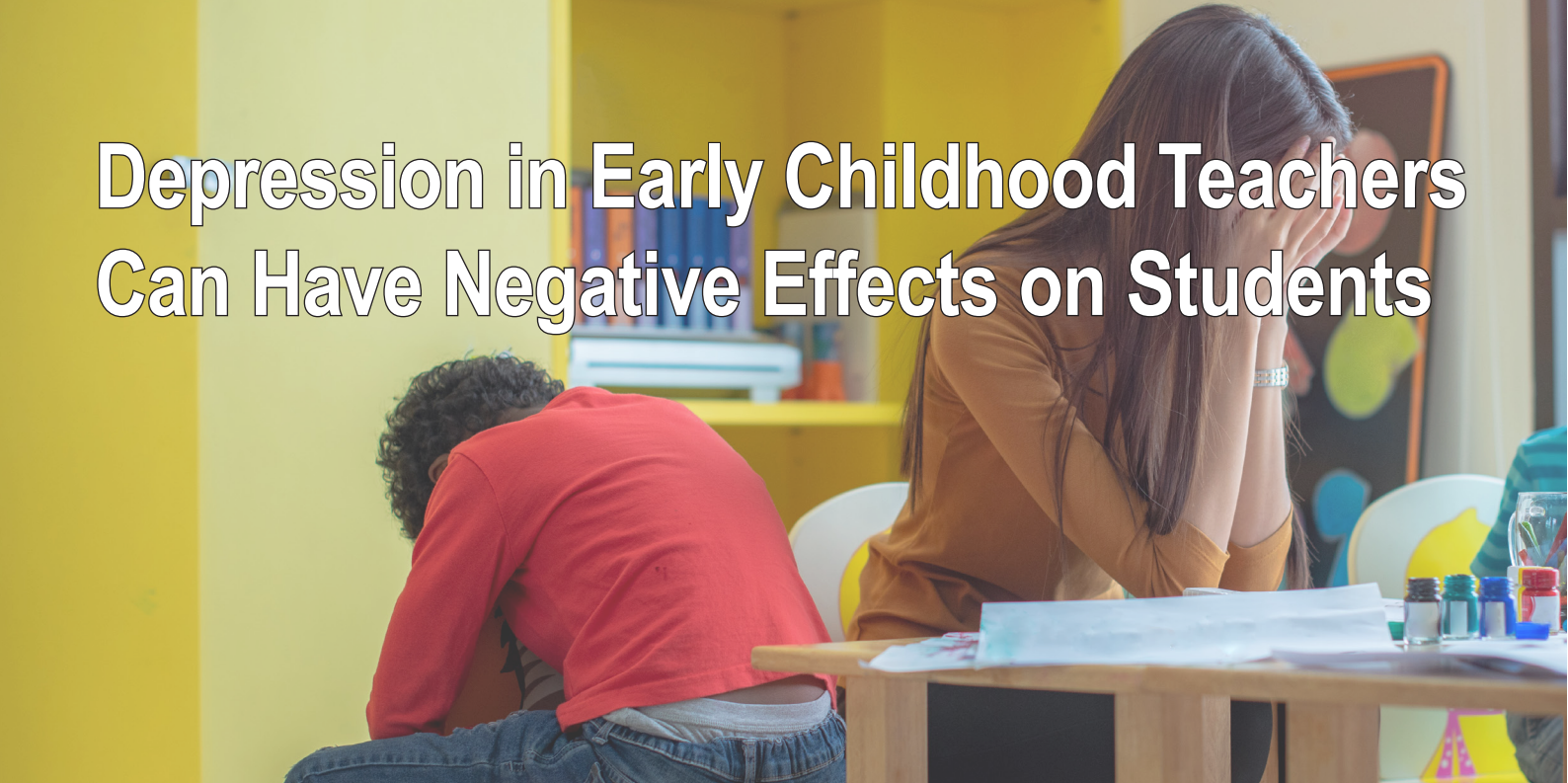


# Depression in Early Childhood Teachers Can Have Negative Effects on Students



Symptoms of depression in Early Head Start teachers could be negatively impacting the children in their care.

Working with young children can be physically and emotionally demanding and stressful – often with low pay – and teachers are often at risk of mental health issues, such as depression.

An estimated 20% of adults in the U.S. experience mental health complications each year with anxiety and depression ranked as the most common causes.

For early childhood teachers, studies have shown that as many as 36% self report having symptoms of depression that meet the clinical cutoff for depression. There is some evidence to show that symptoms of depression may be even more prevalent among teachers who serve children from low-income families in Early Head Start and Head Start programs.

When teachers in these classrooms experience depression, it is not without consequence. Children's early experiences have substantial implications for their development and the emotional exhaustion, stress, and lack of energy associated with depression can hinder a teacher's ability to serve as a positive role model and provide the warm, rich interactions needed for optimal development.

Research on teacher depressive symptoms in early childhood classrooms has focused on teachers of preschool-age children, with little consideration to date of implications for toddlers, especially those from low-in-

## Things to Consider

- Attend to teachers' psychological distress and provide support at the individual, program, and EHS initiative levels.
- Programs should use various support strategies and intervene with teachers' symptoms of depression.
- Online resources can offer a more private and cost-effective means to manage and improve classroom quality.

come families served by Early Head Start Programs.

Researchers with the Early Childhood Education Institute found that teachers experiencing higher levels of depressive symptoms tended to report that they have toddlers with more behavioral problems in the classroom.

Teachers with symptoms of depression can also create an unhealthy social-emotional climate. Children whose teacher experiences depression might learn from the teacher's negative mood and behavioral modeling, poor emotional regulation, and poor management of social problem solving that result from psychological distress.

Given their needs for intimacy and dependency on adults, toddlers and their behaviors are more likely to be impacted by teachers and their emotional capacity than older children.



This brief is taken from the journal article “The role of teachers’ depressive symptoms in classroom quality and child development outcomes in Early Head Start programs” by Kyong-Ah Kwon, Shinyoung Jeon, Lieny Jeon, Sherri Castle

To view the full article, go online to <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S1041608019300767?via%3Dihub>