



**Technical Assistance Center
on Social Emotional Intervention**
for Young Children

Program-Wide Adoption of the Pyramid Model

Program-wide adoption of the Pyramid Model refers to a systemic effort within a program for Pyramid Model implementation fidelity. In program-wide adoption, a leadership team guides the implementation process and develops the supports and infrastructure needed to ensure that adoption of the Pyramid Model can occur within the classrooms and services provided to children and their families. The Leadership team, with representation from program administrators and practitioners, is focused on the ongoing process of supporting the implementation of the Pyramid Model and using data-based decision-making to guide implementation efforts and monitor outcomes.

The program-wide adoption model ensures that programs are attending to both the adoption of evidence-based practices and the development of the infrastructure to support the durable implementation of those practices. Programs that have adopted this model have experienced the following:

- Reductions in child challenging behavior
- Increases in children's social skills
- Increased satisfaction of program staff and families
- Reduced turnover in the program
- Increases in teachers competence and confidence in the support of children
- Changes in classroom and program climate
- Sustained implementation of the Pyramid Model

The following are the components of the Program-Wide approach

- **Leadership Team** – The leadership team meets monthly and guides the implementation of the program-wide approach. The team is comprised of a program administrator, representation from the teaching staff, an individual who can provide coaching and support to teachers, and the individual who serves as a behavior specialist (some individuals might fill more than one of these roles). The team ensures that a system is developed to provide individualized behavior supports to children with challenges, professional development and support to teachers, a plan for family participation, and uses data to make decisions as they guide implementation.

- Staff buy-in –All staff become involved in the model (e.g., cook, teaching assistant, and teachers) and must agree that they are willing to participate. The leadership team monitors and supports staff buy-in on an ongoing basis.
- Family involvement –A variety of mechanisms are used to establish partnerships with families in the adopting the model by sharing information, providing families with information and support in guiding children’s development of social and emotional skills, and collaboratively teaming to support individual children.
- Program-wide expectations – The adoption of program-wide expectations provides a shared focus and shared language for describing behavior expectations to children, staff, and families. Program-wide expectations are posted in the program and classrooms and are provided to families. Staff acknowledge engagement in the expectations by providing developmentally appropriate feedback and reinforcement to children.
- Classroom implementation of the Pyramid Model –Teachers are individually assessed using a fidelity observation tool and then action planning occurs to identify goals for supporting teachers in reaching fidelity criteria.
- Staff professional development and support plans – All staff must have the training and coaching/support needed to effectively implement the Pyramid practices. The leadership team also develops strategies to provide ongoing support to staff as they implement the model.
- Behavior support procedures – The leadership team develops policies and procedures for providing support to staff to address challenging behavior. This includes providing a mechanism for support in crisis situations, developing a problem solving process for children with emerging challenges, and providing a system for identifying children who need a behavior support plan developed through a team driven process.
- Data-based decision-making – Data-based decision-making is a pivotal component of the program-wide approach. The team will gather and review data on implementation and outcomes using tools provided by the Center.

What are Considerations for Selecting Sites for Program-Wide Adoption?

- Willing to serve as an exemplar in the state of high fidelity implementation of the Pyramid Model
- Must be considered a high quality program by meeting program standards (e.g., NAEYC, DEC, Head Start, QRIS)

- Will be guided by a leadership team that is invested in the model (e.g., program administrator and selected staff)
- Must have access to an internal coach whose role is to build the capacity of practitioners in the program
- Must have access to behavior support for children with persistent challenging behavior through an internal person on their team, mental health consultant, or behavior specialist
- Willing to change policies, procedures, family engagement, teacher support, and professional development practices for implementation fidelity and sustainability
- Willing to host other programs and personnel who wish to see/learn more about the Pyramid Model

What is Involved in the Program-Wide Adoption Process?

- The Leadership team will attend a 2 ½ day training on program-wide adoption to develop their implementation plan
- Staff in the program receive training on the Pyramid Model and coaching for implementation within their classrooms
- A coach receives training on how to support staff as they begin Pyramid Model implementation
- A behavior specialist receives training on how to guide the individualized, intensive intervention process
- The majority of staff (80%) agree that they want to be a part of program-wide adoption, although the program might begin their efforts in a few classrooms initially
- The program collects ongoing data on program implementation and outcomes, coaching implementation and outcomes, and child implementation and outcomes

Frequently Asked Questions

Why is a program-wide adoption important; shouldn't the focus be on teachers implementing evidence-based practices?

Teachers need the support of the program to put the Pyramid Model in place. The program is involved in making sure that teachers receive training and coaching for the implementation of Pyramid practices, teachers efforts are recognized and supported, policies and procedures are consistent with Pyramid Model implementation, and there are resources and procedures for ensuring that children with persistent challenges receive intensive, individualized interventions.

What happens in leadership training? If we have been trained in the Pyramid Modules, what additional training is needed?

The Leadership team training provides the team with guidance on the components of program-wide adoption and key elements for implementation. The training provides the team with the time and facilitation to develop an implementation plan for program-wide adoption that is specific to their program's unique needs and circumstances. During this training, the leadership team is provided with materials and resources for implementation and taught how to use the data-based decision-making model to guide the process.

The program-wide model requires a leadership team; we are a small child care program with a director and teachers. Who would be on our team?

The team should be comprised of at least three members, the program administrator, a teacher, and the person who provides the program with behavior support services or mental health consulting. However, the team must be able to take on these roles: coaching teachers, collecting and interpreting data, developing policies and procedures, and guiding the behavior support process. Small programs often bring in community, professional development, or technical assistance partners to sit on their leadership team and assist with implementation.

When I read the description it sounds a lot like School-Wide Positive Behavior Support, how is this different?

This model is based on the design of School-Wide Positive Behavior Support (SW-PBS). Like SW-PBS, we have adopted a systemic effort that uses data-based decision making model to ensure that a comprehensive model of promotion/prevention/intervention is implemented that promotes social competence and delivers effective interventions for challenging behavior. However, the SW-PBS model was designed for implementation within schools and communities with students who are kindergarten through secondary school. The program-wide adoption of the Pyramid Model has been designed to fit the unique service system and settings of early childhood programs and includes the practices, procedures, and data collection measures that are appropriate for use with young children and their families.

My teachers are too overwhelmed to even begin the discussion about collecting data, is this really a feasible approach?

We are very sensitive to the demands on teachers and their inability to cope with more paperwork. We encourage programs to ask their teachers to complete a social emotional assessment for each child and to track behavior incidents using a simple system that takes less than 1 minute to complete. These tools allow the program to quickly identify children in need of support and to collect information that allows them to see what

teachers, children, or program elements need more attention. The social emotional assessment provides the program with data that can be used to show outcomes for children over time. These data collection tools involve a minimal amount of effort and yield data that are critical to the model.

In addition, the Leadership Team is taught to use two measures for tracking implementation progress and guiding teachers. A classroom observation system (Teaching Pyramid Observation Tool (TPOT) or The Pyramid Infant Toddler Observation System (TPITOS) is used to identify teachers implementation and coaching needs and the Benchmarks of Quality is a self-report checklist that guides and tracks program-wide implementation progress.

A program-wide model sounds too ambitious for us as we have 25 classrooms. Do we have to start in every classroom?

The Leadership Team will be encouraged to develop a plan of implementation that allows for program-wide adoption at the pace that makes sense for the resources of the program. However, the model works most effectively when all staff are committed and participating. The implementation across all classrooms in the future should be the goal.