Using Data from the Behavior Incident Report to Address Equity in Pyramid Model Programs: Guidance for State Leadership Teams

What can BIR Data Say about Discipline in Pyramid Model Classrooms?

This guidance aims to help Pyramid Model (PM) state leadership teams use Behavior Incident Report (BIR) data to guide program improvement to reduce challenging behaviors that result in the use of exclusionary discipline practices. This guidance includes critical questions that BIR data can address about programs' implementation of disciplinary practices, considerations for using the data appropriately and effectively, and sample table shells demonstrating how state leadership teams could present BIR data answering each of the critical questions.

► Understand the types of disciplinary practices implemented in PM programs across the state and how these differences vary by program and child characteristics.

► Identify disproportionate reporting of behavior incidents by child characteristics (race/ethnicity, gender, IEP status, Dual Language Learner (DLL) status).

► Identify programs disproportionately using exclusionary discipline practices by child characteristics (race/ethnicity, gender, IEP status, DLL status).

► Compare the use of discipline practices by programs demonstrating high fidelity of PM implementation and programs that are not at fidelity.

► Compare the use of discipline practices in programs before and after reaching fidelity of PM implementation (i.e., over time).

State leadership teams can use findings from the BIR data in several ways:

► Identify and provide training and coaching around alternatives to exclusionary discipline across implementing programs.

► Strategically allocate resources for addressing disproportionality in exclusionary discipline to programs needing this support.

► Highlight the use of effective, positive discipline practices in PM programs.

► Advocate for additional resources with policymakers and philanthropic entities.

► Market the PM to reluctant program leaders as an intervention that can effectively address the issue of disproportionate exclusionary discipline.

Critical Questions to Answer Using BIR Data

BIR data aggregated at the program level can help answer questions about the types of discipline PM programs across the state are implementing. Critical questions state teams can answer with BIR data include:

1. How does the use of exclusionary and non-exclusionary discipline compare across PM programs? Do some programs differ meaningfully in their use of exclusionary disciplinary practices from the statewide average of implementing PM programs? (Table 1)

2. How do exclusionary discipline practices implemented in PM programs vary by child characteristics (gender, race, ethnicity, IEP status, DLL status)? (Tables 2 and 3)

3. Which programs indicate a disproportionate use of exclusionary discipline? How is this disproportionality associated with child characteristics? (Tables 4 and 5)

Your state also may be able to link BIR data to other data sources to answer contextual questions, including:

4. How does the use of exclusionary and non-exclusionary discipline differ by
   - Region of the state
   - Program type (e.g., Head Start, State Preschool, Child Care), program size, children receiving subsidies
   - Critical elements reported by local implementation teams through the BOQ
     - Professional development on implicit bias
     - Practice-based coaching
     - Behavioral/mental health consultation
     - Leadership team structure
     - Parent involvement
     - Use of data for decisions regarding local program improvement

Define Fidelity to the Pyramid Model Before Analyzing BIR Data

We encourage the state team to develop a process for documenting and establishing whether a program is at the high-fidelity implementation of the Pyramid Model. This should include assessing program-wide implementation fidelity as measured by the Early Childhood Program-Wide PBS Benchmarks of Quality (EC-BoQ) (or similar measure) and classroom practice fidelity as measured by the Teaching Pyramid Observation Tool for Preschool Classrooms (TPOT) or Teaching Pyramid Infant-Toddler Observation Scale (TPITOS). For example, a high-fidelity program might have:

> ► All critical elements on EC-BoQ are partially or fully in place, with 80% fully in place.

> ► TPOT and/or TPITOS average of key practices across all teachers who have received coaching of 80% or higher with no red flags and 100% of teachers are showing growth.

Implementation & Intervention Fidelity

Implementation fidelity refers to "the degree to which coaching, in-service training, instruction, or any other kind of evidence-based professional development practice is used as intended…", while intervention fidelity refers to "the degree to which evidence-based intervention practices are used as intended…" (Dunst, Trivette & Raab, 2013, p. 89)[1]. For a program to address exclusionary discipline effectively, both implementation and intervention fidelity are critical to achieving meaningful outcomes.

When developing your criteria for establishing a high-fidelity program, consider the following:

> ► Fidelity must be informed by multiple sources of data.

> ► When using a practice fidelity tool (i.e., TPOT, TPITOS), if a teacher only has 1 score from one observation (i.e., new to the program or coaching), their score should not be included in the average of key practices across all teachers.

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[1] Dunst, C. J., Trivette, C. M., & Raab, M. (2013). An implementation science framework for conceptualizing and operationalizing fidelity in early childhood intervention studies. Journal of Early Intervention, 35(2), 85-101.

▶ State teams should develop a process to re-assess the fidelity status of a program that has been identified as high-fidelity as turnover in personnel and other factors can affect implementation over time.

The graphic below demonstrates the need to determine both program and classroom fidelity to interpret BIR data, because the level of fidelity may differ for a program and an individual classroom within that program. For example, program fidelity may be high (e.g., teachers are receiving Pyramid Model coaching as prescribed), but there could be a high level of challenging behavior in a given classroom where teachers consequentially use more exclusionary discipline practices, indicating low-classroom fidelity (see lower left-hand box). Conversely, teachers in a classroom may be implementing Pyramid Model practices proficiently (high-classroom fidelity) in a program that has high usage of exclusionary practices overall (low program fidelity) (see lower right-hand box).

Program Fidelity High Classroom Fidelity High	Program Fidelity Low Classroom Fidelity Low
Program Fidelity High Classroom Fidelity Low	Program Fidelity Low Classroom Fidelity High

Problem behavior might be high and teachers more likely to engage in exclusionary practices.

Teachers are proficient with preventing and addressing challenging behavior, but the program might still engage in exclusionary practices.

Considerations for Using BIR Data

Before you begin looking at BIR data, consider the following:

▶ Are signed agreements in place that enable local programs to share aggregated, non-identifiable data with the state leadership team? Use the *DaSy Data Governance Toolkit* for guidance on establishing or enhancing data governance policies and procedures, including sharing data across multiple agencies and with local programs.

▶ How might state and program level policies on suspension and expulsion affect the BIR data? For example, some programs, such as Head Start, are prohibited from using any exclusionary discipline.

▶ How will your state team determine what constitutes a program for inclusion of their data in the analyses?

▶ The BIRs provide information about programs' use of discipline practices in response to behaviors that are not developmentally normative or the teacher finds concerning. Programs use these data to make decisions about providing supports to teachers and children within the program and consider actions for program improvement. At the state level, these data provide information related to how programs are responding to behavior incidents and the use of exclusionary discipline responses. The construct of interest is the programs' use of exclusionary discipline, not the number of BIRs or children's behavior. The number of behavioral incidents, as measured by BIRs, does not reflect the quality of a program or the behavior support practices implemented in a program. Having few BIRs could mean there were few problem behaviors, or that teachers did not document all problem behaviors; having many BIRs could indicate that teachers appropriately and consistently reported all incidents. Likewise, changes over time in the number of BIRs does not reflect increases or decreases in program quality.

► States should note the incidence and conditions under which no administrative follow-up occurred in response to BIRs, indicating that teacher resolved the issue.

► Aggregate BIR data are most useful when program staff reliably enter demographic data on individual children. States can communicate the importance of having complete child-level data to be able to get the best use of the BIR data.

► When states and local programs use BIR data to examine disparities in discipline responses, they should use multiple indices and understand the benefits and limitations of each[8]. BIR data submitted by programs to complete the tables described in this document will allow states to calculate these multiple indices.

► In comparing disciplinary actions implemented with children of different races and ethnicities, the current recommendation is to use "all other races/ethnicities" as a comparison, rather than, for example, using White children as the reference group[9].

► We recommend that the state leadership team review the BIR data every 6 months.

► Be deliberate about using accurate and equitable language when communicating about BIR results:

   • Children do not receive BIRs; teachers complete BIRs in response to children's behavior.

Defining a Program when Examining Fidelity

Program-wide implementation of the Pyramid Model refers to a systemic effort within a program for Pyramid Model implementation fidelity. In program-wide implementation, a leadership team guides the implementation of the critical elements, or the infrastructure of supports needed for fidelity of implementation of the Pyramid Model practices.

State Leadership Teams (SLT) are encouraged to determine what constitutes a "program" in program-wide implementation within their state Pyramid Model structure. State teams might consider the following guiding questions in their decisions related to defining a "program." Each question has further clarification for considerations:

► What is the scope of implementation?

► Is the leadership team comprised of people who are in roles that hold them accountable to the critical elements of the Early Childhood Program-Wide Benchmarks of Quality (EC BoQ)?

In identifying the parameters of what might be called a program, the SLT should look at the scope of implementation within a program and the types of administrative oversight of classrooms or groups of children within the program. SLTs will want to know if the members of the program leadership team are in roles and positions in which they have an influence on policies or procedures; the provision of professional development and coaching to practitioners, allocation of resources; the use of family engagement practices; and the collection of fidelity data. The consideration of administrative oversight includes site-level actions related to program policies, provision of resources and professional development, data collection and data use, and family engagement practices. How administrative oversight is arranged often aligns with where program leadership teams are established. For example, leadership teams may be established within a single implementation site, at the school-district level with oversight to many classrooms in different schools, at the community level to guide the implementation of multiple sites, by a Head Start grant recipient or corporate program with many sites, or for one or more family child care home sites.

The following examples provide guidance for SLTs to identify the possible configurations of a program and designation of "program" status in their state.

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[2] Petrosino, A., Fronius, T., Goold, C. C., Losen, D. J. and Turner, H. M. (2017). Analyzing student-level disciplinary data: A guide for districts (REL 2017–263). U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance, Regional Educational Laboratory Northeast and Islands. http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/edlabs

[3] IDEA Data Center. (2014, May). Methods for assessing racial/ethnic disproportionality in special education: A technical assistance guide (revised). Westat.

Examples

► A community child care center is implementing the Pyramid Model in their center. They have one building, one administrator, and a single leadership team monitoring their program implementation. In this example, the child care center is considered the program.

► A school district has multiple preK classrooms implementing the Pyramid Model. The classrooms are distributed across the district with the administrative oversight of the classrooms provided by the building administration in the elementary school in which they reside. The district has one program leadership team with stakeholders representing the preschool program (e.g., administrators, classroom teachers, family representatives). In this example, the school district is considered the program.

  • A school district has multiple preschool programs implementing the Pyramid Model with their own administrative oversight, thus having multiple "programs."

  • An inclusive preschool program has its own preschool campus with one building administrator and one program leadership team. The inclusive preschool is considered the program.

► A Head Start grantee has classrooms distributed across multiple school buildings in the district. The Head Start classrooms have one central administration and one program leadership team with representation from the multiple school buildings. The Head Start program is considered the "program."

► A group of preschool classrooms and family child care programs in a defined community have formed an agreement to support Pyramid Model implementation. They have a community leadership team, are guided by data from the Community-Wide Benchmarks of Quality, have pooled funds to hire behavioral support, and share professional development. The providers in this defined community would be considered the program.

► A family child care home is implementing Pyramid Model practices and is receiving practice-based coaching. The family child care home has formed a leadership team consisting of the family child care provider, a family member, and the coach. In this example, the family child care home is the program.

► A preschool classroom is implementing Pyramid Model practices and receiving practice-based coaching within a school building implementing School-Wide PBIS. The elementary school has a building leadership team that does not include representatives from the preschool classroom. This would be classroom implementation and would ***not*** be considered a program.

► A community preschool enrolls its staff in a community-wide Pyramid Model practices training. Although the community has a community leadership team and uses the Community-Wide Benchmarks of Quality for systemic implementation, the preschool program does not participate in or develop a systemic implementation plan within their program. The community preschool would ***not*** be considered a program.

Critical Question 1: How does the use of exclusionary and non-exclusionary discipline compare across PM programs? Do some programs differ meaningfully in their use of exclusionary disciplinary practices from other PM programs?

In Table 1, states can examine the percentage of teacher and program responses to behavior incidents that do not result in exclusionary discipline and those that result in suspension or expulsion. After individual program data, data for programs are averaged based on whether they meet the criteria for high fidelity. An average across all programs is also provided.

Table 1. Teacher and Program Response to Behavior Incident Reports

	Program at high fidelity[4] (yes or no)	Non-exclusionary teacher response (% of total BIRs)	No administrative follow-up (% of total BIRs)	Non-exclusionary administrative follow-up (% of total BIRs)	Resulting in ISS (% of total BIRs)	Resulting in OSS (% of total BIRs)	Resulting in dismissal (% of total BIRs)
Program A (n enrolled)							
Program B (*n* enrolled)							
Range							
Programs meeting criteria for high fidelity *(n)*							
Programs not meeting the criteria for high fidelity *(n)*							
All PM programs (N)							

Note. ISS is in-school suspension and may be the result of a teacher or administrative response (i.e., time in a different classroom or an adult outside of the classroom; temporary removal from the classroom). OSS is out-of-school suspension (i.e., sent home for 1 or more days, sent home for the remainder of the day). Dismissal is dismissal from the program.

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[4] Programs that meet high fidelity based on the state's definition that considers implementation and intervention fidelity.

Critical Question 2: How do exclusionary discipline practices implemented in PM programs vary by child characteristics (gender, race, ethnicity, IEP status, DLL status)?

Tables 2 and 3 provide the total numbers of children by various child characteristics with a BIR resulting in a suspension or dismissal for each program. A total across all programs is also provided.

Table 2. Total Number of Children with In-School Suspensions, Out-of-School Suspensions, and Dismissals by Race/Ethnicity

	Program at high fidelity[5] (yes or no)	American Indian or Alaskan Native (n)	Asian (n)	Black or African American (n)	Hispanic/ Latino (n)	Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander (n)	Two or More Races (n)	White (n)
Program A (n enrolled)								
In-school-suspension								
Out-of-school-suspension								
Dismissal								
Program B (n enrolled)								
In-school-suspension								
Out-of-school-suspension								
Dismissal								
Program C (n enrolled)								
In-school-suspension								
Out-of-school-suspension								
Dismissal								
All PM programs (N)								
In-school-suspension								
Out-of-school-suspension								
Dismissal								

Note. In-school suspension includes time in a different classroom or an adult outside of the classroom; temporary removal from the classroom. Out-of-school suspension includes being sent home for 1 or more days and being sent home for the remainder of the day.

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[5] Programs that meet high fidelity based on the state's definition that considers implementation and intervention fidelity.

Table 3. Total Number of Children with In-School Suspensions, Out-of-School Suspensions, and Dismissals by Child Characteristics

	Program at high fidelity[6] (yes or no)	Male (n)	Female (n)	Non-binary (n)	IEP (n)	No IEP (n)	DLL (n)	Not DLL (n)
Program A (n enrolled)								
In-school-suspension								
Out-of-school-suspension								
Dismissal								
Program B (n enrolled)								
In-school-suspension								
Out-of-school-suspension								
Dismissal								
Program C (n enrolled)								
In-school-suspension								
Out-of-school-suspension								
Dismissal								
All PM programs (N)								
In-school-suspension								
Out-of-school-suspension								
Dismissal								

Note. In-school suspension includes time in a different classroom or an adult outside of the classroom; temporary removal from the classroom. Out-of-school suspension includes being sent home for 1 or more days and being sent home for the remainder of the day.

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[6] Programs that meet high fidelity based on the state's definition that considers implementation and intervention fidelity.

Critical Question 3: Which programs indicate a disproportionate use of exclusionary discipline? How is this disproportionality associated with child characteristics?

Tables 4 and 5 provide a percentage of children by various child characteristics with BIRs resulting in suspension and dismissals for each program (i.e., child composition value). The percent of total enrollment for each group is also reported. Values that are higher than what is expected for the group given their total enrollment in the program are highlighted. These values indicate disproportionality.

Table 4. Percentage of Children by Race/Ethnicity with In-School Suspensions, Out-of-School Suspensions, and Dismissals

	Program at high fidelity[7] (yes or no)	American Indian or Alaskan Native	Asian	Black or African American	Hispanic/ Latino	Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	Two or More Races	White
Program A (*n* enrollment)								
In-school-suspension								
Out-of-school-suspension								
Dismissal								
Program B (*n* enrollment)								
In-school-suspension								
Out-of-school-suspension								
Dismissal								
Program C (*n* enrollment)								
In-school-suspension								
Out-of-school-suspension								
Dismissal								
All PM programs (*N*)								
In-school-suspension								
Out-of-school-suspension								
Dismissal								

Note. N/A means that the program did not report data on the child characteristic. Shaded cells indicate a disproportionate number of suspensions or dismissals for children having that characteristic.

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[7] Programs that meet high fidelity based on the state's definition that considers implementation and intervention fidelity.

Table 5. Percentage of Children by Child Characteristics with In-School Suspensions, Out-of-School Suspensions, and Dismissals

	Program at high fidelity[8] (yes or no)	Male	Female	Non-binary	IEP	No IEP	DLL	Not DLL
Program A (*n* enrollment)								
In-school-suspension								
Out-of-school-suspension								
Dismissal								
Program B (*n* enrollment)								
In-school-suspension								
Out-of-school-suspension								
Dismissal								
Program C (*n* enrollment)								
In-school-suspension								
Out-of-school-suspension								
Dismissal								
All PM programs (*N*)								
In-school-suspension								
Out-of-school-suspension								
Dismissal								

Note. N/A means that the program did not report data on the child characteristic. Shaded cells indicate a disproportionate number of suspensions or dismissals for children having that characteristic.

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[8] Programs that meet high fidelity based on the state's definition that considers implementation and intervention fidelity.