NCPMI

The Pyramid Model for Promoting Social Emotional Competence in Infants and Young Children:

State-Wide Implementation in Early Care and Education Programs

Contents

ChallengingBehavior.org

Pyramid Model:
Implementing Evidence-Based Promotion, Prevention, and Intervention Practices in Early Care and Education Programs

Overview

The Pyramid Model for Promoting Social and Emotional Competence in Infants and Young Children (Fox et al., 2003; Hemmeter et al., 2021: Hemmeter, Ostrosky, & Fox, 2021) was developed to provide early educators with guidance on the promotion, prevention, and intervention practices that are needed to support young children's social-emotional development and intervene effectively with challenging behavior. In programs implementing the Pyramid Model, practitioners are offered ways to establish nurturing and responsive relationships with children and families; provide predictable and supportive environments; promote the development of social, emotional, and behavioral skills; and address challenging behavior through understanding the behavior and designing interventions that are positive and focused on teaching new skills. The implementation of the Pyramid Model is guided by a program-level leadership team that (a) establishes and maintains staff buy-in, (b) fosters family engagement, (c) establishes program-wide expectations related to social-emotional skills and behavior, (d) provides ongoing professional development and coaching for classroom fidelity of implementation of Pyramid Model practices, (e) establishes procedures for addressing challenging behavior using a team-based process, and (f) uses data for decision-making.

The Pyramid Model can be implemented within family child care homes, child care centers, Head Start, public preschool programs, early intervention, and early childhood special education programs. In some programs, the implementation of the Pyramid Model has been referred to as using PBIS. The Pyramid Model is recognized as offering PBIS practices that are developmentally appropriate and culturally responsive.

The National Center for Pyramid Model Innovations (NCPMI, www.challengingbehavior.org) funded by the Office of Special Education Programs offers free resources to help practitioners, programs, trainers, coaches, and states implement the Pyramid Model. Those resources also include resources developed by previous Pyramid Model Technical Assistance Centers (e.g., Center on Social Emotional Foundations for Early Learning). These resources include:

- A state-wide implementation guide with materials for each stage of implementation

- Training modules for practitioners and families

- Materials and guidance for providing practice-based coaching on Pyramid Model practices to program staff

- Implementation fidelity tools and data decision-making guides

- A behavior incident tracking system that provides data for addressing behavior incidents in a program and identifies potential equity issues in the use of exclusionary discipline

- Materials and resources for practitioners to use in their work with children and families
- Robust resources on trauma, equity, addressing suspension and expulsion, family engagement, supporting children and families during the pandemic, and inclusion

Implementation Strategies

Thirty-two states and territories have initiated state efforts for implementing the Pyramid Model within early childhood programs (see **Appendix A** for listing of states). These efforts have included statewide professional development, integration of the implementation of the Pyramid Model within QRIS, systematic state implementation and scale-up, and the training of trainers and coaches. The implementation strategies used in establishing the Pyramid Model within programs has been deeply informed by implementation science and the lessons learned from over 15 years of implementation success.

The developers of the Pyramid Model recommend that statewide implementation teams establish critical structures to implement, scale, and sustain the Pyramid Model within local programs. Each of these key structures uses data tools to examine the fidelity of the implementation of the model, to measure outcomes, and to guide their implementation process. These key structures are:

- **State leadership team.** It is important to convene a cross-sector and collaborative team of state leaders that will guide statewide implementation and scale-up.
- **A professional development network of program (i.e., implementation) coaches.** The network of program coaches provides training, technical assistance, and coaching to the leadership teams of local programs engaged in implementing the Pyramid Model.
- **Implementation sites and high-fidelity demonstration sites.** Local programs identify a leadership team to guide implementation of the Pyramid Model within their program. Implementation sites that are implementing the Pyramid Model with fidelity are selected to serve as demonstration sites where others can learn more about the approach and outcomes.

The implementation of the Pyramid Model involves a robust menu of professional development for practitioners and program leaders. Programs implementing the approach identify a leadership team to guide implementation within their site. Leadership teams receive training and guidance for working together, using data for decision-making, and supporting practitioners as they implement Pyramid Model practices. Practitioners receive training in the implementation of the Pyramid Model practices with infants, toddlers, and preschoolers. Practitioner coaches are trained in the use of practice-based coaching to support practitioners in reaching fidelity of practice implementation and receive training in observation tools that are used to assess practice implementation fidelity and identify coaching needs (i.e., Teaching Pyramid Observation Tool (TPOT), Teaching Pyramid Infant-Toddler Observation Scale (TPITOS). In addition, key personnel within programs are trained in a process to use to develop and implement interventions for children with persistent challenging behavior (Prevent-Teach-Reinforce for Young Children).

The implementation of the Pyramid Model across all classrooms in a program occurs over time and follows an integrated stage-based framework of implementation. It is a systems change initiative that includes changes in policies and procedures, family engagement and support, ongoing professional development, approaches to behavior intervention, and practices within the classroom. As a result, it might take several years to fully implement the model in all of the program's classrooms.

Implementation Examples

Statewide Implementation in Wisconsin

Wisconsin has been building the capacity of early childhood programs and practitioners to implement the Pyramid Model since 2009. A cross-sector state leadership team works to build and guide this effort to provide Pyramid Model training and support to practitioners and leaders in child care, public preschool, early childhood special education, family resource centers, and Head Start programs.

In 2016, an evaluation of the Pyramid Model work in two Wisconsin communities found that children in Pyramid Model programs had better social and emotional skills and less problematic behavior than children in non-Pyramid Model programs. The positive outcomes achieved through the implementation of the Pyramid Model resulted in a substantial funding allocation for the work from the State Department of Children and Families.

The Wisconsin Alliance for Infant Mental Health coordinates the Wisconsin Pyramid Model Initiative (https://wiaimh.org/pyramid-model-home). The services include state and regional coordination of training for early childhood practitioners and infant and early childhood mental health consultants in Pyramid Practices, guiding regional Pyramid Model communities of practice, providing training and coaching support for program-wide implementation within communities, and promoting intentional integration of infant mental health consultation and Pyramid Model coaching. By 2019, the Wisconsin Pyramid Model effort provided training and implementation support to 112 implementation sites, 120 trainers, 305 classroom coaches, and 10 implementation coaches to support programs in their program-wide implementation.

Early Care and Education Program Implementation in Florida Community

The Children's Academy Fishhawk (CAFH, https://childrensacademyfishhawk.com/) in Florida is a community child care program that enrolls about 125 children from birth to 5 years old. After successfully implementing the Pyramid Model in their first location, Children's Academy Fishhawk sought to start their new location using the Pyramid Model framework to support children's social-emotional learning. In 2018, they received training to become a program-wide implementation site.

The program identified a leadership team to plan for implementation and has met monthly in an ongoing process to ensure that all classes were receiving training and coaching on the use of Pyramid Model practices. The leadership team includes the director, assistant director, and two teachers, one representative of the infant/toddler classrooms and one representative of preschool classrooms. The assistant director received additional training and support to build the needed skills to serve as a practitioner coach. The practitioner coach supports teachers in their use of Pyramid Model practices in their classrooms. The practitioner coach and the leadership team use TPOT and TPITOS to assess teacher strengths and needs and to see growth in their practices over time.

CAFH has also successfully teamed with teachers and families to support children needing more intensive supports in the classrooms. Teachers involved in teaming to develop behavior plans have reported great success with decreasing individual children's challenging behavior.

Appendix

Appendix A. Landscape of States' Pyramid Model Implementation

Table 1. Pyramid Model State Implementation Scan

State	Description of Activities	Exploring/ Emerging Implementing/ Fully Implementing	CCDF $	IDEA $	Other $	Original CSEFEL/ TACSEI State	NCPMI or PMC Partner	Initiative/ Organization Website & Contact Information
AK	Professional Development	Implementing				✓		https://www.threadalaska.net/index.cfm/calendar.catalog_class?typeid=20&Classid=1469
CA	Professional Development, Trainer and Coach Cadre, Statewide leadership team and coordinating staff, Partner Implementation Sites, Training of facilitators for Positive Solutions for Families & CA Teaching Pyramid for Families	Fully Implementing	✓	✓	✓	✓		California Teaching Pyramid https://cainclusion.org/camap/map-project-resources/ca-teaching-pyramid/ Main Contact: Linda Brault lbrault@wested.org
CO	Statewide Pyramid Colorado Hub, Statewide Cross-sector Leadership Team, Trainer & Coach Certification, Implementation Communities, Demonstration Sites, Professional Development	Fully Implementing	From 2010 to 2016	From 2010 to 2016	✓	✓		Pyramid Colorado led by Healthy Child Care Colorado https://healthychildcareco.org/programs/pyramid-colorado/ Contact: Taren M. Schneider Taran@healthychildcareco.org
CT	State Leadership Team, Implementation Sites, Program Coaches, Professional Development	Implementing		✓	✓ PDG	✓	NCPMI, PMC	Connecticut Pyramid Partnership https://www.ctoec.org/pyramid-model/ Annual Report 2018–2019: https://www.ctoec.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/Pyramid-Partnership-Connecticut-Annual-Report-2018-2019.pdf Contact: Deb Resnick Deb.Resnick@ct.gov
FL	State Leadership Team, Community Leadership Team, Implementation Specialists, Implementation Sites	Installation			✓ PDG			Main Contact: Lisette Levy Lisette.Levy@oel.myflorida.com

State	Description of Activities	Exploring/ Emerging Implementing/ Fully Implementing	CCDF $	IDEA $	Other $	Original CSEFEL/ TACSEI State	NCPMI or PMC Partner	Initiative/ Organization Website & Contact Information
GA	Statewide Leadership Team, Program Coaches, Professional Development	Implementing	✓				PMC	Georgia's Social Emotional Early Development Strategies For Success http://www.decal.ga.gov/ InstructionalSupports/Seeds.aspx Main contact: Allison O'Hara allison.ohara@decal.ga.gov
GU	State Team, Master Cadre, Integration Into PBIS						PMC	https://www.guamcedders.org/ tag/pyramid-model/
HI	State Leadership Team (inactive), Implementation and Demonstration Programs/Sites, Professional Development	Implementing	✓	✓		✓		https://health.hawaii.gov/cshcn/hcch/
ID	State Leadership Team, Implementation Sites, Professional Development	Exploring/ Emerging Implementing in 15 programs statewide		✓	✓		PMC, NCPMI	https://idahotc.com/Pyramid#13411 Main Contacts: Omair Shamim–Head Start Collaboration Office omair.shamim@dhw.idaho.gov Melissa Crist–IdahoStars mcrist@uidaho.edu Renee Miner, co-lead reneeminer@boisestate.edu
IL	State Leadership Team, Implementation and Demonstration Programs/Sites, Professional Development, Master Cadre	Fully Implementing	✓		✓ PDG GEERS		PMC, NCPMI	Illinois' Pyramid Model State Leadership Team https://www2.illinois.gov/sites/OECD/ Pages/Pyramid-Model.aspx Contact: Lori Orr Lori.A.Orr@Illinois.gov
IA	Professional Development, Consultant Pool State Leadership Team, Family Child Care, QRIS Integration, Site Scale Up	Fully Implementing		✓	✓ ECI Office	✓	PMC, NCPMI	Early Childhood - Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (EC-PBIS) https://iowaccrr.org/training/PBIS/ Contact: Melanie Reese melanie.reese@iowa.gov Wendy Van Haaften whoogev@dhs.state.ia.us

State	Description of Activities	Exploring/ Emerging Implementing/ Fully Implementing	CCDF $	IDEA $	Other $	Original CSEFEL/ TACSEI State	NCPMI or PMC Partner	Initiative/ Organization Website & Contact Information
MD	State Leadership Team, Trainer, and Coach Cadre, TPOT and TIPITOS Assessors	Fully Implementing	✓			✓	PMC, NCPMI	Maryland SEFEL Pyramid Model https://www.mdpyramidmodelsefel.org/
MA	Professional Development, Coach and Trainer Cadre, Community, Learning Communities, State Leadership Team, Parent Training Center-Federation for Children with Special Needs, Training-Positive Solutions, Equity Initiative	Fully Implementing		✓	✓	✓	PMC, NCPMI	Massachusetts Pyramid Model-Departments of Early Education and Care https://www.mass.gov/orgs/ department-of-early-education-and-care Departments of Elementary and Secondary Education https://www.doe.mass.edu/ Contact: Juin Liu yi-juin.liu@state.ma.us
MN	State Leadership Team, Family Engagement, Implementation and Demonstration Programs/Sites, Professional Development, Evaluation/ Data-Based Decision Making	Fully Implementing	✓	✓ 619 Part C	✓	✓	NCPMI, PMC	Minnesota Centers of Excellence https://mncoe.org/mncoe/innov/pyramid/ Contact: Hope Bissel hope.beissel@metroecsu.org
MS	State Leadership Team, Implementation Sites, Professional Development, Program and Practitioner Coaching, Demonstration Sites, and TPOT Assessors/to Inform Practices	Implementing	✓		✓ SPDG		NCPMI, PMC	https://reachms.org/pbis-early-childhood/ Contact: Brittany Herrington Brittany.Herrington@usm.edu
MT	Implementation Coaching, QRIS Integration, Professional Development Through CC R&R	Implementing			✓ PDG		PMC	https://dphhs.mt.gov/hcsd/Childcare/ STARS/PyramidModel
NE	State Leadership Team, Professional Development, Coach and Trainer Cadre Program Level Support TPOT and TIPITOS Assessors Evaluation, Data-Based Decision-Making	Fully Implementing	✓	✓	✓ Private Funding PDG	✓	PMC	Pyramid Model as MTSS http://nemtss.unl.edu/pyramid-model/ Community Implementation https://rootedinrelationships.org/initiative/ Main Contact: Lynne Brehm lbrehm@nebraskachildren.org

State	Description of Activities	Exploring/ Emerging Implementing/ Fully Implementing	CCDF $	IDEA $	Other $	Original CSEFEL/ TACSEI State	NCPMI or PMC Partner	Initiative/ Organization Website & Contact Information
NV	State Leadership Team, Training and Coaching Cadre, Model/ Implementation Sites/Programs, Professional Development, Integration into QRIS	Fully Implementing	✓	✓		✓	NCPMI	Nevada TACSEI: Pyramid Model Partnership http://nvtacsei.com/about/ Contact: Janice K. Lee janicelee@unr.edu
NH	State Leadership Team and Work Groups, Community Collaboratives, Implementation Sites, Master Cadre, Process and Practice-Based Coach Cohorts, Cohorts of Reliable TPITOS/TPOT Administrators, DOE Data System, Professional Development, Family Engagement	Implementing			✓ PDG Cares Act Head Start		PMC	NH Pyramid Model State https://ptan.seresc.net/blog/social-emotional-development-resources/pm-state-leadership-team/ NH Pyramid Model Annual Report 2020 https://challengingbehavior.cbcs.usf.edu/PyramidNation/State/docs/NH_annualreport_2020.pdf Contact: Debra Nelson Debra.Nelson@dhhs.nh.gov
NJ	State Leadership Team, Implementation Sites, Coaching, and TPOT to Assess Practices, Professional Development	Implementing			✓		PMC, NCPMI	https://www.montclair.edu/center-for-autism-and-early-childhood-mental-health/professional-developmentformation/new-jersey-pyramid-model-partnership/ Professional development through https://www.grownjkids.gov/Welcome Main Contact: Kaitlin Mulcahy mulcahyk@montclair.edu
NM	Professional Development, Coaching	Implementing					PMC	http://www.cdd.unm.edu/ecln/FIT/pdfs/FIT_Annual2015_PyramidPPT.pdf
NY	State Leadership Team, Module Training and Classroom or Program Coaching Master Cadre, Implementation Sites/ Programs, Community-Wide Leadership Teams, Pyramid Model Implementation Data System (PIDS) for All Data Collection	Fully Implementing	✓		✓ PDG Office of Mental Health		PMC	NY Pyramid Model http://www.nysecac.org/contact/pyramid-model Contact: Vicki Robert: Vicki.Robert@ccf.ny.gov Patricia Persell Patricia.Persell@ccf.ny.gov

State	Description of Activities	Exploring/ Emerging Implementing/ Fully Implementing	CCDF $	IDEA $	Other $	Original CSEFEL/ TACSEI State	NCPMI or PMC Partner	Initiative/ Organization Website & Contact Information
NC	Implementation/ Demonstration Programs/Sites Professional Development, Webinar Series, Measuring Child Outcomes	Implementing	✓		✓	✓	NCPMI, PMC	North Carolina Preschool Pyramid Model https://nceln.fpg.unc.edu/ncppmresources and https://challengingbehavior.cbcs.usf.edu/ PyramidNation/State/docs/NC_preschool_ pyramid_model_project_201819_report.pdf
OK	State Team, Integration into QRIS	Exploring/ Emerging					PMC	https://okschoolreadiness.org/ projects/pyramid-model Main Contact: Debra Andersen dandersen@okschoolreadiness.org
PA	State Leadership Team, Implementation Specialists, Implementation Sites, Professional Development	Fully Implementing			✓		NCPMI, PMC	http://papbs.org/ProgramwidePBIS.aspx Contact: Susan Zeiders szeiders@pattan.net
SC	Statewide Leadership Team, Professional Development	Implementing	✓		✓ PDG		PMC	South Carolina Pyramid Partnership https://ed.sc.gov/districts-schools/ special-education-services/programs- and-initiatives-p-i/preschool/ sc-pyramid-partnership-mission-and-vision/
TN	State Leadership Team, Implementation/Demonstration Programs/Sites, Professional Development, Higher Ed Courses, Family Modules, Crosswalked with IMH Competencies	Implementing	✓	✓ 619	✓ Federal block grant Comm. Mental Health Services	✓	NCPMI, PMC	Team Tennessee https://tnvoices.org/team-tn/ Main Contact: Connie Casha connie.casha@mtsu.edu
VT	Professional Development	Implementing	✓	✓ 619	✓ PDG	✓		Northern Light–Community College of Vermont https://northernlightsccv.org/trainings/ pyramid-model-emtss-training-module-1/ Contact: Kate Rogers Kate.rogers@vermont.gov
VA	State Leadership Team, Professional Development, Training, Coaching	Implementing	✓		✓ ECCS		PMC	Main Contact: Bonnie Grifa bgrifa@vcu.edu

State	Description of Activities	Exploring/ Emerging Implementing/ Fully Implementing	CCDF $	IDEA $	Other $	Original CSEFEL/ TACSEI State	NCPMI or PMC Partner	Initiative/ Organization Website & Contact Information
WA	State Leadership Team, Professional Development, Program Coaches, Demonstration Sites	Installation/ Early Implemen-tation	✓	✓			NCPMI	Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) National Center for Pyramid Model Intensive Technical Grant Contact: Julie Dean julie.dean@k12.wa.us
WV	Statewide Leadership Team, Professional Development, Program Coaches, Demonstration Sites	Fully Implementing	✓		✓	✓		Early Childhood Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports http://wvpbis.org/wvecpbis/about/ West Virginia Pyramid Model Partnership Project Launch https://www.westsideproud.com/ wv-pyramid-model-partnership
WI	State Leadership Team, Coaching and Training Cadre, Professional Development, Program Coaches and Demonstration Sites, Outcomes and Monitoring Using Pyramid Model Implementation Data System, Integration with Infant Mental Health Consultation with Pyramid Model; Connecting IMH-Endorsement with Pyramid Model	Fully Implementing	✓		✓	✓	PMC	WI Pyramid Model for Social Emotional Competence https://wiaimh.org/pyramid-model Contact: Julie Betchkal jbetchkal@wiaimh.org

Appendix B. Pyramid Model Resources

Federal Technical Assistance Resources

Ferro, J., Fox, L., Binder, D., & von der Embse, M. (2020). *Pyramid Model Equity Coaching Guide.* https://challengingbehavior.cbcs.usf.edu/Implementation/Equity/Guide/index.html

Fox, L, Binder, D. P., Hemmeter, M. L., Barton, E. E., & Vatland, C. (2018). *Program-Wide Supports for Pyramid Model Implementation: Implementation manual.* https://challengingbehavior.cbcs.usf.edu/docs/LeadershipTeam_ImplementationGuide.pdf

Fox, L., Veguilla, M., Ferro, J., & Binder, D. P. (2020). *Data Decision-Making and Program-Wide Implementation of the Pyramid Model.* https://challengingbehavior.cbcs.usf.edu/docs/roadmap/Roadmap_7_Data.pdf

National Center on Early Childhood Development, Teaching, and Learning and the National Center for Pyramid Model Innovations. Video: *Implementing the Pyramid Model in Family Child Care Homes.* https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sQDigjLdi78&feature=youtu.be

National Center for Pyramid Model Innovations. (2020). *The Behavior Incident Report System (BIRS).* https://challengingbehavior.cbcs.usf.edu/docs/BIR_Overview_Factsheet.pdf

National Center for Pyramid Model Innovations. (2020). *Program-Wide Implementation: Understanding Program-Wide Implementation of the Pyramid Model.* https://challengingbehavior.cbcs.usf.edu/docs/Program-Wide_Implementation_factsheet.pdf

National Center for Pyramid Model Innovations. (2018). *All Hands on Deck: Partnering with Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health Consultants to Implement the Pyramid Model.* https://challengingbehavior.cbcs.usf.edu/docs/IECMHC_All-Hands-on-Deck.pdf

National Center for Pyramid Model Innovations. (2019). *Let's Talk! Webinar: What Works in Reducing Suspensions and Disproportionality.* https://challengingbehavior.cbcs.usf.edu/Training/Webinar/archive/2019/11-18/2019-11-18_Keeping-Children-in-School.html

National Center for Pyramid Model Innovations. (2019). *Within the Framework Webinar: The Pyramid Model Goes to Family Child Care Homes.* https://challengingbehavior.cbcs.usf.edu/Training/Webinar/archive/2019/08-19/2019-08-19_Family-Child-Care-Homes.html

National Center for Pyramid Model Innovations. (2018). *Unpacking Coaching Webinar: The Power of Practice-Based Coaching in Supporting Early Educators' Use of the Pyramid Model.* https://challengingbehavior.cbcs.usf.edu/Training/Webinar/archive/2018/07-16/2018-07-16_The-Power-of-Practice-Based-Coaching.html

National Center for Pyramid Model Innovations. (n.d.). *Modules and Kits for Trainers.* https://challengingbehavior.cbcs.usf.edu/Training/Module/index.html

Smith, B. J., Fox, L., Strain, P., Binder, D. P., Bovey, T., Jones, A., et al. (2018). *Statewide Implementation Guide.* https://ectacenter.org/sig

Smith, B. J., Dell, P., & Fox, L. (2018). *Pyramid Model State Leadership Team Guidance for Preventing the Use of Suspension and Expulsion and Promoting Equitable, Inclusive, and Culturally Responsive Practice.* https://challengingbehavior.cbcs.usf.edu/docs/LeadershipTeam_Guidance_State.pdf

von der Embse, M., Nemec, A. Vorhaus, E., Fox, L., Ferro, J. Hemmeter, M. L., et al. (2019). *Program Leadership Team Guide: Implementing Practice-Based Coaching within the Pyramid Model.* https://challengingbehavior.cbcs.usf.edu/docs/LeadershipTeam_PBC_Guide.pdf

Non-Federal Technical Assistance Resources

Pyramid Model Consortium ePyramid online learning modules. Online professional development program offers several courses in Pyramid Model practices including: (a) Infant/Toddler ePyramid Modules; (b) Preschool ePyramid Modules; (c) Birth to Five ePyramid Modules; (d) Trauma-informed care and the Pyramid Model; (e) Wellness: Taking care of yourself; and (f) Culturally responsive practices to reduce implicit bias, disproportionality, suspension, and expulsion. https://www.pyramidmodel.org/services/online-training/

Pyramid Model Consortium offers training and technical assistance in state capacity-building, program capacity-building, and training workshops. https://www.pyramidmodel.org/services/all-services/