



# MARYLAND PYRAMID MODEL ANNUAL REPORT

2021



PREPARED BY PIEC AT THE UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK

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## THE STATE OF EARLY CHILDHOOD IN 2021

*2021 marked another year significantly impacted by the COVID 19 pandemic. Another year with families in flux, concerns about health + safety ranking above all else, and the economic realities of this extended time impacting both children's access to early learning environments as well as the workforce's ability to hold on during these extended stressful circumstances. This year also marked a much needed reckoning with the impact of racism on our public systems - allowing models like the PM an opportunity to directly and intentionally engage in anti-racist efforts.*

## THE PYRAMID MODEL IN MARYLAND

- Maryland has a long history with, and commitment to, the Pyramid Model. We were among the first states to implement the model in 2006 (back when it was known as CSEFEL) starting with just a few county-wide sites. In the years since, the spread of the model has consistently grown, and today, there is some level of Pyramid Model engagement statewide, with trainers and coaches serving all jurisdictions.
- This work has been supported through dedicated funding by the Division of Early Childhood within Maryland's State Department of Education and dependent on the many committed professionals working within local public school PreK and K programs, special education and family advocacy organizations, the state's Department of Behavioral Health, institutes of higher learning, and most recently within the Part C early intervention sector.
- The Parent Infant Early Childhood (PIEC) team @ the University of Maryland School of Social Work has served as the hub of this work, supporting the SLT, the state's trainers, maintaining the MD PM social media (Facebook, Instagram + twitter), accounts as well as a newsletter reaching up to 2,000 people per month, and a PM website ([mdpramidmodelsefel.org](http://mdpramidmodelsefel.org))

The Pyramid Model for Social Emotional Competence in Infants and Young Children (formerly known as SEFEL – the Social Emotional Foundations for Early Learning) is an **evidence-based framework** for promoting and supporting healthy social emotional development for all children. The PM takes a **tiered public health approach** to providing **universal** supports to all children to promote wellness, **targeted** supports to those at risk and **intensive interventions** for those who need them, all supported by an **effective workforce**. The Pyramid Model supports adults within a range of settings and a range of disciplines (including early intervention providers, early educators, families and other professionals).



# PRIORITIES

The work detailed in this report was guided and facilitated by our Pyramid Model State Leadership Team, and focused on the three priorities detailed below. Activities are intentionally aligned across the many spaces where this work is happening, including: state and jurisdiction and program levels, within Part B & Part C and general education services, as well as childcare and infant + early childhood mental health consultation, as you will see detailed in the pages that follow.



## No. 01 – Workforce Development & Support

Our work remains focused on supporting the dissemination of PM practices and principles through supporting the fidelity-anchored activities of trainers and coaches supported by the PIEC team at the University of Maryland School of Social Work. Efforts to measure the impact of this important work, to both support the social and emotional needs of our youngest children, and the educators and child care providers, which has proven to be more important, now more than ever as we work to understand and overcome the impacts of the COVID-19 Pandemic.



## No. 02 – Elevating Equity

In alignment with a wave of efforts to acknowledge the impact of racial-bias, our PM work has taken an intended focus on how this impacts the experiences and services of our youngest students and their families. We prioritized several efforts to elevate efforts to ensure equity and anti-racism within our PM work in Maryland.



## No. 03 – Family Engagement & Support

We know that within a child's earliest years, family and caregiver involvement is vitally important and powerful, yet many early childhood services and programs do not have access to concrete guidance on how to invite and engage families to partner in the work of supporting their child. Correcting this has been our focus, which you will see throughout this report.

AT A  
GLANCE

# THE PYRAMID MODEL IN MARYLAND IN 2021



## WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

- **4,530 PEOPLE** COMPLETED PM RELATED TRAININGS (I&T, PRESCHOOL, TRAUMA, LEADERSHIP, ETC.)
- **375 PEOPLE** COMPLETED PART C PM TRAINING
- **12 NEW PRESCHOOL PM TRAINERS** TRAINED
- **11 TRAINED IN PRACTICE BASED COACHING** AND STARTED YEAR-LONG COMMUNITY OF PRACTICE
- **34 TPOT ASSESSORS** CERTIFIED
- **21 TPITOS ASSESSORS** CERTIFIED

## ELEVATING EQUITY

- HOSTED OUR **1ST ANNUAL SLT EQUITY RETREAT**
- **8 PEOPLE** JOINED A WORKING GROUP TO EDIT PM TRAINING CURRICULUM TO ACKNOWLEDGE THE IMPACT OF RACIAL-BIAS THAT OCCURS WITHIN THE CLASSROOM, AND TO INFUSE A LENS OF ANTI-RACISM.

## FAMILY ENGAGEMENT AND SUPPORT

- **40 POSITIVE SOLUTIONS FOR FAMILIES (PSF) FACILITATORS** TRAINED AND ENGAGED IN FOLLOW-UP COACHING
- **65 FAMILY MEMBERS** COMPLETED A PSF GROUP





# Maryland's Pyramid Model State Leadership Team

In 2021, the SLT restructured from one body that met monthly to an executive team with four subcommittees focused on the following: Data and Evaluation, Family Engagement, Implementation & Demonstration Sites, and Professional Development. The subcommittees include members of the SLT executive committee, members of the Maryland Pyramid Model Master Cadre, and other stakeholders. The structure allows regular input on PM implementation across the state while maintaining the size of the SLT executive team membership suggested by NCPMI. The subcommittees mirror the subsections of the BOQ and work towards the completion of BOQ priorities within their subsection. Each subcommittee selected a committee chair who is responsible for guiding the monthly meetings and setting the subcommittee's priorities. Each subcommittee also includes a liaison to the Elevating Equity Subcommittee to ensure equity remains a focus across each committee. Quarterly, the SLT executive committee holds a longer meeting, allowing each subcommittee to report on their progress.



Our SLT members represent the diversity of the many organizations and services across the state from fields including early intervention, public preschools, Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation, Maryland State Department of Education, and others. For details about the SLT's bylaws and membership, please see here: <https://www.mdpyramidmodelselfel.org/maryland-state-leadership-team>. The figure here shows the agencies represented on the SLT as of 2021.



Thank you to our dedicated SLT members for giving their expertise and volunteering your time. Our collective work is made better through your diverse contributions.



# SLT's VISION & MISSION

The Vision of Maryland's SLT is for families in partnership with the early childhood workforce to have the ability to equitably nurture and support infants' and young children's social emotional development and well-being within their diverse family cultures and communities to foster lifelong success. This can be accomplished through integration of the Pyramid Model with other related promotion, prevention, intervention, and treatment efforts in the state.

Our Mission is to develop, evaluate and sustain a statewide collaborative effort, guided by national models, that supports the local implementation of the Pyramid Model framework. This work is rooted in fidelity within a variety of early childhood programs and settings across communities within the state. We are committed to actualizing this work with deep intentionality around addressing equity and the needs of BIPOC students, educators, families and communities as referenced in our Equity Statement.





# Equity is at the heart of our work.

In addition to our Mission & Vision statements, our SLT felt it important to craft and ratify a specific **Equity Statement**, and the text is below:

In recognition of the historical, systemic and current racial inequities that exist throughout all levels and layers of our society, we acknowledge that our youngest citizens are too often exposed and harmed. We know this delivers a lasting impact on their social and academic trajectories, the most detrimental of which are higher rates of suspension and expulsion among young black, indigenous, and people of color (BIPOC) before they enter kindergarten, which begins the preschool to prison pipeline. We believe that practices that promote social and emotional awareness and skills in both children and adults, like the Pyramid Model, can serve to significantly correct and address these realities. Recognizing this, the Maryland Pyramid Model SLT commits to implementing the Pyramid Model through a culturally responsive and anti-racist lens. In an effort to move this work forward, we are currently focusing on the following action items, and articulate them here to hold ourselves accountable:

- Implementation of a subcommittee dedicated to elevating equity that meets regularly and supports activities of the full SLT, with specific review of goals and accomplishments during the annual review of the Benchmark of Quality (BOQ).
- Ongoing review and adaptation of training and coaching curriculum to increase the equity lens within Maryland Pyramid Model efforts.
- Adding diversity, equity and inclusion measures into the BOQ fidelity items.
- Ongoing intention of adding and elevating the voices and perspectives of BIPOC partners involved in Pyramid Model efforts across the state.





# Elevating Equity Subcommittee

Our PM SLT has been guided by the essential structures laid out by NCPMI's SLT Equity Inventory. July 2020 marked our first convening of the Elevating Equity Subcommittee. Participation in this committee is voluntary, and all SLT members are invited to attend. Priorities:

1. Develop a document to define language around anti-racism, equity, etc. and what those terms mean in early childhood.
2. Review and edit the SLT's vision and mission statements using an equity lens.
3. Updates to Maryland Pyramid Model training content with respect to anti-racism, equity, and culture.
4. Updates to Maryland Pyramid Model/Practice Based Coaching materials to support equity.
5. Develop crosswalk document for BOQ for equity (with respect to all three implementation drivers). Develop crosswalk document for fidelity measures (TPOT, TPITOS, Inventory of Practices, EIPPF) for opportunities to elevate equity.
6. Develop tools to review behavior incident reports with respect to equity for implementation sites.
7. Develop resources for families on how to talk about anti-racism with children.

## Achievements



- ✓ Update SLT vision and mission statements and develop separate equity statement. These were ratified in the April 2021 SLT meeting and made available to the public.
- ✓ Review of new resources and develop of a work plan to produce a guide for infusing equity, culture, and anti-racism in Pyramid Model trainings.
- ✓ Participation in an Equity Retreat in which content from the National Pyramid Model Consortium was shared related to race, equity, and early childhood. Members reflected on how the information impacted our work and what action steps we could take moving forward.
- ✓ Survey PM Trainers to assess knowledge, skills, and attitudes about the topics of diversity, equity, inclusion, anti-racism, and anti-bias as they relate to delivering Pyramid Model trainings. Results from survey were shared with the SLT and used to create targeted support guide to help trainers adequately address these topics in their trainings.
- ✓ Meetings with the University of Maryland's training team and other PM trainers to begin edits to Pyramid Model Training with the goal to infuse equity throughout the Pyramid Model training.



# SLT Subcommittee Accomplishments



## Professional Development

- Formed to improve PM professional development work across the state
- Working to update the PM modules across all tiers to infuse a lens of cultural responsiveness, equity, inclusion, anti-racism, and anti-bias

## Implementation Sites

- Formed to advance efforts to form PM Implementation Sites
- Identifying additional funding mechanisms for sites

## Family Engagement

- Formed to increase the presence and role of families in PM efforts statewide and across programs
- Identifying funding mechanisms to provide stipends for family input

## Fidelity & Evaluation

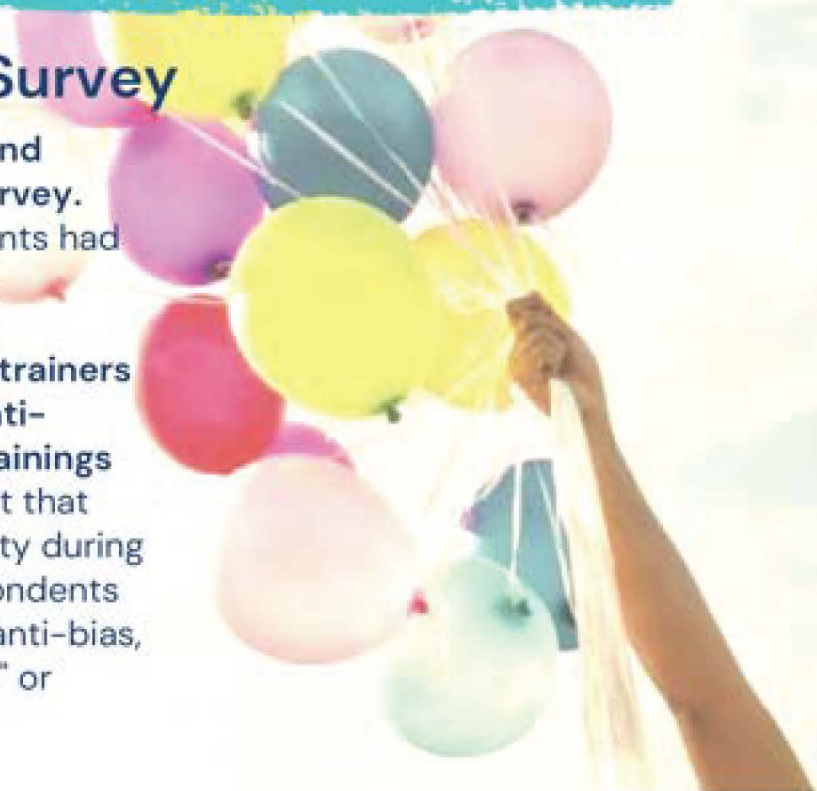
- Formed to review data collection + evaluation across PM efforts
- Tasked with drafting PM reports



# Focus on Supporting Programs & Trainers

## MD PM Trainers Equity Survey

A total of 48 trainers in the PM in Maryland responded to the PM Trainers Equity Survey. Approximately one-third of the respondents had completed a training or course in cultural competence (33%) or anti-bias (27%). An interesting finding of the survey was that **trainers consistently rated the importance of anti-racism and focusing on equity during trainings very highly.** They were less likely to report that they actually center anti-racism and equity during their trainings. In fact, nearly 68% of respondents reported that diversity, equity, inclusion, anti-bias, and/or anti-racism come up either "never" or "infrequently" during their trainings.



## Program PM Implementation Survey

In Fall of 2021, early care and education providers across the state were asked to complete a survey based on BOQ items.

The purpose of the survey was to gauge where childcare providers were in regard to PM implementation. The results provided the SLT's Implementation & Demonstration Site Subcommittee with valuable data about the status of PM implementation across the state and which programs may be good candidates for PM implementation sites.

A total of 407 providers completed the survey. 16% of the respondents had completed PM training within the last five years, and nearly 8% also received practice-based coaching. Providers in Head Start programs were much more likely to be familiar with the Pyramid Model than providers in family- or center-based childcare settings. **Almost 1/2 of providers in all categories reported families were involved in behavior support planning.** Nearly 1/3 had received equity-focused training within the last five years.





# Part C SSIP PM Support



Maryland's engagement in the federal State Systemic Improvement Plan framework offered the MD PM an opportunity to engage PM competencies and strategies within our state's Part C early intervention efforts. This work has included:

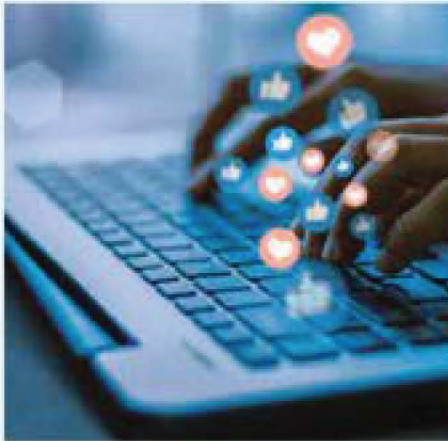
- PIEC team participated in Technical Assistance experience through the National Center for Pyramid Model Innovations (NCPMI) focused on training and fidelity tracking for early intervention providers using the PM in their interactions with families -- and introduced the new fidelity tool, the Early Intervention Pyramid Practices Fidelity Instrument (EIPPFi).
- Expanding beyond Part C into to Part B619 programs within engaged jurisdictions and developing joint PM leadership teams.
- Social Emotional Screening being implemented or piloted in all SSIP counties.
- All SSIP Counties launching PM Leadership Teams and completing BOQs annually.
- Three counties utilizing EIPPFi with providers.







# UMB SSWs PIECs Support for PM Workforce



## ONLINE PRESENCE AND TRAINING SUITE

In addition to our efforts to support the SLT< the state's trainers, the PM curriculum, UMB SSW's PIEC Team also maintained Maryland's PM Efforts represented via our online presence, with a series of free PM trainings (offering both COK and CEU hours in the model as well as a website, newsletter and social media presence.



## UPDATES TO PSF CURRICULUM

Over the past several years the PIEC team has pushed out edits to the PM curriculum, first to accommodate the Part C workforce, then to support the Preschool and Infant + Toddler providers. This year we updated and released the PSF (Positive Solutions for Families) group curriculum, and engaged a record number of facilitators from a broad range of child and family serving programs across the state.



## JURISDICTION SUPPORTS

As with recent years, the PIEC team continued to work with local jurisdictions across the state to support their implementation of the PM within their PreK special ed, PreK general ed, Kindergarten and Part C early intervention teams. At the close of 2021, we had gone beyond training and were engaged in leadership team TA and coaching in 11 jurisdictions.



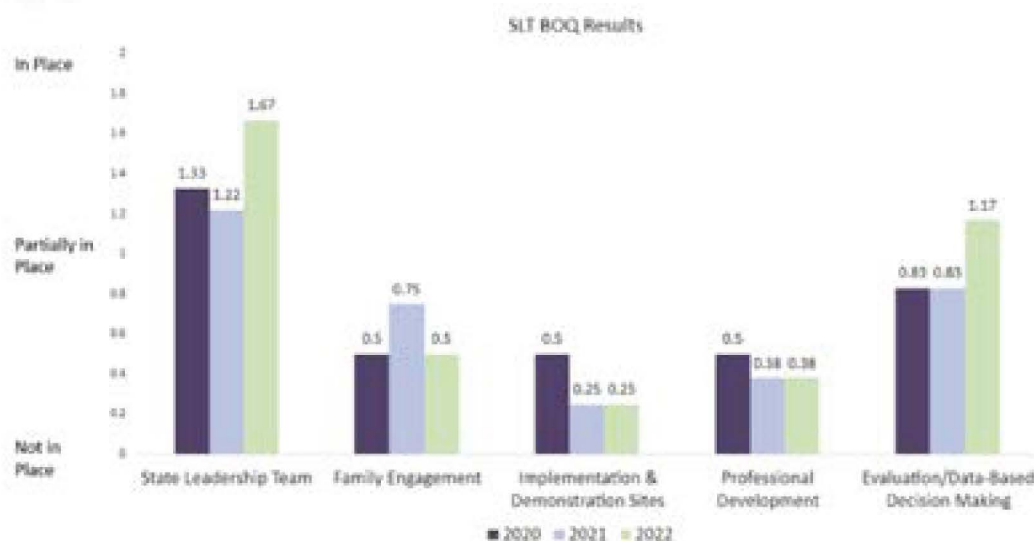


# LOOKING FORWARD

As the SLT and individual jurisdictions and programs continue to advance PM work across the state, several initiatives are underway for the year ahead:

FOCUS	DETAILS
Implementation Sites	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Using ARPA funds to offer incentives to programs</li> <li>Providing funding for coaches to support implementation activities</li> </ul>
Part C Programs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Infusing NCPMI Part C training into existing training</li> <li>Expanding the number of MD's Part C teams engaging in PM</li> </ul>
Statewide Support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Integrating PM into MD's early childhood standards and quality rating improvement system for child care</li> </ul>
Family Engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The SLT Family Engagement Subcommittee continues to outline opportunities for family participation and feedback</li> <li>TA to programs highlighting the need for parent voice on the PM Leadership Teams</li> </ul>
Integration with IECMHC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continuing the work to integrate PM into IECMHC, including utilizing fidelity measures for case data and ensuring workforce is trained in PM during onboarding</li> </ul>

At the end of 2021, the SLT completed the BOQ to assess progress on goals and identify 2022 priorities. The table below shows scores over the last 3 years, which were impacted by the COVID 19 Pandemic, most notably the lower scores for the Implementation Site related items, with schools and childcare closed for an extended period of time, and then focusing on the logistics of reopening and safety. The BOQ sections that we accomplished gains in were the result of administrative structures and procedures put into place for SLT meetings, member engagement and follow up.





# GLOSSARY OF TERMS & ACRONYMS

**STATE LEADERSHIP TEAM (SLT)** A team of cross-agency representatives responsible for planning and supervising all aspects of the PM including funding, policy initiatives, data-based decision making, training and coaching.

**PYRAMID MODEL (PM)** The PM is a framework of evidence-based practices for promoting young children's healthy social and emotional development.

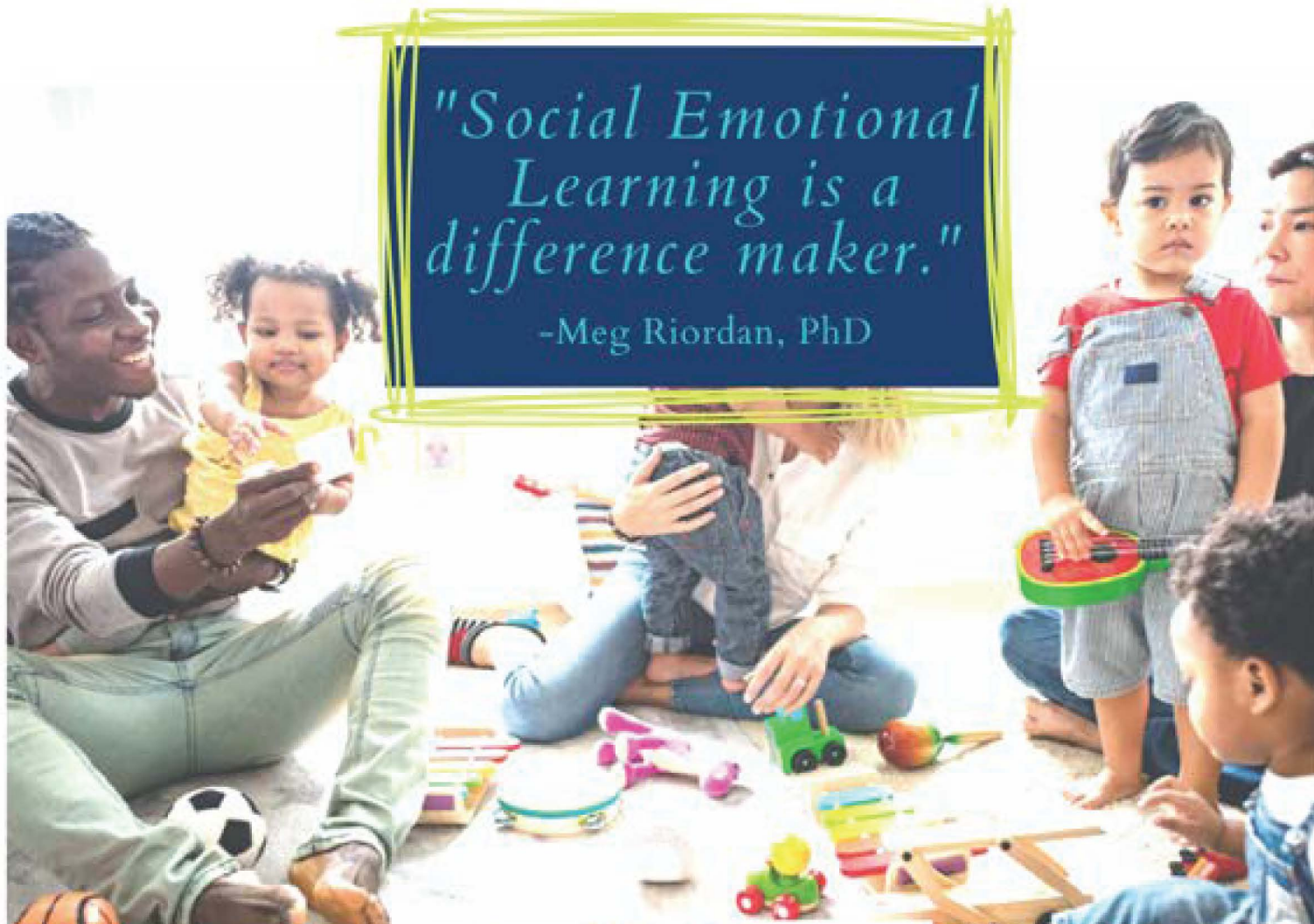
**BENCHMARKS OF QUALITY (BOQ)** BOQ is used by a Leadership Team to assess progress and plan future actions so that PM practices are available for providers and families.

**PART C** Part C of IDEA—the Program for Infants and Toddlers with Disabilities—is a federal grant program that assists states in operating a comprehensive statewide program of early intervention services for infants and toddlers ages birth-2 with disabilities, and their families.

**EIPFFI** The Early Intervention Pyramid Practice Fidelity Instrument (EIPFFI) is used to assess the implementation of PM practices by early interventionists in the coaching of families.

**NCPMI** The National Center for Pyramid Model Innovations (NCPMI) is funded by the Office of Special Education Programs to improve and support the capacity of state systems and local programs to implement the PM.

**NATIONAL PYRAMID MODEL CONSORTIUM** the Pyramid Model Consortium promotes equity and inclusion through the dissemination, sustainability, scale-up and high-fidelity use of the PM for Promoting Social Emotional Competence in Infants and Young Children.




*"Social Emotional Learning is a difference maker."*

-Meg Riordan, PhD







Thank you for engaging with our Pyramid Model efforts to support the social and emotional needs of our state's youngest learners, as well as their families, educators and caregivers.

## Acknowledgements

This state-wide work has benefited from dedicated funding and support from the **Maryland State Department of Education's Division of Early Childhood**, and specifically **Donald Corbin** in his role of guiding and leading this work.

This report was written by the **PIEC Team** at the University of Maryland School of Social Work, with guidance from **MD PM State Leadership Team's Evaluation Subcommittee** (Members include: **Donald Corbin, Sheila Maness, and Deborah Langer**).

Report authors include: **Kate Sweeney, Nyrobi Tyson, Jenny Afkinich, Margo Candelaria, Rachel Vannatta & Ashley Fehringer.**

The support from **Rob Corso** and his team within the **National Pyramid Model Consortium**, as well as the collective guidance from **NCPMI**, has helped our team significantly as we work to advance the implementation of the Pyramid Model within our state.

### **Please get involved!**

Visit us at [www.mdpyramidmodelsefel.org](http://www.mdpyramidmodelsefel.org) to sign up for our monthly newsletter, access online trainings, and link to our social media accounts. Or email [PIEC@ssw.umaryland.edu](mailto:PIEC@ssw.umaryland.edu) to learn about opportunities.

PIEC Team  
University of Maryland  
School of Social Work  
525 W Redwood Street,  
Baltimore MD 21201  
[www.mdpyramidmodelsefel.org](http://www.mdpyramidmodelsefel.org)  
[PIEC@ssw.umaryland.edu](mailto:PIEC@ssw.umaryland.edu)

