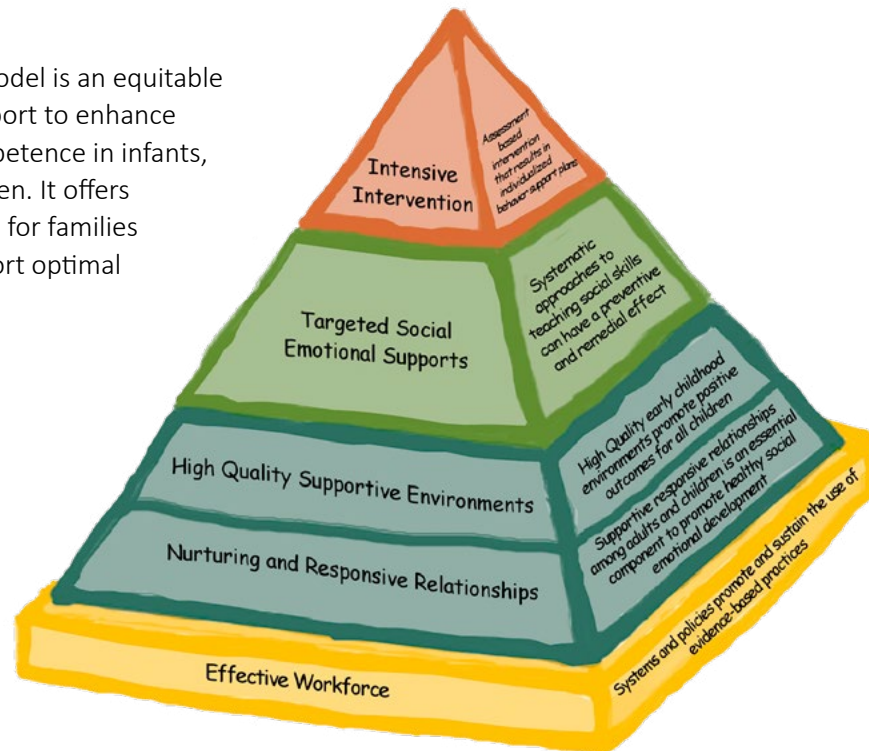


# Wisconsin Pyramid Model

## 2018 Annual Report

The Wisconsin Pyramid Model is an equitable multi-level system of support to enhance social and emotional competence in infants, toddlers, and young children. It offers evidence-based strategies for families and professionals to support optimal development and prevent challenging behaviors.



### Key outcomes of program-wide implementation of the Pyramid Model

- Building program capacity to equitably meet the needs of ALL children and families
- Reduction in suspension and expulsion of young children
- Promotion of family engagement
- Use of data-based decision making and intervention monitoring
- Integration of early childhood best practices with infant mental health consultation
- Fostering inclusive options for young children with, and at risk for, disabilities

# What is the Pyramid Model?

Relationship is a key change agent in early childhood. Pyramid Model Training focuses on practices that address relationships, environments, intentional teaching and individualized interventions. Program-wide implementation of the Pyramid Model is a relationship based professional development framework that is child and family centered. Program-wide implementation intentionally addresses competency, leadership, and organization.

Racial disparities in discipline are reduced in early care and education programs when culturally responsive practices, naturally embedded in the Wisconsin Pyramid Model, are intentionally emphasized during training, coaching, and implementation.

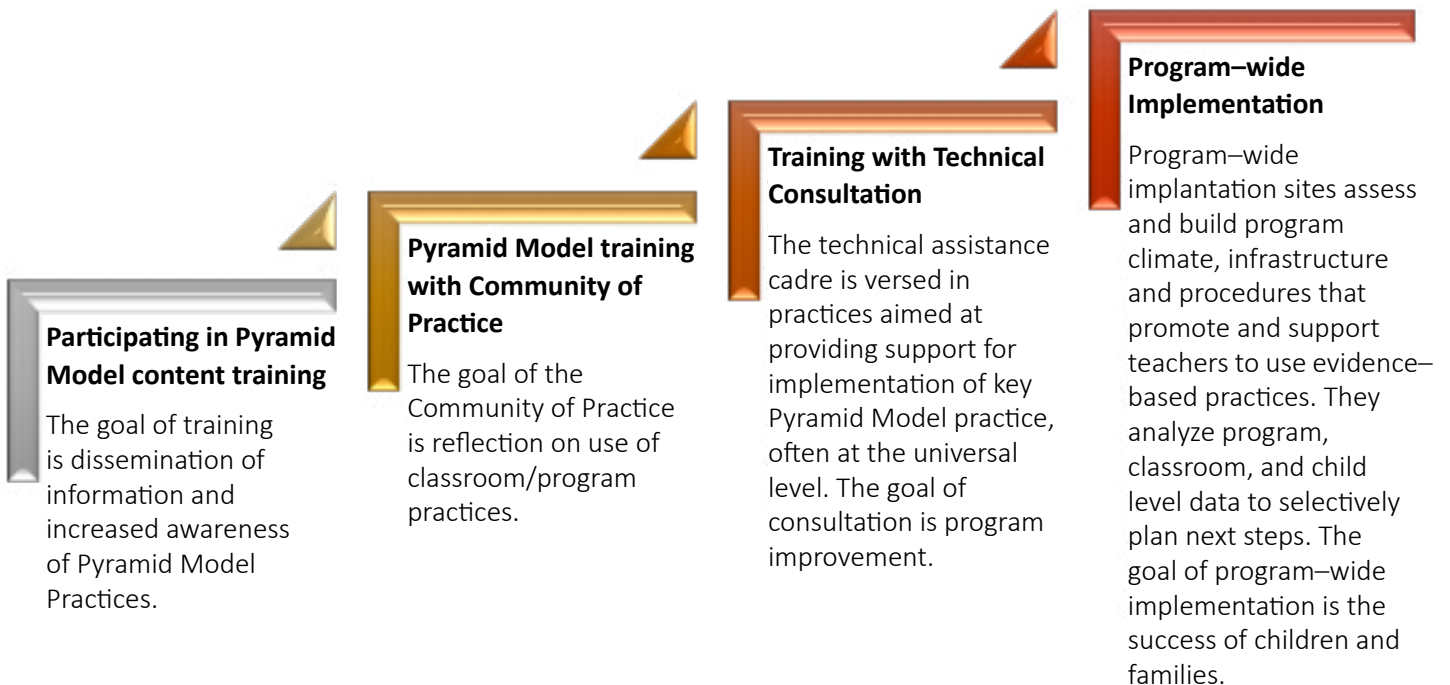


The Pyramid Model is a [national innovation](#) for an equitable multi-levelled system of support to enhance social and emotional competence in infants, toddlers and young children. Program-wide implementation of the Pyramid Model is often called [Early Childhood Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports](#) (PBIS).

The Pyramid Model is NOT a curriculum package, but a [collection of programs](#) and evidence-based [classroom practices](#)—selected by experts in Early Childhood research—to support optimal development and prevent challenging behaviors.

Program wide implementation of the Pyramid Model emphasizes the use of evidence-based practices with fidelity.

## Levels of Pyramid Model Implementation



# The Pyramid Model Works for Wisconsin Because of Intentional and Prioritized Effort

Wisconsin has been building and enhancing the state infrastructure since awarded a competitive technical assistance grant from The Center for the Social and Emotional Foundations for Early Learning (CSEFEL) in 2009. Since that time, a [cross sector and representative State Leadership Team](#) has been meeting at least quarterly to guide efforts to build infrastructure for implementation of the evidence-based practices promoted by the Pyramid Model in Wisconsin.

This team utilizes data from the State Early Childhood Benchmarks of Quality to guide implementation. The resulting Statewide plan is primarily enacted by two State leads—a **Statewide Coordinator** and a **Statewide Training & Coaching Coordinator**.

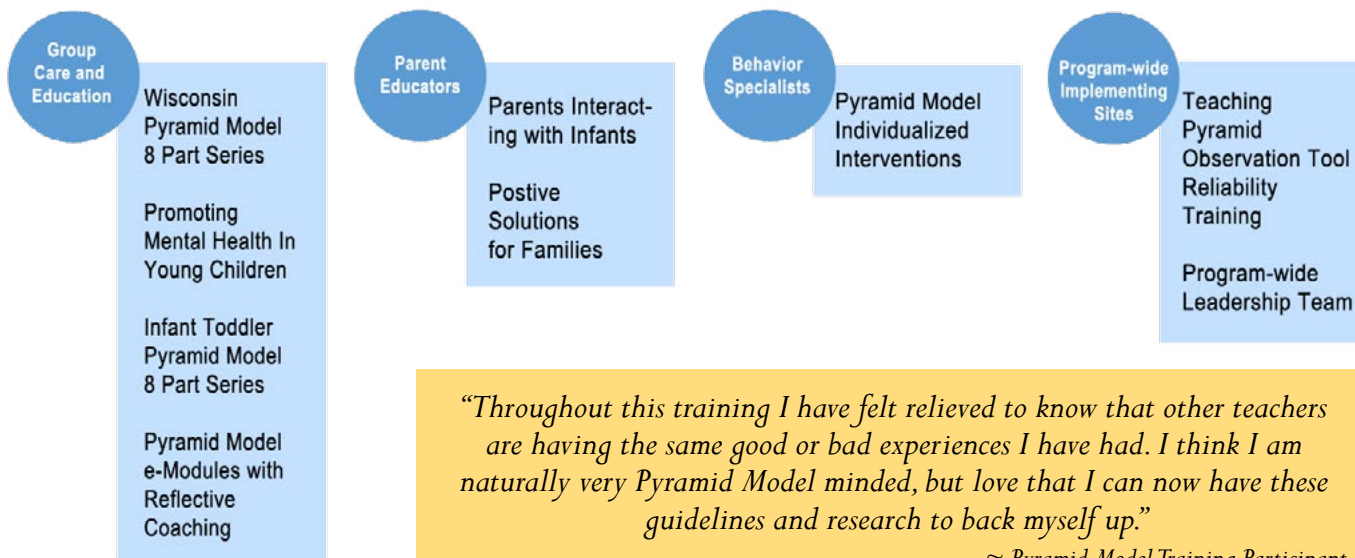
Since 2009, Wisconsin’s Pyramid Model Statewide Coordinators have led project groups to:

- Adapt **national Pyramid Model training content** to create comprehensive training packages representing Wisconsin’s cross sector early childhood support, to include examples from Wisconsin’s program-wide implementing sites, and to align with other important Wisconsin efforts (e.g., WI Model Early Learning Standards, Infant Mental Health

- Competencies);
- Ensure **Registry recognition** for Pyramid Model training participation;
- Embed Pyramid Model content into the **WI Technical College** Early Care and Education degree pathway;
- Develop a **mentoring model** to ensure that new Pyramid Model trainers are recruited to fill needs and are supported to deliver the content as designed;
- Provide support for regional **Pyramid Model communities of practice** to ensure statewide cross sector access to training content despite fragmented funding sources;
- Maintain emphasis on promoting **Pyramid Model parent content** by developing mentoring models that support implementation of the Parents Interacting with Infants (PIWI) and Positive Solutions content;
- Create a readiness process that guides selection of programs to participate in Wisconsin’s four-day **Implementation Academy**;
- Create a **data system** that allows programs to mon-

*continued on page 4*

## Wisconsin Pyramid Model Training Strands



*“Throughout this training I have felt relieved to know that other teachers are having the same good or bad experiences I have had. I think I am naturally very Pyramid Model minded, but love that I can now have these guidelines and research to back myself up.”*

*~ Pyramid Model Training Participant*

itor their implementation progress while providing the State Leadership Team with data to continue to improve training and technical assistance content;

- Work with authors of the [Teaching Pyramid Observation Tool \(TPOT\)](#) to build capacity for WI-based TPOT trainers who ensure internal coaches are able to use the TPOT reliably for coaching
- Convene an **external coaches** community of practice
- Serve in an **advisory capacity** for intentional connections to:
  - Wisconsin’s YoungStar Quality Rating Improvement System
  - School wide Mental Health Framework
  - Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation
  - Wisconsin Home Visiting training and technical assistance
  - Wisconsin Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS)
  - Wisconsin’s PreK to Adult Social and Emotional Learning Competencies.

## Wisconsin Pyramid Model by the Numbers

- Over **11,030** individuals trained in Pyramid Model content since 2010
- Over **469** Pyramid Model content trainings since 2010
- **120** [Pyramid Model trainers](#) of classroom practices, many ready to serve as program-wide coaches
- **13** cohorts of sites launched through **13** Pyramid Model Implementation Academies
- **36** programs teaming to implement Pyramid Model program-wide, with **108** program-wide implementing sites (individual locations) in these programs
- **305** Pyramid Model classroom/internal coaches
- **10** Pyramid Model program-wide external coaches
- **16** members serve on the Pyramid Model state leadership team

## External Coaching: A Key to Fidelity

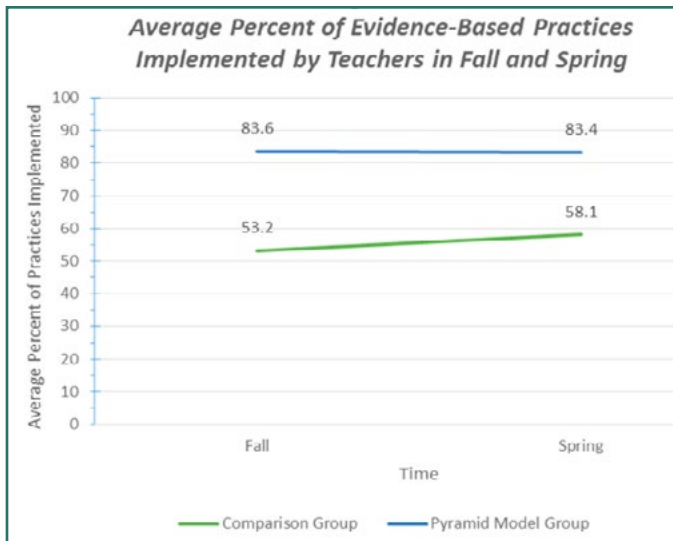
### The External Coach’s core roles and responsibilities include:

- Work with a program’s leadership team to support implementation of Pyramid Model practices with fidelity, utilizing implementation science.
- Support the capacity of the internal coach to promote use of the evidence-based practices promoted by the Pyramid Model.
- Attend Pyramid Model Implementation Academy and help program team to complete Benchmarks of Quality.
- Assist the program’s leadership team in collecting, analyzing and reporting data to monitor program, teacher and child outcomes resulting from implementation.
- Support the program’s leadership team in identifying implementation priorities based on Benchmark of Quality data and team implementation content.
- Assist the administrator in sharing information with staff, families and board regarding implementation.
- Communicate with state coordinators; network and collaborate with other external coaches and Regional Communities of Practice; and participate in Pyramid Model state workgroups as outlined by the Pyramid Model State Action Plan.
- Serve as an ambassador of the Pyramid Model initiative within other state initiatives.
- Utilize Pyramid Model resources and provide information to support team discussion and decisions using materials from the Resource Sharing website and team binder.
- Understand and apply the components of effective meeting facilitation.
- If necessary, assist programs in ensuring that all staff have been trained in Pyramid Model content.

# Data Shows the Pyramid Model Works in Wisconsin

In 2016, the WI Department of Public Instruction funded an evaluation of Wisconsin’s Pyramid Model initiative. The results indicated that children in Pyramid Model 4K classrooms in sample communities in Wisconsin had better social and emotional skills and less problematic behavior than children in non-Pyramid Model classrooms in the same community. Most significantly, children in Pyramid Model classrooms with the most concerning challenging behavior in the Fall had scores indicating typical development in the Spring.

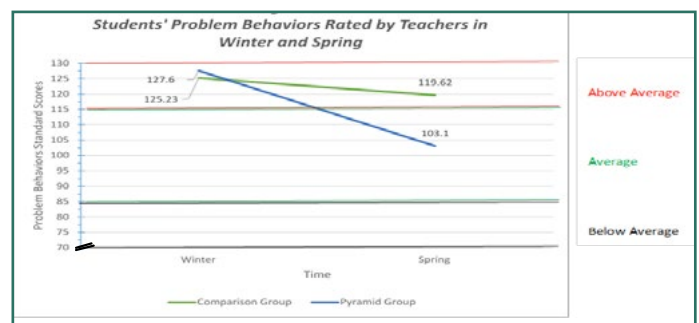
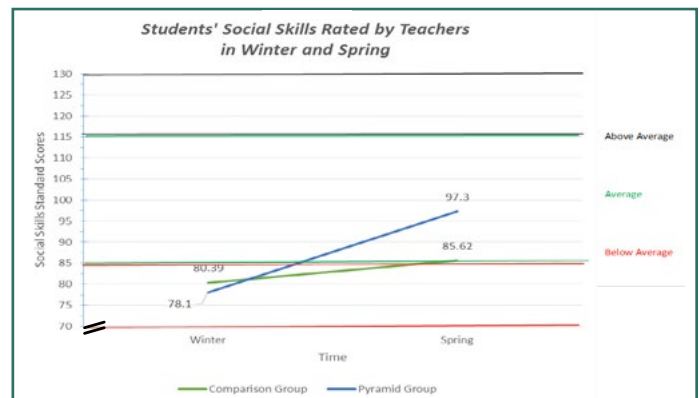
Internal coaches used the Teaching Pyramid Observation Tool—a scientifically validated coaching/assessment tool. The tool supports coaches in providing teachers with highly individualized feedback and guidance to implement the evidence-based practices prioritized by the teacher. **On-site coaching supports Pyramid Model classroom teachers to not only use significantly more evidence-based practices than their “trained only” counterparts, but to use those practices consistently and intentionally throughout the year.**



This increased use of intentional instructional practice and support creates an equitable context for success in Pyramid Model classrooms and yields the result of closing gaps for children identified as having the greatest need (1.84 SD above the mean in the Fall) by teaching them skills correlated with positive adult outcomes.

*These decreases in problem behaviors and increases in social skills for students in the Pyramid Model classrooms were meaningfully different – the students in the Pyramid Model classrooms were reported on average **to no longer display challenging behaviors and to show expected social skills** of four-year-old children at the conclusion of the school year.*

[2016, Neddenriep, Hulse & Buxton, The Wisconsin Pyramid Model Enhancing Social-Emotional Competence to Reduce Challenging Behavior](#)



*“The Pyramid Model is like a secret code for making happy and healthy children thrive through social and emotional relationships.”*

*~ Pyramid Model Practitioner*

# Increased Investment in the Pyramid Model Will Move Wisconsin Forward

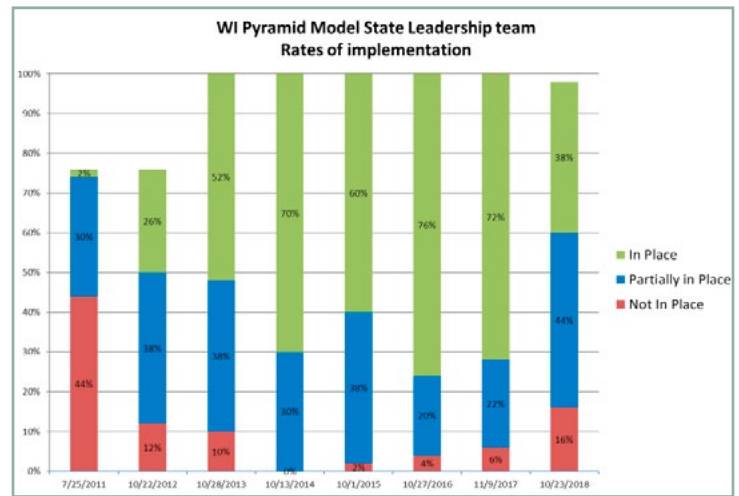
In October 2018, the State Leadership team met to evaluate the status of Pyramid Model infrastructure in Wisconsin using the State Benchmarks of Quality rating. The results indicated slippage in a number of infrastructure indicators, mostly because of loss of Federal grant dollars and resulting restructuring of Wisconsin’s Early Childhood Training and Technical Assistance system.

This year, significant reduction in funding has impeded Wisconsin’s capacity to increase the number of program-wide implementing sites; those sites which work to implement practices with fidelity in order to yield the best outcomes for children and families.

**Increased, coordinated and sustained investment is necessary to address Wisconsin’s priorities of supporting healthy social and emotional development and school readiness of all our children.**

## Addressing Wisconsin’s inequitable outcomes based on race, especially given our alarmingly disproportionate suspension rates for young children

- Wisconsin’s rates of suspension of young Black children from Child Care and 4K programs are significantly higher than national rates. A 2016 analysis by the DPI revealed that black 4-year-olds were ten times more likely to be suspended than their white counterparts.
- The [National Pyramid Model Equity Project](#) has developed new resources, including a **Behavior Incident Report** that allows data to be disaggregated by race—piloted in Wisconsin—and the **Pyramid Model Equity Coaching Guide**.
- Program-wide implementation of the Pyramid Model supports programs to



The percentage of 48 state infrastructure indicators as rated by Wisconsin’s Pyramid Model State Leadership Team in October, 2018

use data to establish equitable and effective practices for ALL children. The *Equity Coaching Guide* supports [culturally responsive practices](#) and assists in addressing implicit biases that interfere with best outcomes for all.

- Pyramid Model Statewide efforts are highlighted as a strategy in the [US Department of Education and US Department of Health and Human Services Joint Statement on Suspension and Expulsion in Early Childhood](#).

## Working to increase inclusive preschool opportunities for young children with disabilities

- Wisconsin has experienced slippage in data measuring how inclusively preschool children receive their special education services. Grant funding for Pyramid Model training for school district staff was eliminated in 2016.
- Young children with disabilities who experience challenging behavior are more likely to be removed to more restrictive placements.
- The US Office of Special Education Programs promotes the [Pyramid Model as a strategy for creating a safe, supporting learning environment for young children with and without disabilities](#).

*“Throughout this (Pyramid Model) training I have changed my mindset. Before I was more annoyed by what the child was doing etc. Now I am more responsive to the child and ponder and ask more questions about how they are feeling, why, and what I can do to help them learn in that experience. I have become more understanding of all children.”*

*~ Pyramid Model Training Participant*

## Continuing to improve the quality of Wisconsin’s Child Care

- For nine years, the Wisconsin Pyramid Model has been promoted as a framework for building an equitable, multi-leveled system of support for programs serving young children and their families. Concerted effort has created a comprehensive, developmentally appropriate and effective system to support the child care workforce to implement best practices. Wisconsin Pyramid Model Trainers provide targeted training to child care teachers and family child care providers that supports implementation of effective practices. Creating a new approved trainer system would prove costly and confusing to Wisconsin’s early care and education field.
- Thirty-eight percent of child care group centers and family child care providers participating in YoungStar employ staff that have received specific training in social and emotional competency and/or inclusion practices.
- YoungStar consultants provide specific technical assistance to child care programs to implement practices learned in Pyramid Model training including: establishing routines and schedules that support developmentally appropriate practices, modeling adult language that is caring and supportive, and emphasizing the importance of positive, nurturing relationships.

*I received a letter today stating that **we are now a level four in the YoungStar rating system.** They evaluated the criteria and determined that our average score met the four star criteria after all. I know that our work as a Demonstration Site helped us. The high scores on interactions with children and families were really influenced by our Pyramid Model implementation.*

*~ Child Care Director*

## Promoting evidence-based models to support families of young children

- Wisconsin’s Pyramid Model implementation effort has focused on promotion of Parents Interacting with Infants (PIWI) as one model that utilizes coaching to enhance the quality of relationship between an infant/toddler and a primary caregiver. [Wisconsin’s efforts were highlighted in the Zero to Three journal.](#)
- In 2016, a collaborative workgroup redesigned the Pyramid Model Positive Solutions for Families content to engage both children and parents in strategies that enhance social and emotional development of



preschool children. Positive Solutions for Families series was shown to be highly effective in a [small comparative survey in Wisconsin.](#)

## Creating more cost effective infant and early childhood mental health services

[Program-wide implementation and Infant and Early Childhood Consultation are considered to be complementary interventions.](#)

- Pyramid Model data from Iowa suggests that Head Start program-wide implementing sites relied less (were able to use consultants with lower frequency) on mental health consultants per child indicating that consults were more effective in Pyramid Model classrooms.
- In Michigan, classrooms with access to Infant Mental

*We are having our Office of Head Start federal review this week, and I wanted to let both of you know that our Pyramid Model implementation and overall mental health services have been commended as Areas of Strength!*

*~ Head Start Program Director*

*continued on page 8*

Health Consultants reached fidelity of Pyramid Model implementation at faster rates than those that did not.

### Offering coordinated and cohesive statewide efforts

- Wisconsin’s Pyramid Model efforts have demonstrated measurable positive outcomes for programs, teachers, children and families. **Moving forward will require expanded, sustainable investment in coordination of efforts.**
- There is a long-term vision for expanding Pyramid Model efforts in Wisconsin and a reasonable budget estimate/request to do so. This effort will require several key individuals—a Statewide Coordinator; a Training and Coaching Coordinator, and a program Evaluator. These individuals will be responsible for:

- Representing the Pyramid Model in statewide efforts
- Leading training and technical content development and improvement
- Expanding training and support for external coaches
- Ensuring Pyramid Model trainers are connected to the selection/mentoring process
- Facilitating State Leadership Team and implementation of statewide action plans
- Launching new program-wide implementation sites
- Collecting, analyzing and disseminating statewide and program wide data on the effects of implementation
- Providing infant and early childhood mental health consultation
- Providing training and technical assistance for individualized interventions

### Supporting developmentally appropriate models for program growth, including evidence-based coaching

- Pyramid Model Coordinators and State Leadership Team members have worked to build collaborative connections to keep the specific developmental needs of children in mind:
  - Wisconsin’s Young Star Quality Rating Improvement System
  - PreK-Adult Social and Emotional Competencies
  - Wisconsin Rtl Center/Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS)
  - School Mental Health Framework
  - Wisconsin Coaching Competencies
  - Early Childhood Professional Development Initiative
  - Infant, Early Childhood & Family Mental Health Capstone Certificate Program.



*“We have a student who is new to childcare and hasn’t had a lot of social interaction up to this point. Playing with friends is very difficult for him. We have had to be very intentional to help him learn how to interact with other friends and how to build those friendships. I have noticed that two specific kiddos volunteer consistently to help the new child learn things, so we have set up intentional interactions between the two and have slowly watched friendships being formed where they seek each other out on their own time.”*

*~ Program Director, program-wide implementing site*



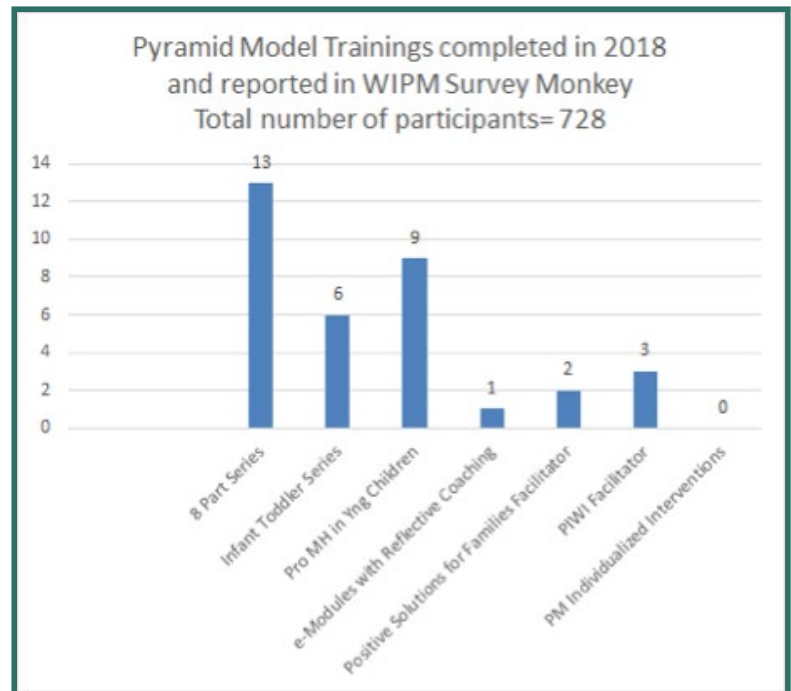
# Wisconsin Pyramid Model: 2018 Highlights

## Growth and development

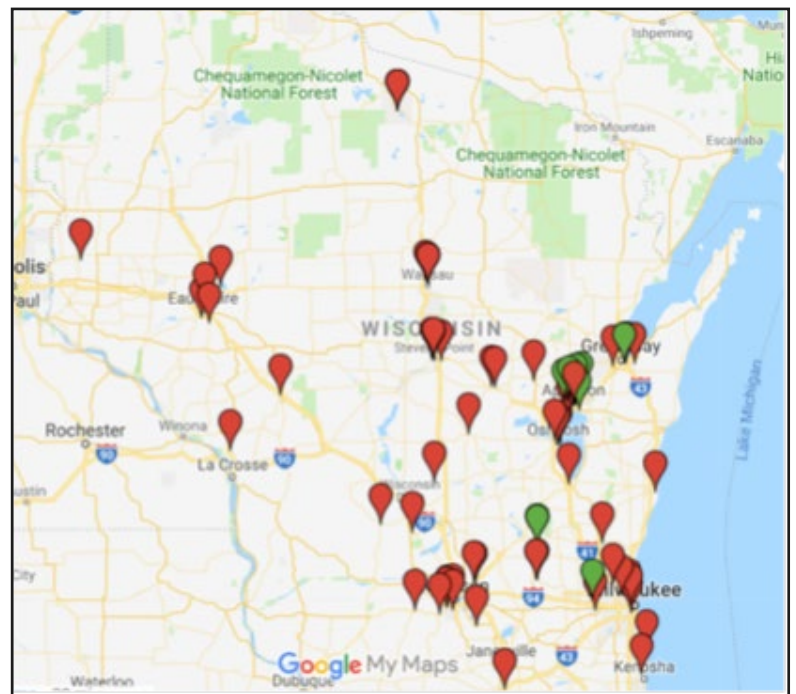
- In partnership with the National Pyramid Model Consortium, a new online training strand, *e-Modules with Reflective Coaching*, was launched.
- Pyramid Model teacher and family support provider trainings continued.
- Training for 38 new classroom coaches was provided.
- 12 new programs (in green on map) were welcomed as [program-wide implementing sites](#) in Wisconsin's 13th Cohort training.

## Wisconsin Pyramid Model recognized in Wisconsin and beyond

- Two videos highlighting best practices were posted by the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction feature Pyramid Model programs.
  - [Early Childhood Social and Emotional Learning](#)—Racine Unified is a program-wide implementation site.
  - [Early Childhood Meaningful Inclusion](#)—Sun Prairie is a program-wide implementation site.
- Wisconsin's co-coordinators presented the Wisconsin Pyramid Model evaluation study at the annual National Training Institute on Effective Practices: Addressing Challenging Behavior Conference in St. Petersburg, Florida.
- Wisconsin's efforts to support the Parents Interacting with Infants (PIWI) Model were presented by the State Coordinator at the World Congress for Infant Mental Health Annual Conference in Rome, Italy.



## Wisconsin's program-wide implementing sites are located in these communities



Statewide Pyramid Model Coordinators  
Julie Betchkal, Department of Children and Families (l.) and  
Lana Nenide, Wisconsin Alliance for Infant Mental Health (r.)

# Stories from the Field: One Community's Commitment to All Children

*“Every Child Thrives (ECT) is a collective impact effort uniting community partners in Wisconsin’s Dodge and Jefferson Counties. It is centered on the shared purpose of ensuring all children thrive in health, learning and life. Launched in 2017, ECT uses data to drive decisions and align resources to support what works.”*

In collaboration with ECT community partners the Greater Watertown Community Health Foundation (GWCHF), made efforts to ensure strong social and emotional frameworks existed in the community to support families and early childhood settings. Beginning in 2018, sites were identified to pilot **Pyramid Model** implementation in child care and school district settings – Future All Stars Academy (Juneau), Dodgeland School District (Juneau), Mary Linsmeier (Watertown), and Watertown Unified School District. GWCHF established **external coaching support** with the guidance and assistance of WI-AIMH. Leadership teams and coaches attended Implementation Academy in May 2018, beginning the implementation within these sites. Sites participated in Pyramid Model training with external coaches throughout the school year.

TalkReadPlaytime playgroups were piloted in 2018 as well, utilizing the **PIWI curriculum** in conjunction with the Daily Vroom app. Watertown Family Center part-



nered with Jefferson County Birth to Three staff to provide additional resources and support for families attending the TalkRead-Playtime sessions. Reeseville Public Library hosted the other TalkReadPlaytime pilot and both sites have these playgroups scheduled for 2019 as well. With a community approach to implementation, **external coaches and internal coaches meet quarterly** to collaborate and make data driven decisions to move implementation sites forward. Benchmarks of Quality data shows how **coaching support, training, and collaboration are key to ensuring continued growth occurs within implementation sites.**

Commitment to ensure children and families are supported with Pyramid Model practices continues to grow as ECT and GWCHF are currently making plans to bring more early child care centers and school districts into the community implementation as well as offer continued PIWI groups and extend into offering Positive Solutions for Families groups. WI-AIMH, GWCHF, and external coaches are closely collaborating to continue to push and support implementation within these communities.

For additional information about this project, visit [www.watertownhealthfoundation.com/everychildthrives/index.html](http://www.watertownhealthfoundation.com/everychildthrives/index.html)



*“I love TPOT! It has helped me become a better teacher and at the same time it gives students important tools that they will be using for the rest of their lives.”*

*~ Classroom Teacher,  
program-wide implementing site*



# Appleton Area School District's Program-wide Pyramid Model Implementation

*“The purpose of the Community Pyramid Model Leadership Team is to provide an infrastructure that directs and supports site leadership teams in the implementation of evidence-based practices promoted by the Pyramid model with fidelity.”*

~From the Appleton 4K Collaborative Mission and Vision document

In 2015, after careful planning, the Appleton Community 4K program, in partnership with Child Care programs in the community, began the journey of program-wide implementation of the Pyramid Model in all 4K community partner locations.

Using a cohort model, the school district supported their partner programs in developing a leadership team, building the capacity of an internal coach and measuring outcomes for all children.

This year, the fourth cohort of programs was trained, raising the total invested programs to four school host sites and 20 community partner sites. In collaboration with the school district, these programs provide training and coaching support not only to their 4K classrooms, but to their Child Care and Head Start staff. According to Suzette Preston, Director of the Appleton Community 4K, “To support only the 4K classrooms just wasn’t a model that would work for our community when we knew a majority of our students were moving from 4K classrooms to child care or wrap around care in the same center. We want for them to experience the same expectations, same vocabulary and same universal learning strategies and supports, such as Tucker Turtle, to build consistent and reliable safe and trusting environments and relationships.”

To support this work, the 4K collaboration developed a “Community Pyramid Model Leadership Team,” meet-



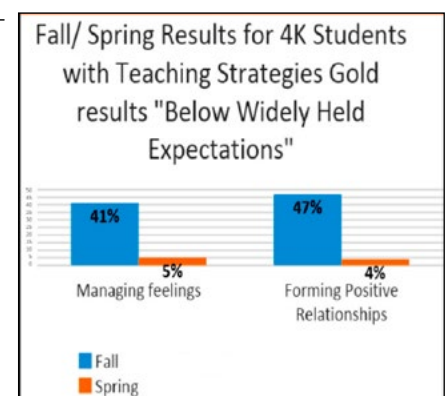
Appleton Community Pyramid Model Leadership team proudly wears t-shirts that display community-wide expectations: “Be Helpful; Be Safe; Be Kind”

ing monthly to work toward implementing the practices measured by the Community Benchmarks of Quality. The Appleton Area School District has invested by creating a Pyramid Model external coach position that supports the work of the leadership team in each program.

The Pyramid Model coaching process has extended into AASD’s Even Start Family Literacy program—serving families of children from birth to five. The program is coaching Toddler room teachers in classroom practices that enhance social and emotional competence. Trained program facilitators provide PIWI parent/child play-groups to support confident, competent and responsive parenting practices. “Kids are happy, there is more peer interaction and toddlers are using their words when they experience conflict,” notes external coach Joan Rice. Additionally, a collaborative team provides several networking opportunities each year through Positive Solutions for Families for parents of preschoolers to learn and practice positive behavior strategies at home.

The hard, intentional, and collaborative work is paying off. The district is carefully monitoring outcomes for students. Data from 2017, tells the story of closing gaps for the most vulnerable stu-

dents—children who are showing developmental need in social and emotional skills. Teaching Strategies Gold results *indicate significant reduction in developmental delay* in two key social and emotional areas—managing feelings and forming positive relationships. Of the 41% of children who demonstrated “fall below widely held expectations” classroom skills and behaviors in the area of managing feelings at the beginning of the school year, just 5% continued to “fall below widely held expectations” for students in 4K in the Spring. Results in the area of managing feelings fell from 47% “below widely held expectations” to only 4% in Spring.





layout and design by Tina Hogle



Created by Julie Betchkal and Lana Nenide under the direction and review of the Wisconsin Pyramid Model Statewide Leadership Team

*funding provided by the Wisconsin Department of Children and Families*