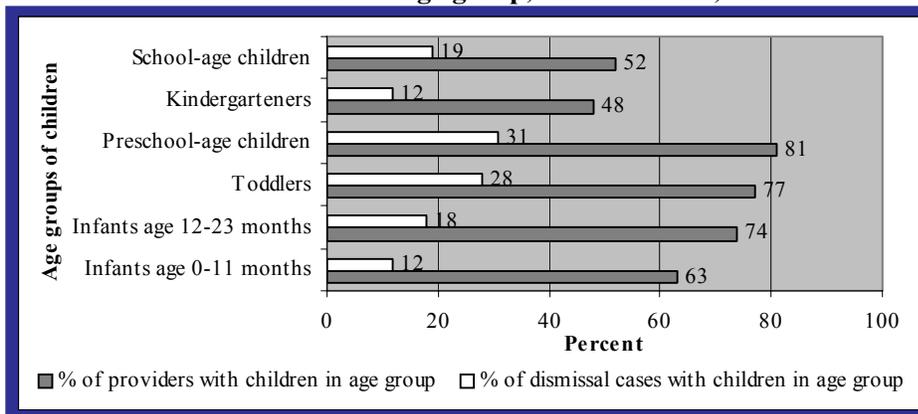
One in five providers who responded to the survey indicated they had dismissal cases in the "last year" (20%); 14% had cases the "previous year." Half the providers reporting dismissal cases had more than one dismissal case. Providers gave information for a total of 244 dismissal cases. Some cases involved multiple children and multiple age groups.

Preschool-age children were the most commonly dismissed (31% of dismissal cases), followed by toddlers (28% of cases), school-age children (19% of cases), and infants 12 to 23 months (18% of cases). Infants 0 to 11 months and kindergarteners were the least commonly dismissed (12% of cases each) (see Figure 1). Having infants (0 to 23 months) or preschoolers in the child care setting made a dismissal of a child (of any age) more likely.

Behavior problems are the most common reason that providers cited for dismissing a child (51% of cases). Behavior problems in preschool are "meaningful predictors of continued behavior problems, poor peer standing, and academic difficulties during Kindergarten."² Other reasons that providers cited for dismissing a child included:

- Inability of parent/guardian(s) to pay for child care (31% of cases).
- Safety of other children (26% of cases).
- Other reasons, such as parental behavior or issues with hours (29% of cases).

Figure 1. Percent of providers with children in age group and percent of dismissal cases with children in age group, North Dakota, 2007



Sources: 1 "Prekindergarteners Left Behind." www.fcd-us.org/usr_doc/ExpulsionPolicyBrief.pdf; 2 "Implementing Policies to Reduce the Likelihood of Preschool Expulsion." www.fcd-us.org/resources/resources_show.htm?doc_id=636702

Examples of reasons children are dismissed from child care

“I don’t know if I would have had the time this child needed. I am by myself and it isn’t fair for the other children when I had no time or energy for them. I don’t think it is realistic in a group-home center for one person to be able to deal with a very problematic child. I think I really helped his parents to realize how serious the problem was and then they sought professional help.” -Provider comment

Behavior problems of the child

- “This child cried continuously throughout the day.”
- “Behavior got out of control and was too disruptive to other children.”
- “He tried getting outside several times a day.”
- “Child was constantly wetting pants.”
- “Excessive crying, biting and other behavior.”

Issues with hours, payments

- “Parent’s hours at work no longer fit with day care hours of service.”
- “Parent said the children would be full-time, but treated us like a drop-off day care without notice.”
- “Always were late with payments.”

Issues with parents

- “Parent’s behavior was threatening and defensive.”
- “Parents would not allow child to be evaluated.”
- “Parents were unwilling to follow through with advice given to them on discipline and biting issues.”
- “Parents would not follow illness guidelines.”

Not enough resources/child had special needs

- “Unable to provide the specialized one-on-one care child needed as well as taking care of other children.”
- “He had [an] attachment disorder and I was not informed about it.”

Child Care Dismissals, continued

Dismissals for *behavior-related problems* were less common among infants and toddlers, and more common among school-age children and among child care settings with 20 or more children as well as 1 to 9 children. Dismissals for *issues of payment* were more common among toddlers and less common among school-age children and children living with both parents. Dismissals due to the *safety of other children* were uncommon among infants, and more common among school-age children, among child care settings with 20 or more children, and in settings with types of licensure other than family or group.

In 14% of child behavior-related dismissal cases, providers were aware of the behavior problem when the child enrolled. When behavior became a problem, actions the providers took included observing and documenting behavior (62% of cases), providing parents with outside resources to assist (33% of cases), and providing the family other resources to contact for placement (37% of cases). In a vast majority of cases (89%), providers had at least one meeting with the parents prior to the dismissal. A time limit was given for the dismissal in 64% of cases, while the dismissal was immediate in 30% of cases.

A professional conducted a formal assessment of the child in 15% of the dismissal cases (results included ADHD, Asperger’s Syndrome, and hearing impairment). Recommendations were given to the parent based on the child’s assessment in 24% of cases. However, providers perceived that parents showed little follow-through on recommendations to prevent dismissal.

Providers were asked what resources would be helpful in order to retain a child in danger of dismissal; 42% indicated printed materials, 21% said information on regulatory policies regarding care of children with special needs, 12% said one-on-one consultation, and 10% said phone consultation with specialists. Comments regarding resources to assist providers include:

Providing training

- “Techniques to use, ideas and activities.”
- “In home observation and guidance when we need help.”

Providing access to advice from a health professional

- “Additional information on Asperger’s Syndrome.”
- “Someone to help staff with child’s anger management.”

Offering government help/input

- “More cooperation from County Social Services.”
- “State required documentation to help support illness guidelines.”

Providing counseling

- “Counselor to come in so I would know what triggers to avoid.”
- “Family counseling.”

Addressing staff ratio issues

- “Money to support extra staff for child with psychological needs.”
- “One-on-one with child.”

Addressing payment issues

- “Payment on time in full.”
- “Guarantee that if we get families on day care assistance we’ll get paid.”

Promoting parent education, training, involvement

- “Cooperation of parents on suggestions to modify behavior.”
- “Information and resources to give to families.”

Insisting on prior knowledge of problems, honesty from parents

- “Knowing about his issues before he came.”
- “Parents being honest when filling out the informational forms.”

“What an excellent survey, I hope it helps children. Without something like this to get a better insight, these children would have no ‘voice.’”
-Provider comment