



Roadmap

to Effective Intervention Practices

6

Statewide Implementation of the Pyramid Model

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*Glen Dunlap, Barbara J. Smith, Lise Fox, Karen Blase,
Donna Nylander, Alissa Rausch, and Tom Rendon*



This document is part of the *Roadmap to Effective Intervention Practices* series of syntheses, intended to provide summaries of existing evidence related to assessment and intervention for social-emotional challenges of young children. The purpose of the syntheses is to offer consumers (professionals, other practitioners, administrators, families, etc.) practical information in a useful, concise format and to provide references to more complete descriptions of validated assessment and intervention practices. This Road Map is co-produced by NCPMI and the Pyramid Model Consortium (PMC).

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Introduction

This document is a guide – a “Road Map” – for implementing widespread use of the Pyramid Model for Promoting Social and Emotional Competence in Infants and Young Children and part of a series of guides from the National Center for Pyramid Model Innovation (NCPMI) (<https://challengingbehavior.cbcs.usf.edu/index.html>). This particular Road Map was produced in collaboration with the Pyramid Model Consortium (PMC) (<https://www.pyramidmodel.org/>).

Pyramid Model Framework and Implementation Commitment to Equity: The National Center for Pyramid Model Innovations (NCPMI) promotes policies and practices that advance equity, diversity, and the full inclusion and participation of all young children and their families in early care and education environments (<https://challengingbehavior.cbcs.usf.edu/Implementation/Equity/index.html>). The Pyramid Model practices and implementation approach affirm and celebrate the unique identities of young children and their families across all social identities. In accordance with this affirmation:

- ▶ NCPMI is dedicated to developing and disseminating products and materials that affirm the highest levels of dignity, respect, and individuality of each child, family, colleague, and community.
- ▶ NCPMI is committed to implementing the Pyramid Model to promote more equitable and just early care and education environments for young children, especially for those children who are historically marginalized. NCPMI will promote equitable outcomes for young children by (a) confronting and dispelling implicit and explicit biases; (b) improving advocacy for young children and families who are often subject to biases; and (c) informing changes in policies, practices, and systems through advocacy.

NCPMI promotes the development of authentic relationships with young children, families, and communities to enhance the capacity of early care and learning environments and systems to:

- ▶ promote the social, emotional, and behavioral outcomes of all young children,
- ▶ eliminate the use of biased and inappropriate discipline practices, including suspension and expulsion,
- ▶ promote family engagement,
- ▶ use data for decision-making,
- ▶ integrate early childhood and infant mental health consultation, and
- ▶ foster full inclusion, access, and participation of all children.

NCPMI provides resources for addressing equity, such as an Equity Coaching Guide (<https://challengingbehavior.cbcs.usf.edu/Implementation/Equity/Guide/index.html>) and the Behavior Incident Report System, which provides data to program leadership teams about possible disproportionality in the use of exclusionary discipline in response to problem behavior in groups of children (https://challengingbehavior.cbcs.usf.edu/docs/BIR_readiness_checklist.pdf). Considerations of equity and inclusion of children and their families regardless of ability status, race, ethnicity, culture, home language, geography, socio-economic status, family composition, or other identities are made at any level of implementation and across all four essential structures.

The Road Map: was written for use by a cross-sector team that is providing guidance and the coordination for the systems change effort to implement the Pyramid Model. Usually, the process is facilitated by an individual or a small, core group of individuals. We will refer to this individual as the “State Pyramid Model Coordinator,” but it should be understood that this term might refer to more than one person. It is also understood that the coordinator has been authorized by the leading state agencies to undertake this effort and that these agencies have made a commitment to work in a cross-sector manner to accomplish the goal of implementing the Pyramid Model throughout the state’s early childhood and early intervention service delivery systems.

This “Road Map” addresses **two major elements** that are instrumental in the process of planning and sustaining the high-fidelity implementation of the Pyramid Model.

- ▶ The first element is the stages of implementation, which refers to the major steps that must be followed in any effort of high-fidelity implementation of an evidence-based practice (<https://nirn.fpg.unc.edu/ai-hub>). A deep understanding of these stages and how they unfold is useful in the planning for sustainable adoption of evidence-based practices, including the Pyramid Model.
- ▶ The second element is four essential structures that are needed for high fidelity implementation of the Pyramid Model as described in the State-wide Implementation Guide (SIG) (<https://challengingbehavior.cbcs.usf.edu/Implementation/State/index.html>). The SIG and the four essential structures are a result of lessons learned in assisting states in the state-wide implementation of the Pyramid Model over the course of 20 years. The structures are: (1) the State Leadership Team, (2) a Professional Development Network of Program Implementation Coaches (sometimes referred to as a program coach), (3) Implementation and Demonstration sites, and (4) data and evaluation systems. Throughout this Road Map, links are provided to the State-wide Implementation Guide for examples and resources.

Element #1: Stages of Implementation

Successful implementation will happen in *stages of implementation* and takes consistent cross-sector commitment, time, effort, and resources over several years to implement the Pyramid Model with a necessary level of attention to fidelity, the achievement of outcomes, scale-up, and sustainability. Implementation can take up to five years beyond the initial implementation period to replicate the model throughout a state’s numerous sites and programs in which young children receive care and education. Efforts to implement the Pyramid Model are more likely to be successful if coordinators and implementers understand and use the stages of implementation to take actions in a sequence that aligns with each stage. We urge readers of this Road Map to become familiar with how the stages are conceptualized and used (<https://nirn.fpg.unc.edu/module-4>). As a brief summary, the stages of implementation are (1) planning and installation, (2) implementation (initial to full), and (3) scale-up and sustainability.

Planning and Installation Stages

This stage involves a determination that there is a need to implement the model, a widespread commitment to implement the model, and the right resources to implement the model effectively. This stage culminates in a decision to implement the Pyramid Model and a written implementation plan (or action plan) as a map for the work ahead. NOTE: Typically, the exploration stage is focused on the selection of the preferred evidence-based practice. This Road Map assumes that the

activities of exploration have been conducted and that a commitment to the Pyramid Model has been made. However, there are planning activities that must be conducted, particularly around the organization of the State Leadership Team and building support for the initiative with key stakeholders.

The activities during installation include preparing programs and their practitioners to use Pyramid Model strategies and practices in their early childhood settings. These activities are related to the selection of Program Implementation Coaches, implementation programs, and staff; arranging for training on the Pyramid Model practices for each group; developing coaching resources; and establishing an infrastructure for evaluation (e.g., data systems, selection of program data coordinators). Major outcomes of this stage include the selection and support of the Professional Development Network of Program Implementation Coaches, early start-up of the Implementation Sites and their Program Leadership Teams, the beginning of training and coaching for them, and establishing data systems. Sustainability planning in this stage includes looking ahead and predicting the resources needed as additional programs and services implement the Pyramid Model (e.g., additional trainers and coaches, expanded data systems).

Implementation Stage

This stage is about actually doing the work, moving from Initial Implementation to Full Implementation. Initial implementation is characterized by high levels of coaching and support for Program Leadership Teams, practitioner coaches, and practitioners. Everyone is new to their roles, and the first miles of this journey can be filled with detours and unexpected barriers that must be negotiated and overcome. Program Leadership Teams are meeting regularly, establishing data systems, and providing training and coaching. Initial implementation in sites might involve implementing with high fidelity in parts of the program, such as in a few classrooms of a Head Start, public preschool, childcare, community preschool, or early intervention (EI) agency or service area while having a vision for program-wide implementation.

Full Implementation occurs at a given Pyramid Model site when all elements of the infrastructure (e.g., training, coaching, data collection) needed to support high fidelity implementation by all staff are in place, and Pyramid Model practices are being implemented with fidelity across all classrooms or program settings. This usually means that all of the classrooms (or other units) are implementing the model and that all adults and children are engaged with the evidence-based practices at all levels. At this point, Implementation Sites might be selected to serve as Demonstration sites.

During the implementation stage, structures to assure communication among all stakeholders are developed. For instance, feedback loops from sites to the State Leadership Team are established to share data and to identify challenges at the program level that the State Leadership Team solves. Communication protocols are established with other stakeholders such as programs, policymakers, board members, or funders to ensure widespread awareness of the initiative and outcomes.

Scale-Up & Sustainability

In this Road Map, expansion and scale-up refer to the same thing – increasing the number of communities and settings using the Pyramid Model within the state so that more children and their families have ready access to effective social-emotional intervention and supports. It might include plans to expand the Pyramid Model to family childcare, home visitation programs, or kindergarten. Scale-up typically requires the State Leadership Team to plan for and provide an expanded infrastructure (e.g., increased numbers of Program Implementation Coaches so that training and program implementation coaches are available to more programs) both for the new implementers, as well as sustaining support for the programs that have already achieved full implementation.

With each expansion effort, the State Leadership Team will need to be aware that the stages of implementation need to be purposefully revisited. This means: (1) a return to planning for the expansion or scale-up effort, (2) installation work in new sites to get everyone trained, organizations on board, and materials developed or purchased for the new settings and communities, (3) extra support at new sites and in new communities during initial implementation and ongoing monitoring and support until full implementation is reached, and 4) sustaining support to the early implementers to ensure the

maintenance of high-fidelity implementation. Scale-up involves expanding from the original implementers and Demonstration Sites to additional programs that are referred to in this Road Map simply as “Implementation Sites”.

In addition to the three stages described above, it is important to always think about how high-fidelity implementation will be sustained over time. We do not consider sustainability to be a separate stage but rather understand it is an important part of each stage.

Element #2: Essential Structures of Statewide Pyramid Model Implementation

There are four *essential structures* to state-wide Pyramid Model implementation:

- ▶ State Leadership Team,
- ▶ Professional Development Network of Program Implementation Coaches,
- ▶ Implementation and Demonstration Sites, and
- ▶ Data and Evaluation Systems.

Each structure is described below, along with activities during each implementation stage. In the remainder of this Road Map, we describe the activities of the essential structures needed for state-wide implementation for each of the stages of implementation. We begin with more detailed information on the State Leadership Team and their activities as they will be responsible for the guidance of state-wide implementation and establishing all of the structures for implementation.

State Leadership Team

The State Leadership Team (SLT) is a group (this may be an already existing group) of state-level people who decide to form a collaborative, cross-sector team to develop policies, procedures, resources, and other mechanisms to plan, implement, evaluate, and sustain a state-wide professional development (PD) system that supports the high fidelity use of the Pyramid Model. The primary goal of the SLT is to ensure structures and resources are available to programs so that they are able to adopt the Pyramid Model with fidelity. These structures include training, program (external) coaching, practitioner (internal) coaching, data systems, and the necessary financial and technical assistance.

The SLT is comprised of approximately 10-15 people who are passionate about the Pyramid Model and who can either make decisions for their agency or program or can report back with a decision within two weeks. Members of the Team include family members and agency leaders from IDEA Part C/early intervention and Part B/preschool; Head Start; childcare; public school preschool; and other programs and settings where young children, including those with or at risk for delays or disabilities and their families participate. Additional Team members should include state-wide training and technical assistance (T/TA) initiatives; state department of education and early childhood; special education and Positive Behavioral Intervention and Support (PBIS) initiatives; mental health; Maternal and Child Health; child welfare; family organizations; evaluators; and higher education (community college, 4-year institutions).

The SLT agrees to meet monthly and to adopt logistics and activities that ensure their effectiveness as a collaborative team. Such logistics include: developing a written, collaborative mission and vision statement; decision-making activities that lead to feelings of ownership and full participation of all team members (e.g., only members may participate in meetings and, if absent, agree to support decisions made in their absence); regular meeting times with agendas, meeting evaluations and

meeting summaries; and a written action plan based upon the team's regular self-assessment on the State Benchmarks of Quality. For a full description of the SLT and activities as well as samples of mission and vision statements, action plans, and logistics and activities for productive meetings, see the SLT section of the State-wide Implementation Guide (SIG): <https://ectacenter.org/sig/slt.asp>. The State Benchmarks of Quality (SBoQ) guides this work for the SLT.

State Benchmarks of Quality: State-wide implementation of the Pyramid Model is a complex and multi-faceted endeavor. The process has many moving parts, and it can be a tremendous challenge for the State Leadership Team to organize and monitor the numerous activities that need to occur. The State Benchmarks of Quality was developed over several years to help State Leadership Teams (SLTs) gauge the progress of implementation efforts. The State Benchmarks of Quality (SBoQ) is a tool to be used by SLTs for monitoring and self-evaluation, and it can be used as a template for understanding and mapping the overall initiative of Pyramid Model Implementation (<https://challengingbehavior.cbcs.usf.edu/Implementation/State/index.html>). The SBoQ is like the "job description" of the SLT. The SLT should self-assess on the SBoQ twice a year at least for the first year or two and at least once a year in subsequent years.

The SBoQ consists of benchmarks organized under various "critical elements" of the implementation process. For each benchmark, there is a column to indicate the person or persons responsible for the activity and an evaluation section where each benchmark is rated as being either "not in place," "needs improvement," or "in place." The tool can be completed by SLT members individually or as a group; however, it must also be reviewed by the SLT as a whole to reach a consensus score and plans for the next steps. Progress on the SBoQ can be graphed using a simple excel spreadsheet.

The SLT develops, implements, scales-up, and sustains these policies and resources over time. The SLT should plan on 3-5 years developing the Professional Development Network of Program Implementation Coaches to provide support to and mentor programs, the selection and support of Implementation and Demonstration Sites to reach fidelity, and establishing and using evaluation systems sufficient to measure implementation across the state. Additionally, adequate resources are essential for staff support to the SLT as well as the Pyramid Model system. The SLT identifies initiatives across the state to link to (e.g., QRIS) as well as expanding the effort to other PM innovations including the use of appropriate discipline practices, equity, and inclusion.

As the SLT develops and implements the various components of the Pyramid Model PD system, such as Implementation and Demonstration Sites and the network of Program Implementation Coaches, it also plans for future needs related to sustaining these components and scaling them up. For instance, as the network of Program Implementation Coaches is selected and trained, the SLT develops plans for addressing turnover in the network members and adding members to the network to cover additional regions of the state. Second, as new programs implement the Pyramid Model, the SLT ensures necessary coaching resources continue to be provided to the earlier implementers to ensure they sustain their high-fidelity implementation. The SLT ensures that fiscal resources continue to grow as the number of programs and communities implementing and sustaining the Pyramid Model grows.

The principal emphases of the SLT's work as described in the State Benchmarks of Quality (SBoQ) are:

- ▶ Establishing a Professional Development Network of Program Implementation Coaches comprised of individuals who can train and coach Program Leadership Teams to high fidelity implementation;
- ▶ Establishing Implementation Sites to fully implement the Pyramid Model program-wide and from these, identify Demonstration Sites that can demonstrate the process and outcomes of high fidelity implementation and mentor other sites;
- ▶ Ensuring the availability of behavior specialists within programs or who are external to programs to address the needs presented by severe, persistent challenging behavior;
- ▶ Ensuring family engagement and empowerment throughout the initiative;
- ▶ Establishing a data system to evaluate fidelity of implementation as well as outcomes;
- ▶ Developing and monitoring a plan to scale up and sustain all of these components; and,
- ▶ Develop a marketing/communication system to promote Pyramid Model and its' benefits to new programs, agencies, and funding opportunities.

Planning & Installation Stages

During the early stages of the SLT's work together, they focus on forming an effective team, making decisions together about the Pyramid Model Professional Development (PD) system, developing their norms and logistics, and confirming their membership, vision, and mission. They develop their action plan based on the self-assessment on the State BoQ and begin building the PD system. Based on their action plans, the SLT creates workgroups to accomplish the activities. Workgroups can focus on one strategy of the action plan and can bring in voices in addition to the SLT members, such as key individuals with knowledge of the particular workgroup area of focus. Workgroup examples include communications and marketing, data and evaluation, higher education, and finance. The focus of their work is on the goal that programs and communities state-wide will have access to effective trainers, coaches, and behavior specialists including necessary resources and on-site coaching that result in the high fidelity adoption, implementation, and sustainability of the Pyramid Model. They also begin to develop the data systems that will ensure they have the information for quality improvement, ensuring fidelity of implementation, tracking, and reporting child and program outcomes.

During the installation stage, the SLT ensures buy-in across the key service systems and adequate resources (financial and staffing) for their work. Data are collected and used for making decisions. During installation, the state-wide Professional Development Network of Program Implementation Coaches is recruited to build and sustain high fidelity implementation. Plans are developed for recruiting Implementation Sites and a small number of programs are selected to be the initial implementers. All Implementation Sites and coaches have a written memorandum of understanding with the SLT that outlines their responsibilities, expectations, and data requirements and the responsibilities and supports to them from the SLT.

Implementation Stage

Local programs that serve young children are selected to serve as Implementation Sites. Each program has its own Program Leadership Team that is mentored and supported by a Program Implementation Coach (external to the programs). The Program Leadership Team is comprised of administration, family members, and providers and develops policies and supports to staff such as training and practice-based coaching. Staff are selected to serve as Practitioner Coaches who are trained by the Program Implementation Coach to provide practice-based coaching to staff. Sites use the Benchmarks of Quality to guide their work as well as other measures (see the *Roadmap to Data Decision-Making and Program-wide Implementation of the Pyramid Model* <https://challengingbehavior.cbcs.usf.edu/Implementation/Data/index.html>) learning how to collect data and conduct data-based decisions. Implementation Sites receive early and extensive technical assistance (TA) by Program Implementation Coaches to reach program-wide high fidelity. Some are selected to be Demonstration Sites that agree to provide the state with at least annual data demonstrating the effectiveness of the Pyramid Model. They also agree to mentor other programs, provide tours and additional information indicating how and why programs should adopt the Pyramid Model. Demonstration Sites play an important role in communicating to the State Leadership Team challenges or barriers to full-scale high-fidelity implementation that the State Leadership Team can resolve to pave the way for future program implementation.

The State Leadership Team provides an annual public celebration of the outcomes and accomplishments of the high-fidelity programs. The annual celebration event is an opportunity to support cross-site communication and sharing, gathering stories and data for annual reports and future planning for expansion and innovation. During this stage, the SLT also plans for the scale-up of the Pyramid Model throughout the state by building state-wide capacity (funding, staffing) for training and supporting new Pyramid Model programs, coaches, trainers, and behavior specialists while they are supporting the high-fidelity implementation of the Demonstration Sites. Communication links or feedback loops are established to ensure the SLT is getting the information they need to address challenges and barriers and to provide the T/TA the sites need.

Scale-Up & Sustainability

The SLT action plan includes a scale-up and sustainability plan with strategies for sustaining all the components (SLT, Professional Development Network of Program Implementation Coaches, Implementation and Demonstration Sites, Data and Evaluation Systems) as well as scaling up the number of programs and communities using the Pyramid Model with high

fidelity. For instance, sustaining the effectiveness of the SLT is critical to the success of the initiative. SLTs should have plans related to onboarding new members as membership turns over including orientation and mentoring. The scale-up could also include Pyramid Model implementation work in other early childhood settings (e.g., homeless shelters, family childcare, home visitation programs, kindergarten). The scale-up and sustainability plan addresses turnover of leadership on the SLT, in the Implementation and Demonstration Sites, and Professional Development Network of Program Implementation Coaches. Budgets are developed to provide ongoing support and resources for current and new Pyramid Model trainers, external and internal coaches, behavior specialists, and Implementation and Demonstration Sites. Such support includes planning for turnover and succession of key individuals.

Additionally, the SLT institutionalizes and embeds the Pyramid Model within state initiatives such as Quality Rating Systems and Early Learning Guidelines. The SLT develops information and public awareness venues such as a website, newsletter, webinars, and reports of the outcomes of high-fidelity implementation to raise interest and commitment from programs, policymakers, funders, and other stakeholders. The SLT annually prepares an evaluation report that describes: (a) the extent to which high fidelity adoption is being implemented, sustained and scaled- up; b) impact on child, provider, and program outcomes; and (c) impact of training and coaching. The evaluation report is used by the SLT for progress monitoring and planning and providing a public report on outcomes.

Innovation and adaptation: Throughout the stages of implementation, the SLT adapts, innovates, and addresses critical issues as they arise. For example, the SLT will decide how to coordinate or embed Pyramid Model work with state-wide inclusion efforts. The SLT will consider equity and social justice issues as they arise and determine what information they need to address them and how to move forward. Suspension and expulsion policies and procedures are clearly aligned with Pyramid Model goals and objectives. The SLT determines the coordination of these efforts state-wide and across agencies. NCPMI provides resources to help guide SLTs in their efforts to engage with and address innovation opportunities and challenges through Pyramid Model efforts (<https://challengingbehavior.cbcs.usf.edu/Implementation/Equity/index.html>; <https://challengingbehavior.cbcs.usf.edu/Pyramid/inclusion.html>; <https://challengingbehavior.cbcs.usf.edu/Pyramid/suspension.html>).

Professional Development Network (PDN) of Program Implementation Coaches

The Professional Development Network of Program Implementation Coaches (PDN) is a group of carefully selected professional development (PD) experts responsible for delivering training and providing program coaching to Program Leadership Teams. The network of program implementation coaches is also responsible for training practitioner coaches and behavior specialists to build program capacity for establishing and supporting high fidelity implementation of the Pyramid Model in Implementation and Demonstration sites. The network of program implementation coaches also promotes awareness and adoption through presentations and training on the Pyramid Model.

The PDN is established and supervised by the State Leadership Team (SLT) with one or two members or representatives of the SLT or staff associated with the SLT serving as paid coordinators. The PDN is comprised of individuals from around the state who are experienced providers of training and technical assistance and whose current professional responsibilities can enable them to add Pyramid Model training, technical assistance, and coaching support to programs to their scope of work. For more information on the PDN see the SIG at <https://ectacenter.org/sig/pdn.asp>.

The members of the PDN are selected by the SLT as one of the initial activities during the first year of implementation. Criteria for selection include: (a) experience and skills as trainers and providers of TA and coaching, (b) experience and expertise with young children, family support, and inclusion, (c) availability of time and ability to commit to the work, (d) interest and commitment to the Pyramid Model, (e) diversity to match the demographics of the children and families in the state and, (f) geographic distribution within the state and the state's population centers. Some states use a competitive application process for the selection of PDN members.

When members are selected, a commitment to participate should be formalized with a collaborative agreement or memorandum of understanding (MOU) signed by the PDN member, the member's employer, and a representative of the SLT. The agreement or MOU should specify the total amount of time (FTE) that is expected for training, meetings, and delivery of Pyramid Model training and technical assistance over a year's period of time. Ideally, the commitment should be for a minimum duration of 3-5 years.

All members of the PDN must participate in training on all elements of the Pyramid Model and Pyramid Model implementation. Even if a member is expected to focus on a specific area of expertise (e.g., training, Part C, intensive behavior support), it is important for the member to be proficient in all areas of PDN activity (e.g., training, technical assistance, coaching, classrooms, home visiting, etc.). Comprehensive training on all tiers of the Pyramid Model for preschool and infant/toddler strategies, program-wide implementation, and leadership should be provided for all PDN members before Pyramid Model implementation activities are initiated. Program Implementation Coaches need to be competent in training program leadership teams on all the data collection tools and processes and using the data for making decisions and improving services. Another area of competence that Program Implementation Coaches need is promoting equity and supporting program leadership teams in building equity competence within their program. NCPMI and PMC have resources to support coaches and programs in building equity competence, including a Pyramid Model Equity Coaching Guide: <https://challengingbehavior.cbcs.usf.edu/Implementation/Equity/index.html>.

Behavior Specialists: The PDN should incorporate "behavior specialists". The purpose of a behavior specialist is to provide training, coaching, and facilitation for site-based teams to support children with persistent challenging behavior. A behavior specialist should be a person who can effectively provide training, coaching, and facilitation on all aspects of the process of collaborative, team-based functional assessment and intervention for children with significant challenging behavior that require intensive, individualized interventions. It is important to build capacity within a state to address persistent challenging behaviors. The network of program implementation coaches should include members who are trained as behavior specialists and each local site or community should seek to develop this capacity by having at least one individual available to all programs who has the skills and experience to serve as a behavior specialist. While a less specialized individual who works within a program may assume this role who can respond immediately to activate and facilitate the behavior support process, it is still essential for programs implementing the Pyramid Model to have access to an external behavior specialist.

The principal area of expertise required to fill the role of behavior specialist is in guiding and implementing the process of assessment-based, individualized positive behavior support. Behavior specialists must have extensive knowledge and experience in (a) teaming, (b) functional behavioral assessment, and (c) designing, implementing, and evaluating individualized behavior support plans. Behavior specialists often come to their role with backgrounds in applied behavior analysis, mental health consultation, early childhood special education, and program-wide positive behavior support.

Specific preparation for individuals serving the role of behavior specialists in the Pyramid Model includes training in understanding and addressing challenging behavior and providing individualized interventions (Pyramid Model practices) and in a process for facilitating the development and implementation of assessment-based behavior support plans including the "Prevent-Teach-Reinforce for Young Children (PTR-YC)" and "Prevent-Teach-Reinforce for Families (PTR-Families)" model https://challengingbehavior.cbcs.usf.edu/docs/PTRYC_what-to-expect.pdf; https://challengingbehavior.cbcs.usf.edu/training/webinar/archive/2012/12-14/2012-12-14_Prevent-Teach-Reinforce-for-Young-Children.html. In addition, it is recommended that prospective behavior specialists engage in a supervised case-study-based practicum in which guidance is provided by a behavior specialist mentor for each step of the behavior support process: teaming, goal setting, functional assessment, development of a support plan, implementation and evaluation of the support plan, and maintenance and expansion of the plan.

The principal activities necessary for PDN operations are listed below according to the stages of implementation, and they are also listed in the State Benchmarks of Quality.

Planning & Installation Stages

This stage occurs in the first year and is when the SLT plans for the establishment and operations of the PDN. The SLT must consider how members will be selected, how MOUs will be written, how initial training for the PDN will be provided, how training and coaching activities will be documented and evaluated, how activities will be managed, and how the SLT will maintain and exercise oversight, and how the membership and high-quality training and coaching activities will be sustained and expanded over time. The SLT must address how the PDN will reach all sectors of the early childhood system (e.g., Head Start, school districts, childcare, Part C early intervention) and whether the PDN will have representatives from these sectors. The plan for PDN development, implementation, maintenance, and expansion should be prepared in written form.

Implementation Stage

In the initial Implementation Stage, the PDN is selected and trained. Procedures for managing activities of the PDN and for reporting to the SLT must be implemented. Assignments for PDN members need to be put in place with consideration for training of trainers TA and external coaching for the initial Implementation and Demonstration Sites. Areas of expertise should be delineated, and assignments made accordingly. It is important to keep in mind that all members of the PDN should be actively involved in filling roles that are functional for (a) building state-wide capacity, (b) developing fidelity of Pyramid Model implementation in the Implementation and Demonstration Sites, and (c) expanding awareness of the Pyramid Model in communities and early childhood agencies around the state. An important role for the SLT to provide ongoing support to the PDN, such as regular communication, group calls for peer support and brainstorming challenges and solutions, data use, and updates on new resources.

Scale-Up & Sustainability

Plans must be in place for addressing attrition, installing and training replacement members of the PDN, and expanding the membership of the PDN as sites are added to the state-wide initiative in subsequent years. For additional support for new members, mentors should be selected for each new PDN person.

Implementation and Demonstration Sites

Pyramid Model Implementation Sites can be a building level program, a cluster of public preschool or Head Start or childcare classrooms, an early childhood program comprised of multiple centers guided by an organizational unit, or a unit of Part C/early intervention services. Part C early intervention programs can be an Implementation Site when a group of home visiting professionals is working within an organizational structure providing supervision, collaborative teaming, and professional development. Each Implementation Site has a Program Leadership Team and staff who provide training and coaching and collect data on the fidelity of implementation and on child outcomes. For more information on Implementation Programs and program-wide implementation see: <https://ectacenter.org/sig/isds.asp>; <https://challengingbehavior.cbcs.usf.edu/Implementation/Program/index.html>

While all sites and programs that implement the Pyramid Model are Implementation Sites, Demonstration sites are Implementation Sites at high fidelity that agree to serve as showplaces for high fidelity implementation. Demonstration Sites serve the state-wide initiative by sharing data on the outcomes of the high-fidelity implementation of the Pyramid Model, the multi-year process of implementation, and by hosting visitations from policymakers and from personnel interested in implementing the model in their own programs. These functions not only provide important information to the SLT as well as public awareness, but also help to build the political will necessary to fund, support, and sustain the state-wide effort. In exchange, Demonstration Sites receive extra training, coaching, evaluation support, and substantial recognition from the state-wide initiative.

The average time for a site to achieve a high level of fidelity in implementing the Pyramid Model program-wide is approximately 3-5 years. It may take a year or two longer for very large programs. The process requires the development of a Program Leadership Team, an investment in staff training and ongoing professional development, and identification and deployment of resources for (a) practitioner coaching; (b) collection and summary of data; and (c) facilitation of individualized behavior support for children with the most persistent challenging behaviors.

Community Implementation. Community-wide implementation can be a unit of focus for the SLT. In this approach, Community Implementation Teams are formed, they select or access the PDN Program Implementation Coaches, they select and support Implementation Sites, and receive and analyze fidelity data. They communicate with the SLT about supports needed, policy changes, and the data they have collected from their trainers, coaches, and sites. They use the Community Benchmarks of Quality to guide and assess progress on their community-wide efforts to implement the Pyramid Model.

Planning & Installation Stages

The State Leadership Team (SLT) establishes criteria for selecting Implementation and Demonstration Sites. It is recommended to “think big, but start small” by starting with 3-5 sites for initial training and implementation. Each site creates its own Leadership Team, and members of the Program Leadership Team participate in training for program-wide implementation of the Pyramid Model. Personnel from each site are identified to participate in training on all three tiers of the Pyramid Model, and at least one professional from each site is identified to participate in training to serve as the site’s data coordinator and another professional is identified to serve as the site’s practitioner coach. The Program Leadership Team uses the Benchmarks of Quality to guide and track their systems change work.

Implementation Stage

The implementation stage begins with the completion of all training for site personnel including administrators. This training is organized by the SLT and generally provided by members of the network of Program Implementation Coaches. Then, the Program Implementation Coach provides external coaching to help the Program Leadership Team begin implementation of the Pyramid Model strategies and collection of fidelity data. The Program Leadership Team meets regularly and uses the Benchmarks of Quality to guide their efforts. The data are used for internal decision-making (such as identifying professional development objectives) and for sharing with the SLT so that the SLT can deliver targeted assistance and build public awareness of the outcomes of high-fidelity implementation of the model. Typically, a site will begin implementation with only a few units (e.g., classrooms) and will add units as the initial implementers gain fluency in the application of Pyramid Model strategies at all tiers of the Pyramid Model. Demonstration sites provide “demonstration” functions by sharing their data with the SLT and by offering tours and descriptions of their program to prospective implementers, policymakers, and funders.

Scale-Up & Sustainability

As Sites acquire proficiency in implementing Pyramid Model strategies, the SLT should plan for adding new Implementation Sites. This usually occurs in the second year. The SLT must again establish criteria and procedures for site selection. Arrangements for training and initial implementation must be made. Deployment of the Professional Development Network of Program Implementation Coach resources for training and program coaching need to be carefully configured as it is this early expansion phase that can stretch the capacity of the PDN personnel. Some Implementation Sites may choose to participate as additional Demonstration Sites, and others may focus entirely on their own implementation. Either way, the sites must agree to share data on fidelity and child outcomes. These data are essential for the SLT to monitor progress, identify problems, and continue to advocate for improvements and expansions of the Pyramid Model.

It is vitally important to keep in mind that ongoing support, recognition, and celebration are needed for Demonstration Sites to maintain high levels of implementation fidelity and that support for existing sites should not be compromised in efforts to provide training and coaching for new sites. Often there is a need for additional resources to ensure that adequate levels of support (e.g., training, coaching, and evaluation) are offered to sustain existing programs while investing in expansion

and scale-up efforts to new sites. Both the State Leadership Team and the Program Leadership Team should have written sustainability plans. Sustainability plans address turnover in leadership and other personnel, ongoing staff buy-in and expertise of new and continuing personnel, and budgetary and policy changes needed for expansion and sustainability.

Data, Evaluation, and Using Data to Make Decisions

Pyramid Model implementation requires data-based decision making (see Roadmap to Data Decision-Making and Program Wide Implementation of the Pyramid Model <https://challengingbehavior.cbcs.usf.edu/Implementation/Data/index.html>). Measures and evaluation procedures have been established to help programs determine fidelity of implementation and fidelity of intervention practice. Additionally, guidance is provided to State and Program Leadership Teams on how to use the measures, how to collect the data, and how to use the data for making important decisions about needed professional development, problem-solving, policy and programmatic changes, and ensuring family and child success.

For instance, there are fidelity measures for indicating how accurately the Pyramid Model practices are being used by practitioners. These tools, the Teaching Pyramid Observation Tool (TPOT), Teaching Pyramid Infant-Toddler Observation Scale (TPITOS), and the Early Intervention Pyramid Practices Fidelity Instrument (EIPPF) are tools that assess intervention practices fidelity. Other tools include the various Benchmarks of Quality assessments used by teams (i.e., state, program, community, and early intervention); coaching logs; and the Behavior Incidence Report System (BIRS). In addition, it is recommended that programs use a child social-emotional screening measure such as the Ages and Stages Social Emotional Questionnaire (ASQ-SE) (Squires, Bricker, Twombly, 2002).

Planning & Installation Stages

During the planning and installation stage, measures that are currently being used by programs are examined for their alignment to the need for measuring fidelity of implementation and child outcomes. Procedures for the use of evaluation tools are developed and training in evaluation tools is conducted. In addition, data systems for the collection of data are established.

Implementation Stage

In the Implementation Stage, the SLT and programs decide who will collect the data, how and when data will be collected, and how the results will be displayed and used for decision making. Additionally, in this stage, the data are collected and used by program and State Leadership Teams for making decisions such as targeting professional development needs or identifying providers who are proficient and may serve as mentors or coaches to their peers, etc. The data are provided to the SLT as well as challenges or barriers that require SLT attention or needs for program training or coaching.

Scale-Up & Sustainability

Data are used by programs and the SLT to ensure continued high fidelity of implementation and desired child outcomes. Data are reported to the public, funders, and policy makers to market the impact of the Pyramid Model and garner support and resources. As more programs are added, and more data are reported, the SLT decides how much data are needed for the state-wide decision-making. Data systems are adapted and expanded as needed.

The SLT annually prepares an evaluation report that describes: (a) the extent to which high fidelity adoption is being implemented, sustained, and scaled- up; b) impact on child, provider, and program outcomes; (c) impact of training and coaching, (d) reduction in suspensions and expulsions, (e) improvements in the equity of services and diversity awareness. It is used by the SLT for their progress monitoring and planning as well as providing a public report on outcomes. The evaluation

report is an important tool for raising awareness of the impact of the Pyramid Model for the purposes of recruiting new programs, increasing commitment, and developing the policies fiscal resources necessary for state-wide adoption.

Conclusion

This Road Map provides a guide and suggested resources for the state-wide implementation of the Pyramid Model for Promoting Social Emotional Competence in Infants and Young Children. State-wide implementation of the Pyramid Model with fidelity requires attention to the two major elements described above: implementation science and stages (Planning & Installation stages, Implementation stage, Scale-Up & Sustainability) and four essential structures (State Leadership Team, Professional Development Network of Program Implementation Coaches, Implementation and Demonstration Sites, and Data, Evaluation and Using Data to Make Decisions). Examples of how states have used this approach are found on the state pages of the websites of NCPMI (<https://challengingbehavior.cbcs.usf.edu/>) and PMC (<https://www.pyramidmodel.org/>).

References

Squires, J., Bricker, D., & Twombly, E. (2002a). *Ages & Stages Questionnaires: Social-Emotional, A parent completed, child-monitoring system for social-emotional behaviors*. Baltimore, MD: Paul H. Brookes.