



# Trauma-Informed Care and the Pyramid Model for Promoting Social and Emotional Competence in Infants and Young Children



Early educators are becoming increasingly aware of the importance of understanding the impact of trauma on young children and their families and offering trauma-informed care. Children’s responses to trauma can include a child’s difficulty in relationships and social interactions with peers and adults, challenges in emotional regulation and social skill development, and challenging behavior. Practices that are recommended for providing a trauma informed educational program (National Child Traumatic Stress Network, 2017) consist of:

- ▶ Implementing a multi-tiered approach that acknowledges the importance of providing a safe and nurturing environment for all children and more intensive and focused prevention and intervention for children who have social, emotional, or behavioral support needs;
- ▶ Prioritizing the establishment of nurturing and responsive relationships with all children and their families;
- ▶ Offering children predictable routines;
- ▶ Teaching children social, emotional, and behavior regulation skills;
- ▶ Responding to challenging behavior by seeking to understand the behavior and use prevention and instructional strategies to address behavior; and
- ▶ Eliminating the use of exclusionary or punishment responses to challenging behavior (i.e., time-out, suspension).

**The Pyramid Model for Promoting Social and Emotional Competence in Infants and Young Children** (Fox, Dunlap, Hemmeter, Joseph, & Strain, 2003; Hemmeter, Ostrosky, & Fox, 2006) provides a multi-tiered approach that has been designed for implementation within early care and education programs. In programs implementing the Pyramid Model, practitioners are guided in how to: 1) establish nurturing and responsive relationships with children and families; 2) provide predictable and supportive environments; 3) promote the development of social, emotional, and behavioral skills; and 4) address challenging behavior through understanding the behavior and designing interventions that are positive and focused on teaching new skills.

## Resources for Implementing Trauma-Informed Care

- ▶ Checklist of Early Childhood Practices that Support Social Emotional Development and Trauma-Informed Care
- ▶ All Hands on Deck: Partnering with Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health Consultants to Implement the Pyramid Model
- ▶ Understanding Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation and the Pyramid Model

## References

Fox, L., Dunlap, G., Hemmeter, M. L., Joseph, G. E., & Strain, P. S. (2003). The Teaching Pyramid: A model for supporting social competence and preventing challenging behavior in young children. *Young Children*, 58(4), 48-52.

Hemmeter, M. L., Ostrosky, M., & Fox, L. (2006). Social and emotional foundations for early learning: A conceptual model for intervention. *School Psychology Review*, 35, 583-601.

National Child Traumatic Stress Network, Schools Committee. (2017). Creating, supporting, and sustaining trauma-informed schools: A system framework. [https://www.nctsn.org/sites/default/files/resources/creating\\_supporting\\_sustaining\\_trauma\\_informed\\_schools\\_a\\_systems\\_framework.pdf](https://www.nctsn.org/sites/default/files/resources/creating_supporting_sustaining_trauma_informed_schools_a_systems_framework.pdf)

