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Advice from Early Childhood Educators: How to Speak with Parents about Discipline

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Abstract: This capstone project explores how early childhood educators practice and understand discipline and how these approaches intersect or conflict with parenting styles. Discipline is a highly-debated topic that research has not provided many definitive answers on. For example, there are still nineteen states that allow corporal punishment in public schools, with more than 160,000 children subject to corporal punishment each year (Gershoff & Font, 2016). Some physical punishment, such as spanking children, is not considered child abuse in most states and is instead considered “reasonable parental discipline” (Howard, 2018). However, there is substantial literature that has shown the negative impacts spanking has on children throughout their lives and has argued for spanking to be considered an “adverse childhood event” or ACE (Afifi et al., 2017). The disagreement about what type of physical punishment counts as abuse is just one subsection of the controversy around the discipline of children and demonstrates how both parents and educators have widely varying ideas about discipline. This capstone addresses how early childhood educators address parents’ differing discipline practices. Interviews with five early childhood educators who have been in the field for an average of 17 years provide not only advice for educators on how to bring up these conversations with parents, but also suggestions for schools on how to better support educators.

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Introduction

Over the summer, I worked with 2-year-old students at a preschool in Philadelphia. One day, a new student was getting out of her seat during lunch and walking around while eating. The teachers told her she needed to sit down while she ate because it was causing other students to get up as well. When she wouldn't sit down, the teachers took the food from her hand and told her she needed to sit down if she wanted to eat it. This seemed to confuse her, and she cried and refused to eat her lunch while sitting down. Later that day, at pick-up, the teachers spoke to her parents to understand why she wouldn't sit to eat her food at lunchtime. The parents reported that they allow her to eat her meals and snacks anywhere in the house, whether she's sitting or standing. The teachers explained that while that can work at home, in the classroom they could not have twelve two-year-olds walking around eating their food. Although this is just one small example, it highlighted for me the key role educators have in using discipline to teach children how to get along in a social environment. Preschool is often the first time children are required to interact with other children and a thoughtful approach to discipline can establish a foundation for how they act in social environments throughout their lives.

This experience also made me wonder how often these types of things come up in the classroom and led me to question how parenting styles around discipline impact the jobs of early childhood educators. I also became curious about how early childhood educators think about and approach this potential challenge. Educators have the unique opportunity to see children in a social environment, which gives them insight into how discipline can help the child learn self-regulation and how to interact in a positive way with their peers. I interviewed teachers to better understand how they approach discipline and how they communicate with parents around this topic.

To begin this research, I would need to first get a better sense of what discipline—especially with young children—even is. I wanted to focus on the way that discipline can be a learning tool that helps children understand how to interact with their peers. Young children are just beginning to learn how to interact with others, and discipline is a vital part of this learning. Children are constantly pushing boundaries to understand what is allowed and what is not. In this capstone, I define discipline as a way of teaching and enforcing boundaries for children—whether they are boundaries in the classroom for safety or their peers’ boundaries about how they want to play (Nieman et al., 2004). This definition of discipline includes both positive and negative reinforcement. Going into this research, I expected to find that the teachers I interviewed had not been explicitly taught about how to handle situations surrounding discipline disagreements with parents. Based on my own experience, I assumed that teachers are not taught how to have these conversations with parents and expected that teachers would feel positively about teacher education that could help with this topic. Learning about strategies educators have developed through years of experience produced a thoughtful discussion based on important concepts surrounding the topics of discipline and parent-teacher relationships.

Key Terms

1. **Discipline:** *The use of positive or negative reinforcement that alters behavior in order to teach boundaries, independence, and self-regulation.*
2. **Punishment:** *The use of consequences for actions that break community norms. This can include but is not limited to timeouts, carrying out threats, and even corporal punishment.*
3. **Positive Reinforcement:** *Praising and/or rewarding behavior that follows community norms.*

4. **Negative Reinforcement:** *Correcting behavior that goes against community norms. This can include the use of words explaining why the behavior is unacceptable but can also include punishment.*

Research Questions

1. *What are early childhood educators' classroom goals and how do they understand and practice discipline in the classroom?*
2. *What strategies do early childhood educators use to discuss the matter of student discipline with parents?*
3. *Where do teachers learn how to address conversations around discipline with parents?*

Scope and Limitations

My capstone contains an extensive literature review on the topic of student discipline and parent-teacher relationships. Interviews with educators gave insight into how early childhood educators are approaching this topic. The interviews also provide some recommendations and advice to early childhood educators and care centers about how to approach discipline and parent-teacher relationships. The interviews also produced useful insights and information about teacher experience. However, because I was able to interview only five educators, the results are not generalizable. Another limitation is that I only interviewed early childhood educators from Connecticut and Pennsylvania, which is not representative of the larger landscape of early childhood education in the US. Also, both Pennsylvania and Connecticut prohibit the use of corporal punishment in schools which also likely shaped the teachers' beliefs about discipline.

Methodology

First, I conducted an extensive literature review that distills the difference between discipline and punishment with young children. I looked at parent-teacher relationships to

understand what current scholarship says about how these relationships are formed and why they are important. I also investigated the impact that a lack of boundaries and discipline has on children, along with the dangers of discipline practices that are highly punitive. One important aspect of this literature is how culture and class shape what discipline practices are used by both parents and teachers. I looked at research about what the theoretical role of early childhood educators is and what types of practices are deemed essential for the goals of quality early childhood education. Specifically, I focused on literature regarding the role of boundaries, consistency, and positive reinforcement. The literature review encompasses studies that have shown what forms of classroom discipline are determined to be “best practices.” Finally, the literature review provides an overview of the discipline practices of parents and how that may intersect with classroom discipline.

Next, I interviewed five early childhood educators about how they view and practice discipline in their classrooms. Each interview was conducted over Zoom and recorded. This allowed me to transcribe the interviews and record the detailed responses early childhood educators provided. These interviews helped me get a sense of how early childhood educators develop and learn about the concept of discipline and classroom management. These interviews also revealed what these early childhood educators’ perceptions were of parental discipline practices. These interviews give insight into whether early childhood educators feel that differences in parental discipline impact their role as educators. To help answer this, I asked early childhood educators about times when they have encountered families that use different discipline practices and how they navigated the situation. This allowed me to collect strategies that early childhood educators can use to address these topics with parents. The interviews also allowed early childhood educators to express their views on appropriate support for their

education about classroom discipline and navigating conversations with parents about discipline. Understanding what support early childhood educators need around conversations about discipline with parents helped me determine recommendations for best practices for care centers. I interviewed teachers who have an average of over 17 years in the field because they have more experience working with students and parents. The interview script encompasses these questions and includes a hypothetical scenario to gather a broad understanding of how different teachers would approach a particular situation. The interview script can be found in the Appendix.

Understanding teachers' perspectives is vital when researching this topic, because so much of educators' knowledge comes from their experience. Pairing this with in-depth research on discipline and punishment with young children allowed me to suggest some recommendations. The first section of recommendations consists of tips from early childhood educators about how to approach having conversations with parents about discipline. The second section focuses on ways that schools can better support early childhood educators in their own education around classroom discipline. I hope that these recommendations can improve early childhood educators' confidence when talking about discipline with parents and when practicing it in their classrooms.

Background Research

In this section, I summarize what contributes to quality early childhood care and look at what discipline looks like in these quality care settings. Best practices for early childhood care guide what type of discipline is used in the classroom, so it is important to understand what the research says is best for children. This section also covers the lack of accessibility to quality early childhood care, and looks at the way that culture and class can shape disciplinary practices among both teachers and parents.

I. Quality Early Childhood Care

There are differing views on the central purpose of early childhood education. While some people want children to focus on hard skills like the alphabet or numbers, others want them to concentrate on socialization (Katz, 1999). Most research points towards the importance of learning moral reasoning and how to interact in groups at this age (Arbery & Zajac, 1996). Recently there has also been a shift away from focusing on the memorization of numbers and letters and more focus on children experiencing nature and engaging in their communities (Barrable, 2019). Regardless of the goal an individual teacher or parent has for their children, discipline is the way adults seek to reach these goals.

Being able to meet children where they are developmentally is a vital skill for early childhood educators. Many students are at very different levels in the classroom for various reasons, which means that a quality early childhood center must be able to teach kids with varying levels of ability. A 2006 article describes the way teachers co-taught an early childhood class with one special education instructor and one non-special education teacher (Chiasson et al., 2006). They found that meeting all children at each child's own level benefitted all students in the classroom (Chiasson et al., 2006). This approach also highlights the importance of positive interactions between early childhood educators and students.

To help students understand how to interact in a group better they need to be given clear and consistent boundaries to help them regulate their emotions and behaviors (Garrity et al., 2017). When children understand what the rules are, they can begin to start understanding why the rules exist. When positive reinforcement is used to teach children what the boundaries are, there are more positive outcomes (Sigler & Aamidor, 2005). Students tend to behave in ways that allow them to receive praise from people they trust and care about. When teachers put in the

effort to form loving relationships with their students, the students care more about listening and learning from their teachers. Daniel Gartrell writes about how building these relationships and encouraging self-regulation must be a part of quality early childcare education (Gartrell, 2003). Robert Coles writes in *The Moral Intelligence of Children* about the importance of having consistent boundaries set for children in early childcare. He argues that children need adults to model communication and fairness to help develop children's morals and ethical reasoning (Coles, 1997). This research shows how maintaining consistent boundaries with children helps them learn self-regulation and how to interact in social settings.

II. Discipline in Quality Early Childhood Care

Coles explains how guiding children in understanding morals and right and wrong is a vital aspect of early childhood education (Coles, 1997). Thinking of discipline as a way of setting boundaries pairs nicely with this idea because setting out boundaries and engaging with children about the *why* of the boundaries will help them develop moral intelligence. An example of how this education of moral intelligence can be taught through discipline would be when a child steps on a book. An educator should tell them not to do this, but what happens immediately after is where moral intelligence can be fostered or forgotten. If a teacher just says, "no we don't step on our books," a child will likely listen, but without an explanation, they won't be able to understand why that is wrong. Instead, a teacher could say, "oh no! We can't step on our books because it might hurt them. We want to take good care of our books so that all our friends can use them." Next, a teacher could ask the child, "what could happen if we step on our books?" A child would likely reply something along the lines of the pages could rip, etc. This discipline is setting a clear boundary that books cannot be stepped on, but also fostering moral development with the child who is critically thinking about why they should not step on books. Gartrell pushes

for a similar form of discipline which he calls guidance rather than punishment. In “Instead of Discipline, Use Guidance,” he writes that explaining to children the situation and asking them questions about conflicts helps children not only better understand the situation at hand, but also gives them the skills to navigate future conflicts with classmates. He emphasizes how guidance provides children with the tools to navigate situations independently (Gartrell, 2021).

Discipline is something that impacts people at every age and stage of life. Whether it is from family, friends, work, or the government, discipline is constantly being used to alter people’s behavior. While discipline is important to study at every age, it is particularly important for young children because it is the first time they are understanding how to interact with their peers. How children respect and understand boundaries is informed by how they experience discipline during their childhood (Nieman et al., 2004). Discipline for young children shapes the way they view discipline in the future, and begins to define an individual child’s morals (Carrie, 2017). Discipline is necessary to socialize children and help them understand how to work in a group and handle conflict with their peers. Basic things that most adults don’t think much about, like allowing a person to finish speaking before speaking themselves, are social norms children learn about through discipline. These social norms are important for children to learn to be able to relate and speak with their peers as they continue to learn and develop.

Discipline is often misunderstood as punishment for wrong behavior, but it also includes enforcing positive behaviors. When viewed through positive and negative reinforcement, it can be more simply seen as the way that children learn how to interact with each other and follow societal norms. People use negative reinforcement all the time without even realizing it. For example, if a friend is constantly late or cancels plans last minute, you may stop making plans with them. This is a very simple example of negative reinforcement: a person behaves in a way

you do not like, and you respond by limiting the time you spend with that person. While sometimes negative reinforcement is necessary in the early childhood classroom—for example, if a child is doing something unsafe, they need to be told they cannot continue—it is often more helpful to use positive reinforcement or redirection (Reinschluessel & Mandryk, 2016).

A common strategy used by early childhood educators to avoid negative reinforcement is to praise children who are following the classroom norms. For example, if some students are sitting on the rug and others are not, a teacher may point out the students sitting on the rug and praise them for their behavior, saying something like, “Wow! I love how my friends on the carpet are sitting so nicely and have their listening ears on.” A different teacher who prefers using negative reinforcement may instead direct their attention to the students not sitting on the rug and tell them they need to sit on the rug.

Positive reinforcement can also be used to teach children about what choices might be unsafe, like stepping on toys. Using this example, an adult could positively reinforce the child/ren who are playing gently with the toys saying, “I love how [name] is playing so gently with our toys and making sure to take good care of them!” This allows the adults to discipline the children with positive reinforcement by encouraging the children who are stepping on the toys to be more careful with their toys.

One differentiation I would like to highlight is the use of punishment as a form of negative reinforcement. In both of the examples above, students are not being punished for their actions or inactions. They are being disciplined by either being told to sit down or seeing their peers praised for their behavior. If a teacher decided to use punishment instead (i.e., giving a consequence to each child who was not sitting on the rug), this could include a timeout, losing privileges like recess, or even corporal punishment. Although punishment is included in negative

reinforcement, I want to make it clear that all negative reinforcement is not necessarily punishment.

My capstone project seeks to understand what different forms of discipline exist, what teachers think are the most effective strategies, and how teachers communicate in a sensitive and non-judgmental way to parents about how to have consistent, positive discipline. My definition of discipline for this capstone focuses on this aspect of self-regulation and growth: *Discipline is the setting of boundaries that promote social-emotional learning and help children develop their moral reasoning; This is only possible when there is a trusting and loving relationship built on mutual respect between the child and the adult.* Discipline that is clear and consistent helps children to understand how to work in a group and gain necessary skills like self-control, emotional regulation, and trust. When children see discipline modeled consistently, they are able to better internalize strategies they can use to navigate conflict with their peers.

III. Accessibility of Early Childhood Education and Racially Biased Discipline

Early childhood education is largely inaccessible to many families in America due to the high cost of care and the lack of childcare centers in poorer communities (Gordon & Chase-Landsdale, 2001). The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services found that working families spend 40% more on childcare costs than what is considered affordable (Malik, 2019). Because of the large inaccessibility of early childhood care, students are not all granted the same educational opportunities. This is particularly damaging to disadvantaged students, because attending quality early childhood care has proven to promote child well-being (Harvard University, 2010). Even within these spaces, where children are receiving early childhood education, students are still not being afforded equal opportunities to learn. Russell Skiba argues that due to the racial disparities in disciplinary policies like suspensions and expulsions, racial

minorities are still not able to have the equal access to education that they were promised in the *Brown v. Board* decision (Skiba, 2015). Suspensions and expulsions in schools are generally associated with older children in middle and high school and often thought of as being caused by behavior that is extreme or unsafe in nature. However, preschoolers are suspended and expelled from school at three times the rate of students in kindergarten through 12th grade (Gilliam, 2005). Walter Gilliam has performed extensive research about push out of children from early childcare centers and found that Black boys are disproportionately suspended and expelled compared to their peers (Gilliam, 2005). The combination of inaccessibility of care and inequality within care stacks the odds against children who are part of racial minorities and come from poorer families.

IV. What are Some Causes of Differing Early Childhood Discipline Practices?

Psychologists have coined names for four different types of parenting styles: authoritarian, authoritative, uninvolved, and permissive. Authoritarian parenting is focused on punishment for behavior that is considered “bad” and relies heavily on punitive justice. Uninvolved parenting is when a parent does not nurture a relationship with their child and provides few rules or boundaries for the child. Permissive parenting is characterized by not enforcing any rules and allowing children to do whatever they please (Morin, 2022). Social media has blown up with information about parenting styles like “gentle parenting”, which some have misconstrued to mean that children should never be told no. An article on a Montessori learning website addresses this common misconception that gentle parenting is “boundary free” and explains the importance of boundaries with children. (Oliver, 2020) Three of the teachers that I interviewed brought up the issue of overly permissive parents, stating that it can be more difficult to set boundaries with these children. Authoritative parenting, which is what the

American Academy of Pediatrics recommends, involves enforcing rules while also focusing on having a positive relationship with one's child. Of course, parenting unfortunately can also include maltreatment or abuse. Studies show that when parents are exposed to violence during their childhood, it leads to higher rates of them maltreating their own (Dixon et al., 2005). A study from the publication *Child Maltreatment* investigated what factors increase the likelihood of parents maltreating their children (Valentino et al., 2012). They found that 78.1% of 18-year-olds who reported abuse had mothers who also reported abuse from their childhood (Valentino et al., 2012).

Literature Review

My literature review explores research pertaining to early childhood discipline and specifically parent-teacher relationships. This review looks at the dangers of highly punitive disciplinary practices, as well as the issues with excessive lack of disciplinary practices. It looks at the way these practices may differ at school and at home, and how this may impact children who experience varying levels of discipline. Within this line of research, I look at relationships between parents and teachers in early childhood education. Learning about the role of this relationship in discipline will help to place my interviews in the context of broader literature.

I. Discipline in Early Childhood

Discipline is often confused with harsh practices like corporal punishment. I believe that effective discipline requires trust and care between educators and children, which cannot be present with corporal punishment. As Katherine Read explains, in *The Nursery School, Human Relationships and Learning*, the relationship between parents and educators is vital to creating a positive environment to support children's learning, and trusting relationships among parents, educators, and children are essential for effective discipline (Read, 1976). She argues that the

goal of discipline should not be to punish behavior, but instead to understand behavior and to encourage children to move towards self-discipline. While working at The Friends Center in New Haven, I have seen firsthand how effective discipline can lead to children learning how to self-regulate emotions. In the classroom, when children are having really big emotions, we encourage them to take space for themselves in the cozy box—a space with many pillows away from the main play areas in the classroom. After practicing this many times, I have seen children become upset by something (e.g. their tower toppled over) and, without any instruction or encouragement, they go to the cozy box to take space for themselves. This serves as an example of the effectiveness of Read’s strategy regarding discipline.

II. Highly Punitive and Neglectful Disciplinary Practices

Lawrence Wissow’s article “Ethnicity, Income, and Parenting Contexts of Physical Punishment in a National Sample of Families with Young Children” from 2001 showed that 60% of parents use what is labeled “ordinary” physical punishment when disciplining their children (Wissow, 2001). “Ordinary” physical punishment encompasses spanking, shaking, and slapping with one’s hand. This study found that 16% of parents yelled at their infants (children under the age of one), while 63% yelled at their toddlers (2-3 year olds) (Wissow, 2001). Whether or not yelling is considered emotional abuse depends on the context, because parents all have different definitions of what it is to yell at their children. Wissow’s study also found that 11% of parents spanked their infants and 67% of parents spanked their toddlers (Wissow, 2001). Spanking, unlike other forms of physical punishment, is not legally considered child abuse (Pirius, 2023). They investigated which parents were more prone to use physical abuse and found some non-linear results. They found that 66% of parents who made \$20,000-\$30,000 in annual income along with 63% of parents who held a high school diploma or GED spanked their children.

These results were particularly interesting, because both were significantly higher than any income group or education level lower or higher than theirs. The researchers also found a slight positive relationship between parents who were physically or sexually abused and whether they spanked their children. Ethnic differences also resulted in varying rates of spanking. The study found that 67% of African American parents, 57% of white parents, 47% of Hispanic parents, and 41% of Asian parents spanked their children. While this research is twenty years old, it is helpful to gain an understanding of what types of practices were commonly practiced around the time when corporal punishment was beginning to be banned (Gershoff & Font, 2016). Also, with spanking and physical punishment generally being more frowned upon today, it would be hard to know whether parents were being truthful about the way they currently practice physical discipline with their children.

Children who undergo physical punishment and abuse are more likely to develop a condition called toxic stress (Bucci et al., 2016). Toxic stress is a condition that children can develop when they are exposed to adverse childhood events (Bucci et al., 2016). These events can include abuse from harsh punishments but can also be caused by neglect. Neglect can be seen as the opposite of highly punitive discipline. Children who are neglected do not receive any information about what boundaries there are and are less able to develop an understanding of how to interact with others (Howard, 2018). Both of these extremes of discipline—one focused on punishment and severe negative reinforcement, and the other lacking any teaching about boundaries—can cause serious stress to children and impact their life negatively well into adulthood (Bucci et al., 2016).

III. Parent-Teacher Relationship in Early Childhood Education

Studies have shown that positive relationships between parents and teachers help students grow and learn in school (Minke et al., 2014). One study found that when parents have a positive relationship with their child's teacher, the teacher is also more likely to have a more positive relationship with their child (Chung et al., 2005). Building trust between parents and teachers can be difficult, and studies have found some variables that tend to alter the level of trust a parent has in their child's teachers. A 2016 study focused on elementary school found that students who are eligible for free or reduced-price lunches had parents who had significantly decreased levels of trust in their children's teachers (Santiago et al., 2016). This suggests that families who have a lower socioeconomic status may be less likely to trust their teachers. To address this issue, teachers employ all sorts of strategies to help build trust with families. Communication between parents and teachers plays a vital role in the forming of a strong and trusting relationship (Vickers & Minke, 1995). Studies warn teachers against using the same strategies for all parents, explaining the importance of changing the communication and relationship for different parents (Crozier, 1999). Debra Miretzky's 2004 study showed how these parent-teacher relationships impact more than just the children. She found that both parents and teachers can play a role in creating a democratic community in their school by having more discussions about the school's community (Miretzky, 2004). It is evident that the relationship between parents and teachers can impact the way a child experiences their education. Katherine Read argues in her book *The Nursery School, Human Relationships and Learning* that the relationship between parents, teachers, and children is key to quality childcare. What is missing from the literature is concrete strategies for teachers to navigate these relationships with parents from different cultural and

economic backgrounds who may hold different beliefs, which is the information my capstone hopes to provide.

IV. Class, Culture, and Race

Differences in discipline and punishment among class, culture, and race influence not only teachers' practices, but also parents'. Vonnie McLoyd's research examines the way that economic hardship influences parenting practices and points out that Black children are at a disproportionate risk of economic hardship (McLoyd, 1990). Pinderhuges et al. explains how this stress caused by economic hardship can lead to parents having an increased reliance on punitive parenting practices (Pinderhuges et al., 2000). Their study examined the practices of 585 different families in the mid-South, with 82% white families, 16% Black families, and 2% families of other races. They visited the families in their home for three-hour sessions which included observations and interviews with the parent(s). This study also supported one of the interviewed teacher's beliefs about people practicing the type of discipline that they experienced. They found that parents who believed in the effectiveness of corporal punishment were more likely to use it than parents who did not. Parents who were experiencing higher levels of stress were more likely to utilize harsh discipline, which the authors point out is also often less consistent. The other main factor they found that contributed to differing ideas of discipline was the goals parents had for their children. Researchers suggested that parents who value their children being able to adhere to authority over having autonomy may be more likely to use harsher discipline practices (Pinderhuges et al., 2000). Dixon et al.'s 2008 study showed that Black and Latine families valued respect and parental authority more than European-American families (Dixon et al., 2008). The data showed significant differences in values in parenting for different races.

Lisa Fontes' 2002 article addresses the way that culture can shape discipline practices (Fontes, 2002). She focuses on how Latine parents have been largely left out of research on cultural influences on parenting styles and practices. She explains how cultures define maltreatment differently, and some common practices in the U.S. would be considered abuse in other countries and vice versa. Her conclusion after reviewing the literature is that parents should be spoken to in a non-judgmental way that recognizes the way culture and race shape parenting practices.

This literature on class, culture, and race strongly suggests that teachers need to be aware and potentially educated on how to bring up these difficult and often sensitive topics with parents. Educators need to understand the way that class, culture, and race can shape discipline practices to ensure they are prepared to address these topics in a culturally appropriate and non-judgmental way.

This literature review has demonstrated the importance of discipline, and particularly consistent discipline, for young children. Existing literature has shown the impacts of various disciplinary practices, and how the parent-teacher relationship is connected to this, but it has not demonstrated how teachers in practice learn to address these conversations with parents. There are resources for teachers about forming relationships with parents and how to address discipline, but it is unclear how many teachers are actually taught these strategies. While large sweeping changes such as parenting and teacher training could help address this issue, I want to focus on more immediate, feasible solutions. Talking to teachers about what strategies they use to address the disconnect between discipline at home and at school provides vital information that can help other teachers navigate this issue.

Analysis of Interviews

When analyzing the interviews, I coded the data into three main themes:

1. Teachers' classroom goals and ideas of discipline
2. Teachers' strategies addressing parents' differing ideas on discipline
3. Where teachers learn discipline strategies

These categories helped me answer my research questions and gather the common themes teachers shared about discipline and relationships with parents. When analyzing the interviews, I gathered data from each interview into the three categories to ensure I was getting the most accurate information based on my data set. Each quote is marked with a number 1-5, which corresponds to which teacher shared the quote.

Interview Findings

1. Teachers' Classroom Goals and Ideas of Discipline

Teachers' answers varied, but generally focused on modeling communication and social emotional learning. Only one teacher did not include communication, with her only classroom goal being potty training the two-year olds in her class. Two teachers explicitly mentioned social emotional development, with one teacher sharing that they "think [social emotional development] is crucial before anything else..."(1) The other teacher elaborated that focusing on social emotional development teaches kids "how to be a good human being, and you know, take care of other people, and be strong in yourself." (5) Three of the teachers mentioned relationships with the children as the foundation for reaching their classroom goals. One teacher elaborated, "For me [it] starts with relationships...kids know if you like them and if you don't like them very quickly, and if you like them and respect them, then...you can teach them anything."(1) This teacher went on to share that social emotional skills that children learn in

preschool set the foundation for future learning. She explained how children “carry [social emotional skills] through with them the rest of their lives.” (1) A few teachers went on to explain how social emotional learning is only possible if communication skills are emphasized in the classroom. One teacher expressed how communication is vital for all children, “even if they can't use their words, like trying to, you know, help them and...be a voice for them.” (2) Modeling how to communicate was something three of the teachers brought up as an important teaching tool. Another teacher spoke about how increased communication abilities lead to “less, you know, grabbing toys from each other. They actually have the words to articulate what they're feeling. So yeah, a lot of big emotions. We do a lot of...emotional identification and just say, ‘oh...that seems frustrating. I would feel, you know, frustrated’ and just kind of giving them those words.” (4) Modeling communication also extended to the *way* kids communicate, with one teacher bringing up their classroom's focus on kindness. They explained how communicating in a kind way is something they are working on with their students. They explained how they model different ways to be kind so the kids understand what being kind actually means. Overall, most teachers agreed that recognizing and empathizing with children's feelings and modeling how to communicate their feelings was one of their main goals in the classroom.

One teacher explained her approach to discipline very matter-of-factly, stating that teachers and adults generally should not take children being upset and crying personally, because “...they're dysregulated. They have to figure out how to manage these big feelings and our job is to help them.”(5) Helping children learn how to understand and regulate their emotions was something every teacher brought up when explaining their ideas of classroom discipline. Another teacher discussed how she uses redirection as her main tool for emotional regulation. She

explained that her school does not allow timeouts, so offering a child water when they are upset about something is usually able to distract them from what they were upset about. Another teacher explained that having an “...understanding that at two, they're not trying to hurt someone... they're feeling frustrated...”(4) She explained that this understanding allows her to have more patience with the children, and helps her and fellow educators practice positive redirection.

Another teacher brought up the root causes of behavior as an important thing for teachers to think about. She explained that she thinks “...about the motivation behind behavior, [don't] just react, but try to explore why something is happening.”(5) This emphasis many of the teachers placed on having empathy and understanding for the children seemed to be at the root of their beliefs about classroom discipline. One teacher explained that she tries “not to follow people around nagging at them about things that don't matter so much.” She went on to share that she has “...three main rules. You take care of yourself, you take care of other people, and you take care of our stuff. And if you keep those, if you follow those three rules, then you're doing okay.” (5) These three simple rules were echoed by many of the other teachers, who also placed an emphasis on not being overbearing or nit-picky with their students because they are so young and are learning so much at such a quick rate.

When I asked one teacher about her ideas of classroom and behavior management, she immediately told me that to her, those are two different but related things. She went on to share that classroom management is something that is totally in her control. She shared the questions she asks herself to ensure she is setting the children up for success: “Do we have rules and routines in place? Do we have...a schedule? Are children aware of [the schedule]? Are they taught to know what's coming next? [Do they know] what the expectations are? Are they

invested? The classroom rules and routines...[are they] flexible? Do we have enough materials? Is the room situated and set up right? Is the furniture placed correctly? and on and on and on.”(1) She explained that “When you have all those things in place, it minimizes any negative behavior...I look at me first. Me being the teacher, our teaching staff, our teaching practices, and I make sure that I remove any barriers to any unwanted behaviors...”(1) Another teacher shared similar beliefs about how children do better when they are able to have consistency and a routine they are accustomed to. This teacher explained that children “...can't tell time, you know, they have no concept...They know by schedule what's gonna happen next. So that really gives them some sort of like sense of control.”(2)

Another teacher also emphasized the importance of choice and agency when practicing discipline in the classroom. She explained how children “...have control over two things: when and how much they eat and when they use the bathroom. They have everything else dictated to them. Come here, sit here, eat there, go over there, this and that.”(1) She explained that because of the general lack of agency and control children have, she tries to increase the number of choices children have when practicing discipline. A few teachers echoed this, sharing a common phrase used in their classroom as discipline is “let’s make a different choice.” Another teacher explained that while she thinks kids appreciate consistency in discipline, “...many kids can also learn that there are different rules in two different settings.”(5) While literature does suggest consistency is helpful (Garrity et al., 2017) (Coles, 1997), this teacher explained that while it is easier for kids if discipline is consistent, even children who experience very different discipline at home are still able to understand the expectations at school. She went on to agree with the other teachers that having consistency at school can help provide stable expectations that help children improve their social emotional development.

One teacher brought up the distinction between time outs and children taking time away from an area or activity. She explained how with time outs, “you can call it buttermilk, you can call it whatever you want, but what is it and what are you using it for?...can the child come out when they're ready to come out? I don't think there's anything wrong with...saying, you know what, why don't you sit down here until you can calm your body down...when you feel like you're ready, then you come and get me and we can go back to X, Y, and Z. As opposed to ‘go sit over there and I'll come and get you...’ [or] ‘you have to sit there for three minutes’ or whatever... It's a totally different experience for the child.”(1) This distinction between time out and taking time away was centered on the agency of the child. She explained how children are not being taught how to self-regulate if the teacher is telling them when they are ready to come back. Another teacher brought up this difference as well, sharing that, “...we don't necessarily believe in timeout, but sometimes depending on the behavior... it's good to just take a step away.” (4) She explained how helpful this time away can be, sharing that “...it just really helps to focus and...understand their cues and what they're needing as an individual.” Another teacher talked about how she believes time out was originally meant to be time away from positive reinforcement. She went on to explain that time out “...didn't mean punishment...it was a time to sort of reset. And I think that kids and grownups do sometimes need time to reset, but I don't think leaving kids alone with big feelings is a way to help them reset. I think they need somebody to be with them to help absorb some of their big feelings and to help them talk when they're calm enough to talk about what happened, to talk through what happened, and to think about new strategies.”(5) This framing of time away or taking a break showed that time away can have a very different impact on the child depending on the way it is handled by the teacher. This distinction between time away and time-out seemed important to every teacher, and each

teacher explained that time-outs with timers or teachers regulating how long the time out is, is not a discipline method that they utilize.

One teacher's idea of classroom discipline was very flexible and focused on how she as a teacher can help her students. She elaborated on one tool she uses to help avoid needing teacher intervention to have children follow the classroom rules and norms. She explained how each area in the classroom has a limit on how many students can be in the area. Instead of having the teachers step in every time there are too many students in an area, which can lead to big emotions from children who want to play there, she utilizes choice cards. Each area has a limited number of spaces for kids' choice cards, which helps encourage them to problem solve without the help of a teacher, which helps them develop independence. She gave an example of how this can work in the classroom,

“So when it's time to make choices and it's Maddie's turn to choose, I'm gonna hold that up and Maddie will say, ‘oh, I wanna go to dramatic play.’ But if there are already four friends there, Maddie's gonna take her choice card and see that all four spots are filled. Now I wait to see what Maddie's gonna do...sometimes they'll take somebody's name off and put theirs on, right? Sometimes they'll come back...and get upset and cry. Sometimes they'll just go in the area. But now you have that system in place where I can say, ‘Hey, Maddie, where's your choice card?’ And then you could say, ‘well, um, it's on the floor’ or ‘it's in my pocket,’ whatever. And then I'll ask questions. ‘Well, how many friends can be here? Well, how many friends were here when you got here?’ And you know, we can walk through that and talk through that. And even if they're upset and crying, cause that happens...but the bottom line was in a situation like that, if you have a system in place that children know how to use...then it minimizes that behavior because they may cry that first time, but after a while they're gonna know. And then I'll ask them, ‘well, what are you gonna do?’ ‘I gotta make another choice.’ ‘Yeah, you do. Well, what would you like to do?’ And then we can, you know, move on from there.”(1)

This approach focuses on children developing their independence and self-sufficiency, which the teacher explained helps to decrease the need for teacher intervention. One teacher spoke about the need for varying types of discipline depending on the child and depending on the day. They explained that sometimes a child may need a firmer voice one day but emphasized that regardless of the type of discipline you can never take the loving, nurturing part out. They also

explained that “...your practice will change and I think it should, depending on where the children are.”(1) Another teacher emphasized the importance of changing and adjusting discipline approaches with different children, explaining that, “...something that might work with one child hasn't worked with another...or you know...sometimes there's something else going on that you suspect that there might be... some kind of...sensory or...spectrum kind of disorder...you just wanna learn ways to best help a child. I mean, we're teaching to the individual.”(5) This teacher highlighted the way that children, regardless of their age, may be at different levels developmentally, so adjusting your discipline for each child is essential. Another teacher explained that as children get used to the classroom norms, discipline for each individual child often changes across different weeks or even days. Most of the teachers highlighted how vital it is for them to be able to adjust their practices based on what a child needs at that moment.

2. Teacher Strategies Addressing Parents’ Differing Ideas on Discipline

Teachers all agreed that the range of disciplinary practices used by the families in their programs varies widely. Teachers explained that some parents use spanking as a form of discipline, while others choose to never say “no” to their children. One teacher elaborated on the range of practices, sharing, “I've seen a lot of families use like reward systems..like when it's time to go and they don't wanna go be like, oh, we have cookies in the car...I've also seen the other side of the spectrum where it's like parents are on their level, like baring their teeth, like ‘get in the car right now...you're in trouble.’”(2) Teachers brought up an increasing prevalence of parents who are “...very lenient, which to me is almost as bad as being too, you know, rigid.”(1) Another teacher also explained how differences in discipline at home can also just depend on a child’s home situation. She explains, “...it doesn't necessarily just have to be the discipline policy in the home that's different. It could just be that the circumstances in the home

are different.”(3) This teacher gave the example of sharing at home and at school—explaining that children with no siblings do not need to share when they are at home. This brings up the important point that even if parents and teachers are on the same page about discipline, a child’s environment at home and school will be different which will lead to taking in different information.

One teacher spoke about how many lenient parents are only lenient because they don’t have the tools to discipline their child in a more effective way. She talked about how parents will “...just keep giving them things and trying to please them. And it prolongs the outburst...because, you know, maybe they wanted this puzzle that they couldn't play with right now. Now they're giving them this puzzle and they still are going. So they don't necessarily understand that it's about the emotion.”(3) She explained the importance of talking to parents about helping their child recognize their emotions and helping facilitate their emotional regulation. She went on to explain that when children have emotional outbursts or tantrums they are trying to communicate something, and adults should respond by recognizing this, and trying to help them understand what they are feeling. “...there are a lot of parents who are trying not to be the parents that their parents were...so sometimes they swing in a very opposite [direction]...especially if somebody was raised with a very strict discipline policy...they swing to be ultra gentle... without realizing that something in the middle, more authoritative, loving, but with limits, is going to be an easier parenting thing to hold onto as your child tests those limits.”(3) She went on to explain that sometimes parents who were raised with stricter discipline continue to practice that with their children because they don’t know a different form of discipline. She explained that with these parents, “...sometimes they want to be different, but

they're struggling...and when you're frustrated, sometimes [you do] the things you remember, the things that come to the top of your brain first.”(3)

Only one teacher—the only Black identifying educator I interviewed—brought up race when talking about differences in discipline practices. She explained how she has seen,

“...parents of color, do a lot of commands. Sit down, come here...whereas white parents do a lot of talking: ‘honey, would you like milk or juice?’ or ‘would you like this or that?’ and ‘what do you think?’ and things that we do in the classroom...as a parent, I know that you have to prepare your child at three or four years old to deal with the world as the world is gonna deal with them. So you kind of feel obligated to give them a little bit of a hard shell for the world that's going to come...So when you get out in the world, it's not a surprise. So I think, and that's just a very simplistic way of putting it, but I think that's why some people are so harsh with discipline. However, in recent years...we're all learning that we don't have to be that way with our children. We don't have to have that harsh discipline, that they have ideas, that they have thoughts, that they have feelings, and you can work with them and reason with them without resorting to that extreme...discipline. Because discipline means learning and teaching. It doesn't mean punishment.”(1)

This educator showed genuine empathy for parents who use different forms of discipline. She shared that she believed parents who maltreat their children or utilize punishment like spanking may do so because that is what they know. She shared that before she was an early childhood educator, she used spanking as a part of her discipline toolbox with her daughter. She went on to say that she would not do that today if she had another child, but she is able to understand why parents may turn to spanking or other practices when that is what they grew up with. She went on to explain that she uses that as a way to start conversations with parents about alternative styles of discipline. She explained that, “...one of the ways I educate parents is to use myself as an example. And I say, listen, I'm here all day with 16 kids, right? I don't spank them...How do you think we manage to get them to do what we need them to do?”(1) She shared that using herself as an example avoids the condescending feeling parents can often have with these types of conversations. She shared an example of how she helped educate a parent who was using yelling and spanking to discipline their child. She emphasized that once you have a positive and

trusting relationship with a parent, they are far more likely to be receptive to what you're saying. She talked to this parent saying: "Clearly the yelling at him is not working. Is he doing what you want him to do? No. Well that doesn't work. So, this is what we do at school. When he does that, this is what we do and it takes some time."(1) This approach of trying to help the parent manage behavior without saying what they were doing was wrong or bad, but merely pointing out that these other strategies might work better with their specific child was effective for this teacher. She explained that "...in the end, she was appreciative and expressed that to me..."(1) She also explained how these conversations are always ongoing because figuring out what works for a child is not something that will always continue to work. What works for a child one week may not work the next. She emphasized that having a strong and positive relationship with the families helps these conversations come up more naturally and also prevents any distrust or feelings that teachers are being condescending.

One teacher said that to have a positive relationship with families you really need to avoid judging parents and families. She explained that she finds herself doing it every once in a while, but shared that "I've learned over the years, when I start judging—and I've done it—the universe teaches me a lesson. 'See, you didn't know, so you shouldn't judge.'"(4) She explains that she really tries to focus on forming a relationship with parents and understand why they do things in different ways before ever giving her input. Three of the teachers felt that explaining to parents what discipline happens at school is the easiest way to bring up potential differences in discipline without being judgmental. One teacher shared, "...I tell them what exactly we do at school. So first I would ask them, 'do you see that behavior at home?'...if they say no, then I can only tell them what I see at school and what we do...telling them...the language that we use, so at home and at school, the child is hearing the same things."(2) Another teacher emphasized this

point, saying, “I think it's good to... just share how we kind of talk...[and] what strategies we use...”(4) Another teacher explained what she does when she encounters parents who are overly-lenient or unwilling to address their child’s behavior that is harming other students. She explained how in those situations, “I go back to policies... ‘Well, these are our classroom rules and this is how we enforce them and blah, blah, blah.’”(1) Another teacher explained that she uses administration to help back her up. She explained that if a parent was not respecting her or willing to work together, she goes to “the higher ups,”(2) meaning the site directors and administrators for help. Teachers were very consistent in their belief that parents understanding policies and discipline strategies that are used in the classroom is beneficial for the students. Another teacher talked about how useful she has found more frequent parent-teacher conferences. She explained that at drop-off and pick up many parents are in a rush and also that older children are starting to understand what adults are talking about. She explained how parents also seem to really appreciate having a longer sit-down conversation about what their child is working on and how they can help support them.

One teacher talked about the importance of “sandwiching” when having conversations with parents. What she meant by this was starting a conversation with parents about something positive the child has been doing, then discussing the challenging behavior, and ending with another positive thing the child has been practicing. She explained that she doesn’t bring up challenging behavior every day to parents because she doesn’t want them to feel overwhelmed. She explained that giving parents strategies about how to practice different skills like sharing at home can really help children in school. She also joked that these conversations usually go over better with the mom, so she tries to address problems with them before talking to a child’s dad. One teacher reflected, “...sometimes you can change their mind and sometimes you cannot. But

either way, you can provide that information to them that maybe this time you say it, it won't stick, but maybe the third or fourth time you approach the topic with them in a non-judgmental way...and considering cultural differences, maybe it'll stick that time.”(1) Two teachers brought up sharing resources with parents, such as informational pamphlets or websites that can be helpful. One teacher explained that sharing, “...some information...might help the parents get on board...”(3) Nearly all the teachers spoke about how families and teachers are a team or a partnership. With one teacher sharing how she uses this partnership to help with conversations with parents, “You know, we're working together and you know, we really need your support on this.”(5) It was clear that relationships with families along with having evidence to back up practices were helpful for teachers when having these conversations.

3. Where Teachers Learn Discipline Strategies

The main two routes teachers brought up for where they developed their discipline strategies were education and experience. Three of the teachers cited education as the foundation for good teaching, explaining that “You have to know about child development, what's appropriate, what's not appropriate, you know, what, what a three-year-old, four-year-old, two-year-old can do, and what should be expected of them.”(1) She explained that while so much is learned from experience and trial and error, “...you can't take that educational piece away. You know, if you don't know child development, if you don't know what's appropriate for children, then you really can't make informed decisions.”(1) Another teacher shared how she always tried to keep track of helpful resources that she receives from trainings and conferences to build up a stack of resources that she can pull from. One teacher explained the way she views education and experience working together to form her idea of discipline. She explained that “...taking classes in college is like getting the book smart of it, but actually like being inside a classroom is the

street smart, like the real stuff.”(2) This teacher expressed that because her center provides so much support and education she hasn’t really had to venture outside of her center to find education. Another teacher explained how discipline is one of the biggest things that teachers struggle with, and need more support on, citing that “conferences or workshops on dealing with kids with challenging behaviors, those are always well attended. Those are always full...” (5) It was clear from even the small interview pool that access to training and education varies for different centers. While some teachers felt very supported by their center’s educational opportunities, one teacher explained that almost all of her beliefs around discipline have been formed from learning through practice and from other teachers around her. She explained that while her school has an occasional training, the trainings have not really informed her educational practice.

One important finding from the interviews was that the teachers who cited education as important were also the ones who had more access to training and professional development through their educational centers. One teacher explained that “I learned it all from my center.”(2) She went on to say that her center not only provides training, but also they have a once a week team meeting where administration comes in to discuss issues in the classroom. She cited this collaboration as the main way she had formed her beliefs about discipline in the classroom. Another teacher shared a similar experience. She spoke about how the first center she worked at had a consultant who would come in once a week to observe anything in the class she felt wasn’t working well. She explained that this opportunity allowed her and her co-teachers to understand “...what...worked? What didn't work? What did I miss?...And so that I think was really helpful to sort of stop and break it down.”(5) She explained how this experience of getting consistent and specific feedback was the one thing that helped her the most in understanding what discipline

worked best for her classroom. Another teacher spoke about how having administration or consultants model discipline practices have really helped them in improving their confidence in their own discipline practices. These responses seem to show that providing teachers with training and consultants who can help with the situations they are dealing with in their classroom can have a large impact on their educational practice. It also shows that receiving specific feedback about different aspects of the classroom can really help teachers in forming their understanding of classroom discipline.

Interestingly, only one teacher brought up her own experience of discipline when she was growing up. She emphasized how your personal experiences with discipline influence the way you view and practice it in the classroom. She explained how it had directly influenced her classroom discipline: “I come from a household as a child where discipline was very strict and children were seen and not heard, and you know, you just didn't really get an opinion on what you were wearing, doing, saying...I remember how it felt not to have choices. So that also influences my practice.” (1) This reflection on how her experiences have influenced her practice is something she shared is a large part of her philosophy as a teacher. She talked about how important it is to constantly be reflecting and learning more about different forms of discipline.

Recommendations

Based on literature and interviews, these tips from teachers are things I recommend for teachers and care centers to consider incorporating into their practice.

Informal Advice

Some of the teachers offered useful ideas about resources they use to help them talk to parents about discipline. One teacher explained that acknowledging why certain behavior can be triggering for parents. She explained, “Parents don't want their kids to grow up to be biters,

hitters, cheaters, liars.”(1) She described how providing parents with digestible information based on research can help them understand that their child's behavior is normal, but also help them understand a developmentally appropriate way to address the behavior. She talked about how she had made one-page guides from Steffen Saifer’s book *Practical Solutions to Practically Every Problem, Third Edition: The Survival Guide for Early Childhood Professionals* and handed them out to parents (Saifer, 2016). She shared that it has been received well, and parents appreciate the informative and non-condescending nature of a short page about their child’s behavior. Another teacher talked about how she has shared links to different videos from Mr. Chaz, who is a Black male preschool teacher who often addresses the topic of discipline in his videos. She shared how this can be especially helpful when some centers’ discipline practices may be associated with how white women practice discipline. She went on to share how these videos are not only educational, but show that, “this is a technique that could work for anybody.”(4)

Recommendations for Schools to Better Support Educators

All of the teachers agreed that support and easy access to resources is vital to being able to be the best educator they can be. One teacher shared it is “...best if like teachers aren't having to like find all this stuff in their own and they can just like go to their administration”(2) Having an administration that can also help support with more specific needs in the classroom was something two educators specifically brought up as the most impactful way they have been able to grow as educators. The teachers interviewed who felt supported by their center cited it as a vital part of their education as a teacher, and teachers who did not feel as supported, cited ways that this support could help them.

One teacher suggested that some sort of parent observation could be really helpful for bridging the gap between discipline practices in school and at home. She talked about how if parents were able to see how a day in the preschool worked it could help parents understand how discipline is used throughout the day. The one issue with this that the teacher brought up was that often kids can act differently or have bigger emotions when parents are in school. Despite this issue, the point of parents really understanding what is happening at school and how teachers handle discipline was important. One teacher offered a suggestion for how to ensure parents and teachers are on the same page. She explained that before any child starts at their center, the director of her school does a home visit where they read over the school's policies, which includes the discipline policy. This seemed like a really helpful way to not only ensure parents are made aware of the school's policies, but also provide a time for parents to ask questions about the policies. Overall, all five interviewees agreed that having constant support from their center's administration was a key way for them to grow and become better educators. They also agreed that having this support allowed them to be more prepared for tricky conversations with parents.

Conclusion

This research demonstrates how important it is that early childhood educators are supported and given the resources to be able to address disagreements or conflicts with parents. Discipline is a highly controversial topic and it is necessary for teachers to be given the tools to not only conceptualize their own understanding of healthy discipline, but also how to speak with parents about it. Many of the teachers explained how important education both formally and on the job is in order to be a better educator. All of the teachers spoke about how much early childhood education continues to impact children throughout their life. They understand the

importance of their job but are also aware that most people and often even parents at their centers don't necessarily understand how vital early childhood education is. This study showed that even within this small pool of educators, they are not all being provided with adequate education on how to form these necessary relationships with parents and families.

Appendix

Below is the interview questions I used for the teacher interviews:

Introduce myself, briefly describe my personal stake in the project (going into the early childhood education field), reassure participants of confidentiality (review consent form), let them know that we can pause at any time if needed.

1. *Tell me about why you went into early childhood education*
 - a. *What's your favorite/least favorite part of your job*
 - b. *How would you describe some of the key things you are trying to teach as an early childhood educator?*
2. *How did you develop an understanding of classroom/behavior management strategies in the early childhood classroom?*
 - a. *Classes?*
 - b. *Professional development?*
 - c. *Advice from peers?*
 - d. *Can you describe an experience that made you rethink your classroom discipline practices?*
 - e. *What are the most challenging behaviors you're dealing with in your classroom right now?*
 - f. *Is there consensus or conflict around behavior management at your childcare center?*
3. *Tell me about the spectrum of disciplinary practices that you observe parents using with their children at home who attend your childcare center*

- a. *If the parents had a different type of strategy, why do you think that was the case?*
 - b. *Where would you characterize most of the parents at your childcare center falling?*
4. *Can you tell me about a time that you addressed this difference in opinion about discipline with parents?*
 - a. *Did you feel prepared/how did you prepare?*
 - b. *Did you feel supported by your administration?*
 - c. *How was it resolved?*
 - d. *Does your school offer any training for parents around student behavior?*
 - e. *What advice would you give to other teachers about how to work with parents successfully?*
5. *Scenario: Alex is hitting their friend Kai repeatedly when they are out playing. You and the other teachers have talked to Alex about healthy boundaries and keeping hands to themselves. Alex's parents have been fairly hands-off and are content to leave the teachers to deal with the situation. Can you walk me through how you would talk to the parents?*
 - a. *Language they were using*
 - b. *What resources are you drawing on?*
 - c. *Where would you look for support?*
6. *What kinds of resources and support do you think early childhood educators need in order to talk to parents successfully about discipline?*
 - a. *What continue to be the obstacles?*

7. *Is there anything else you'd like to add that I haven't asked you on this topic?*
8. *Demographic questions*
 1. *Number of years teaching*
 2. *Age you teach*
 3. *Gender identity/preferred pronouns*
 4. *racial/ethnic identity - how would you identify your race/ethnicity on a US census form?*

"Thank you so much for taking the time to interview with me," etc.

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