



iSocial: Improving social-emotional outcomes of infants, toddlers, and young children with disabilities (birth to age 5) in New Hampshire.

Guidance to Support Your Program's Use of The Pyramid Model Preschool Classroom Kit

This guide was developed to support your program's use of the Pyramid Model Preschool Classroom Kit. The kit and accompanying book, [Unpacking the Pyramid Model](#), are intended to be the property of your program; its resources and materials will support your current and future teachers' implementation of Pyramid Model evidence-based practices which promote young children's social and emotional development. These resources will be particularly helpful with practice-based coaching and other professional development activities. Most of these resources (as well as many others) are also available for download and print from the [iSocial google site](#) and from the [National Center of Pyramid Model Innovation](#) website.

The Pyramid Model Preschool Classroom Kit includes resources and materials that are grouped into five "sub-kits": Tucker Turtle Kit, Problem Solver Kit, Super Friend Kit, Classroom Visual Kit and Emotional Literacy Kit. This guide addresses each sub-kit. It specifies the associated materials and the specific Pyramid Model teaching practices it addresses. There are also classroom examples offered and references to the [Unpacking the Pyramid Model](#) book for more information.

We know that the tools and resources included in this kit are just a few of the strategies that teachers use in their classrooms to promote children's social and emotional development. We encourage you to build on this kit by adding those you've developed to implement Pyramid Model teaching practices in your program.

The contents of this document were developed under a grant from the US Department of Education, H323A170029. However, those contents do not necessarily represent the policy of the US Department of Education, and you should not assume endorsement by the Federal Government. Project Officer, Sunyoung Ahn.

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Tucker Turtle Kit

Includes: Scripted Story, Poster [The Turtle Technique](#), Turtle Puppet

It is important to help children identify their feelings and teach them strategies to manage those feelings. Identifying a feeling (“name it to tame it”) allows the child to intentionally take the next step to choose an appropriate response. Giving a child the tools to manage their own emotions appropriately empowers the child and builds resilience.

| Teaching Practice <i>Inventory of Practices</i> | Classroom Example | <i>Unpacking the Pyramid Model</i> |
|--|--|---|
| Teaches that all emotions are okay, but not all expressions are okay | Teacher uses the Tucker the Turtle puppet to teach children how to “Think like a Turtle” | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Talk about Feelings Throughout the Day (page 133) ▪ Checklist of emotional literacy practices (Appendix 14.1, page 139) |
| Labels negative feelings paired with actions to regulate | At large group time teacher teaches the Turtle Technique and references the Tucker Turtle poster | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Talk about Positive and Negative Feelings (page 134) ▪ Checklist of emotional literacy practices (Appendix 14.1, page 139) |
| Helps children recognize cues of emotional escalation | Teacher reads the Tucker Turtle scripted story at circle time | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Teaching children how to recognize feelings in others (Table 14.3, page 135) |
| Helps children identify appropriate choices | Teacher helps a child walk through the 4 steps of the Turtle Technique: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Recognize that you feel upset 2. Stop, before you take an action 3. Go into your “shell” 4. Come out of your shell when you feel calm or ready | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Games and songs to teach emotion words (Table 14.1, page 133) |

Additional Resources:

[The Turtle Technique \(visual\)](#)

[Make-your-own Tucker the Turtle](#) cut out pattern

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Problem Solver Kit

Includes: [Problem Solving Scripted Story](#), [Problem Solving Steps Poster](#), [Problem Solving Steps Wrist Cards](#), [Large Solution Cards](#), Solution Kit Wrist Cards

The ability to navigate solving problems is a skill set that needs to be intentionally taught to children. Inevitably, problems will arise in the classroom whether those problems are peer conflict, overcoming obstacles, or finding new ways to do things. Problem solving can be broken down into four steps to teach children to: identify the problem, think of possible solutions to that problem, reflect on what would happen if each solution were tried, try one of the solutions. Children can be taught and given opportunities to solve problems throughout the day.

| Teaching Practice <i>Inventory of Practices</i> | Classroom Example | <i>Unpacking the Pyramid Model</i> |
|--|--|---|
| Creates opportunities for decision making, problem solving, and working together | Teacher uses the Problem-Solving Wrist Cards to prompt children working through the problem-solving process | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Using Real-Life Classroom Situations to Teach and Reflect (page 126) |
| Uses real-life situations to practice problem solving, beginning with defining the problem and emotions involved | Teacher refers to the Problem-Solving Steps Poster while supporting two children trying to resolve a conflict | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Explicit Instruction (page 122) ▪ Scenario cards (Figure 13.2, page 120) ▪ Support Children to Problem Solve in Naturally Occurring Situations (page 125) ▪ Using Real-Life Classroom Situations to Teach and Reflect (page 126) |
| Systematically teaches the problem-solving steps: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. What is my problem? b. What are some solutions? c. What would happen next? d. Try out the solution | Teacher uses visuals (such as the poster or wrist cards) while helping children solve problems | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Problem-Solving Steps, Problem-Solving Solutions (page 120) ▪ Problem-solving steps with examples (Table 13.1, page 120) |
| "Problematizes" situations throughout the day to allow children opportunities to generate solutions | Teacher carries the Solution Kit Wrist Cards around at free time to help children generate solutions to problems | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Using Real-Life Classroom Situations to Teach and Reflect (page 126) ▪ Modeling Problem Solving During Interactions with Adults and Children (page 126) |
| Takes time to support children through the problem-solving | Teacher uses the Problem-Solving Wrist Cards to support children during | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Planning for Individualization (page 127) |

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| process during heated moment | the problem-solving process | |
| Helps children identify appropriate choices | Teacher uses the Large Solution Cards during a group lesson on choosing solutions to problems | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Problem-Solving Solutions (page 120) ▪ Solution cards (Figure 13.1, page 121) |
| Helps children try solutions until the situation is appropriately resolved | Teacher holds up Solution Kit Wrist Cards to visually cue children talking through various solutions | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Support Children to Problem Solve in Naturally Occurring Situations (page 125) |

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Super Friend Kit

Includes: Scripted Story, Friendship Skills Poster, [Super Friend Awards](#), Super Friend Cape

Friendships are an overwhelmingly important component of learning throughout development. In order to help children build friendships with positive foundations it is imperative to teach children friendship skills. Friendship skills include sharing, taking turns, organizing play, being helpful, initiating, responding to initiations, giving compliments, and giving and accepting apology or acknowledgment of mistakes. By providing intentional learning tools, like a scripted story and props, we can help children learn how to embark on positive friendships.

| Teaching Practice Inventory of Practices | Classroom Example | <i>Unpacking the Pyramid Model</i> |
|---|---|---|
| Creates a classroom that is a place that children and families like to be (i.e., feel comfortable, welcome, and safe) | Teaching team uses Super Friend Awards to celebrate children’s success with friendship skills | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ A classroom Culture of Friendship (page 109) |
| Encourages peer partners/buddies (i.e., hold hands during transitions, play partner, clean-up buddy, etc.) | Teacher reviews the Friendship Skills Poster at large group time and encourages children to work together by picking a clean-up buddy | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Peer- Mediated Interventions, Cooperative Activities, Friendship Activities (page 112-113) |
| Gives general reminders to "play with your friends" | Teacher reads the Super Friend Scripted Story at circle to encourage children to play together | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Teaching Friendship skills (page 110) ▪ Friendship skills: Defined with examples and non-examples (Table 12.1, page 111) ▪ Friendship Activities (page 113) |
| Models phrases children can use to initiate and encourage interactions | Teacher models play initiation by stating, “Can I play too?” before joining a child’s play | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Modeling (page 111) |
| Teaches appropriate social skills through lessons and role-playing opportunities Incorporates cooperative games, lessons, stories, and activities that promote altruistic behavior into planning | Teacher puts on the Super Friend Cape and role-plays friendship skills with co-teacher | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Role Play (page 111) |
| Structures activities to encourage and teach sharing | Teacher refers children to the Friendship Skills Poster to encourage | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Embedded Friendship Opportunities Matrix (page 116) |

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| | sharing in the dramatic play area | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Sample embedded friendship opportunities matrix for Aidan (Table 12.2, page 116) |
| Structures activities to encourage and teach turn taking | Teacher refers children to the Friendship Skills Poster during a turn-taking game | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Embedded Friendship Opportunities Matrix (page 116) ▪ Sample embedded friendship opportunities matrix for Aidan (Table 12.2, page 116) |
| Structures activities to encourage and teach requesting and distributing items | Teacher reviews the Super Friend Scripted Story at large group and focuses discussion around requesting items from a peer | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Embedded Friendship Opportunities Matrix (page 116) ▪ Sample embedded friendship opportunities matrix for Aidan (Table 12.2, page 116) |
| Structures activities to encourage and teach working cooperatively | Teacher gives out Super Friend Awards to children who work together to build a large block tower | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Embedded Friendship Opportunities Matrix (page 116) ▪ Sample embedded friendship opportunities matrix for Aidan (Table 12.2, page 116) |

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The Classroom Visual Display Kit

Includes: Classroom Rules Poster, Positive Feedback Poster, [Providing Positive Feedback and Encouragement](#), 1stThen Board, Twelve (12) 1st Then Cards, [Visual Supports for Routines, Schedules, and Transitions](#), Classroom Expectations Poster, Ten (10) Daily Schedule Cards, Eight (8) Check-in Center Boards (8 areas) , Transition Helper Poster, Ten (10) Transition Cards w/ Ring Conversation Starters Poster, Twelve (12) Stop & Go Signs, Stop & Go Scenario Poster, Pyramid Model Poster

Teaching children routines, rules, and expectations are common practice in most preschool classrooms. When used regularly, children can develop a clear understanding of what is expected of them and what they can expect in their classroom. When visual supports are incorporated, they give children a reference and guide them choose how to behave.

| Teaching Practice <i>Inventory of Practices</i> | Classroom Example | <i>Unpacking the Pyramid Model</i> |
|--|--|--|
| Verbally interacts with individual children during routines and activities | Teacher refers to the Positive Feedback Poster to give children feedback many times a day. The specific feedback refers back to the Classroom Expectations Poster; “When you help your classmate pick up you are being a good friend” | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ What is Positive Descriptive Feedback and Why is it Important? (page 102) |
| Implements schedule consistently | Teacher uses Daily Schedule Cards to post on the wall at eye level to provide information on the sequence of daily activities | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Visual Schedules (page 56) ▪ Visual supports for arrival time (Figure 7.3, page 65) |
| Teaches children about the schedule | Teacher reviews all or part of the schedule with the class as appropriate and does so multiple times throughout the day | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Visual Schedules (page 56) ▪ Visual supports for arrival time (Figure 7.3, page 65) |
| Teaches children the expectations associated with transitions | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Teacher holds up a First /Then Board or Cards to provide visual support for children in transition. ▪ Teacher uses transition cards (with rings) to help children make successful transitions | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Visual Supports (page 54) ▪ Provide Individualized Transition Warnings (page 66) |
| Uses a variety of ways to teach the expectations of specific | Teacher uses Check-in Center Boards to help children choose centers. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Use Visuals (page 44) ▪ Visual Schedules (page 56) |

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| activities so that all children understand them | Teacher makes a “portable” visual schedule to use during activity time and/or for children to use as needed throughout the day | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Setting Up Small Groups (page 84) |
| Gives clear directions | Teacher posts a visual representation (pictures of directions) that is short, specific, and not cluttered and confusing | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Creating Visuals for Expectations and Rules (page 74) |
| Identifies appropriate classroom rules with children | Teacher posts a Classroom Expectation Poster of rules that are few in number (i.e., fewer than 6) and include a visual representation or drawing | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Creating Visuals for Expectations and Rules (page 74) |
| States rules positively and specifically avoids words “no” and “don’t” as much as possible | Teacher posts a Classroom Expectation Poster that always reflects positive actions | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Creating Visuals for Expectations and Rules (page 74) |
| Provides opportunities for children to practice classroom rules | Teacher refers to the positive visuals on the Classroom Expectations Poster and “practices” the skills needed to successfully follow the classroom expectations | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Creating Visuals for Expectations and Rules (page 74) |

Additional Resources:

[Providing Positive Feedback and Encouragement](#)

[Visual Supports for Routines, Schedules, and Transitions](#)

[Tips and Ideas for Making Visuals to Support Young Children with Challenging Behavior Classroom rules \(printable\)](#)

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Emotional Literacy Kit

Includes: [Feelings Wheel](#), Twenty-four (24) [Feelings cards](#), Four (4) Bingo Cards, [Relaxation Thermometer](#)

Children with strong emotional literacy skills are healthier, less lonely, less impulsive, more focused, and have greater academic achievement. Emotional literacy is the ability to identify, understand, and express emotions in healthy ways. Children are not born with the ability to understand emotions and learn these skills at different rates. Helping children learn emotional vocabulary is essential for developing emotional literacy skills.

| Teaching Practice <i>Inventory of Practices</i> | Classroom Example | <i>Unpacking the Pyramid Model</i> |
|--|---|--|
| Uses photographs, pictures, and posters that portray people in various emotional states | Emotions posters are hung around the classroom and in calm down areas | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Strategies to Foster Emotional Literacy (page 131) |
| Uses validation, acknowledgement, mirroring back, labeling feelings, voice tones, or gestures to show an understanding of children’s feelings | Teacher responds to a child by saying, “I think you are feeling mad. I would feel mad too if I worked so hard and my tower broke.” | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Strategies to Foster Emotional Literacy (page 131) |
| Assists children in recognizing and understanding how a classmate might be feeling by pointing out facial expressions, voice tone, body language, or words | Teacher shows a visual of the emotion and says, “Sarah is feeling excited, she is smiling and clapping her hands!” | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Teaching children how to recognize feelings in others (Table 14.3, page 135) |
| Teaches that all emotions are okay, but not all expressions are okay | Teacher talks about emotions at group time giving examples and non-examples of what children can do when they are feeling mad, sad, etc. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Teaching Children How to Manage Difficult Emotions (page 135) |
| Labels own emotional state and provides an action statement | Teacher says, “I am feeling frustrated, so I better take some deep breaths to calm down. “Smell the flower,” (breathe in), “blow the candle” (breathe out)” | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Talk About Feelings Throughout the Day (page 133) |
| Uses opportunities to comment on occasions when children state they are feeling upset or angry but are remaining calm | Teacher says, “It made you angry when those blocks wouldn’t fit together, but then you tried again, and you did it!” | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Teaching Children How to Manage Difficult Emotions (page 135) |
| Labels positive feelings | Teacher points to the picture and says, “I’m happy you all came to school today.” Or label how characters in stories are feeling | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Talk about Positive and Negative Feelings (page 134) |

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| Labels negative feelings paired with actions to regulate | Teacher shows the relaxation thermometer and says, “You are feeling frustrated, let’s take some deep breaths to help you feel better.” | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Talk about Positive and Negative Feelings (page 134) |
|--|--|--|

Additional Resources:

- [Feeling Wheel English-Spanish](#)
- [Feeling Faces: This is how I feel today! \(English-Spanish\)](#)
- [Feeling Faces Cards \(English-Blank\)](#)
- [Self-Regulation Skills: Relaxation Thermometer](#)
- [Feeling Faces Sign-In Chart](#)

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