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**CSEFEL/TACSEI State Team Update: Colorado (March 2011)**

**Pyramid Plus: The Colorado Center for Social Emotional Competence and Inclusion**

The action plan of the Colorado Pyramid Plus State Policy Team outlines its objectives in the areas of infrastructure, professional development, public awareness, access and leadership. In an effort to meet these objectives, the State Policy Team supported the development of **Pyramid Plus: The Colorado Center for Social Emotional Competence and Inclusion** which began operations at the University of Colorado, Denver in October of 2009. State Policy members representing the Colorado Department of Human Services (through its Division of Child Care, Division of Behavioral Health, and Department for Developmental Disabilities) came together to fund this three year grant. Pyramid Plus received additional funding from the Colorado Health Foundation in December, 2010.

The goal of the Pyramid Plus Center is to increase the use of evidence-based, early childhood social emotional and inclusive practices in early care and education settings, including family child care and in-home providers, through the high fidelity implementation of two national models:

* [Pyramid Model](http://www.challengingbehavior.org/do/pyramid_model.htm%22%20%5Ct%20%22_blank) for Promoting Social and Emotional Development of Infants and Young Children
* [SpecialQuest](http://www.specialquest.org/%22%20%5Ct%20%22_blank) Birth-Five Approach to Early Childhood Inclusion
* as well as other related evidence-based inclusion practices

**Highlights and Accomplishments**

**Trainers Pool/Coach Cadre**

Colorado has over 400 people that have been trained in the Pyramid Model modules since 2006. The State Policy Team overseeing the initiative in Colorado has been challenged to determine who of those attendees are training in their program or community, if they are training to fidelity, and if they have any interest in training others.

Therefore, the Pyramid Plus Center has taken on the challenge of certifying trainers, coaches and demonstration sites throughout Colorado in order to ensure high fidelity implementation of the Pyramid Model.  This rigorous process requires candidates for certification to participate in multiple-day training events, develop their own professional development plans, participate in distance training events, submit videos of coaching and training, and submit consumer evaluations.  Requirements for certification, the application process, Q&As, have all been developed and are on our website: [www.pyramidplus.org](http://www.pyramidplus.org). Over 70 people have enrolled in Pyramid Plus certification as well as 4 programs.

**Training**

Pyramid Plus is integrating the Pyramid Model training materials with the SpecialQuest materials as well as other evidence-based inclusion training materials from LEAP and Building Blocks. This is our “Pyramid Plus Approach” training package. This package also integrates the full b-5 continuum.

**Trainings required for Certification**

Spring Pyramid Plus Approach training – b-5

Summer Institute – program wide and intensive intervention

On-going webinars and other distance training opportunities

**Community Trainings**

1. Promotion/prevention trainings: Key elements of Pyramid Model Modules 1 and 2 with inclusion practices
* Two ½ day sessions (8 total)
* Topics include:  building positive relations, supportive environments,  teaching social skills and emotional literacy
* Coordinated through  Resource and Referral Agencies and other community agencies
1. Pyramid Plus Approach trainings – open enrollment
2. Additional trainings: A limited number of additional trainings are offered on a first-come, first-serve priority basis. Priorities are given to Pyramid Plus Center funders.
* Geographic equity will be considered
* Participants of at least 30

Our Pyramid Plus Approach full trainings offer CEU or graduate/undergraduate credit

**Work with Demonstration/Implementation Sites**

Pyramid Plus is pleased to announce four candidate sites for certification in Colorado: Creative Options in Aurora, Fremont County Head Start in Canon City, Primetime Early Learning Center/Norwood Preschool in Norwood, and Bal Swan Children’s Center in Broomfield. These candidate sites were selected based on their commitments to practicing inclusion and promoting social emotional development using the Pyramid Model throughout their programs. Each site receives intensive technical assistance and training from the Pyramid Plus team to reach a status of a Certified Pyramid Plus Site.  Certification requires that the site/community has established a sustainable infrastructure of high fidelity practice disseminated program-wide as outlined in their Memorandum of Understanding with the Pyramid Plus Center.

**Other Accomplishments**

State Policy Team members have worked to revise rules regulating Family Child Care Homes. The requirements will be revised so that providers requesting continuation of a permanent license must have 3 of the 15 required clock hours to be in social emotional development.

The three clock hours of required early childhood social-emotional professional development/training for every licensed provider (7.707.32 B) must relate to at least one of the following topic categories:

1. Nurturing and responsive relationships with children, families and coworkers
2. High quality environments that promote healthy social-emotional development
3. Teaching social-emotional skills in group care
4. Interventions and supports to address concerning behaviors and promote healthy social-emotional development in group care
5. Understanding early childhood mental health consultation

A team of Colorado ECE faculty is looking at which content of the Pyramid Model can go into what courses (including meeting the course competencies for ECE 237, Theories and Techniques of Social and Emotional Growth, and ECE 103, Guidance Strategies for Children). In addition, they are looking at how the Pyramid Model Approach fits within a social and emotional certificate across the community college system. As a result of that, they hope to develop a user’s guide for faculty with regard to how to infuse specific modules into each ECE class. A next step for that will be to provide an online training in the summer for faculty via CCCOnline.

In the Fall of 2010, Pyramid Plus held it’s first annual Policy Summit. Over 100 people attended. A panel of state and local policy makers presented recommendations about how policies, funding and systems can be changed to better support young children particularly related to social emotional competence and inclusion.

Currently we are inviting applications from communities to partner with us as Implementation Communities. We hope to be working with 6 this year. One community, Pueblo, has already started that work and we are learning from them as our models.

**Supports that have helped to reach these accomplishments**

The Pyramid Plus Center developed a website for its initiative in Colorado ([www.pyramidplus.org](http://www.pyramidplus.org)) that relies extensively on resources / links to both CSEFEL and TACSEI. There is so much great information available, including topic-specific webinars, that has been invaluable to our work. In addition, personnel from those centers have also been tremendously helpful. Lise Fox came and presented at our Team Implementation training in October, Rob Corso has been a wonderful resource on inclusion / SpecialQuest and CSEFEL , and Jill Giacomini has been fabulous with website / newsletter resources. Lise Fox, Mary Louise Hemmeter and Glen Dunlap presented at our Summer Institute.

**Issues or Barriers**

The investment that the Colorado Department of Human Services and the Colorado Health Foundation have made to support this work has allowed us to move beyond the financial / resource barrier that prohibited us from making great strides in the past. It is exciting to be able to have the resources to do what the team has wanted to do this year.

We’re building a Pyramid Plus Center with guidance from our State Policy Team that has representation from all of the above entities. We are also collecting data beyond the CSEFEL requirements through our Certified Sites as outlined in the MOU. Phil Strain is heading up the evaluation work in connection with national CSEFEL. Strain and Smith, as members of the national centers, are guiding our work in Colorado in order for it to be sustained past three year grant period.

**Sustaining the Initiative**

In order to meet our long-term sustainability and fidelity goals, we will eventually employ the strategy of a resource bank of certified trainers, coaches and sites statewide. We’re not there yet, but we’re building our way toward it.

We feel a little on the forefront of embedding ‘inclusion’ within our Pyramid Model work, as per our newly revised vision statement. The state is really primed to take this on with the team of trainers it has, as well as with an energetic and supportive State Policy Team and national Center support.