



Foundations for Early Learning

Integrating social emotional competence with early language and literacy learning to benefit infants, toddlers, preschoolers, and their families

Project Description

Vermont is the recipient of two technical assistance grants from nationally renowned training centers: the **Center on the Social and Emotional Foundations for Early Learning (CSEFEL)** and the **Center for Early Literacy Learning (CELL)**. **'Foundations for Early Learning' (FEL)** represents the integration of these two grants into a five year training program for Vermont's early childhood community that will support the social-emotional development and early language and literacy learning of infants, toddlers and preschoolers.

About the grants:

CSEFEL's Pyramid Model is a conceptual framework of evidence-based practices addressing the promotion of social emotional development and the prevention of challenging behavior of young children. CSEFEL represents nationally recognized researchers and program developers in the areas of social skills and challenging behavior. Based on evaluation data over the last five years, the Pyramid Model is a sound framework for early care and education systems. Extensive training materials, videos, and print resources to help states, communities and programs implement the CSEFEL Pyramid model have been developed and can be found at www.vanderbilt.edu/csefel/.

CELL is a research-to-practice technical assistance center funded by the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP). The main goal of CELL is to promote the adoption and sustained use of evidence-based early literacy learning practices by early childhood intervention practitioners, parents, and other caregivers of all young children, including those with identified disabilities, developmental delays, and at-risk for poor outcomes. CELL, in its second year of operation, is developing training materials including practice guides, research summaries, and toolkits with DVD's, some of which are posted on the website at www.earlyliteracylearning.org/.

Vermont has a strong history of excellence and commitment to early childhood education, intervention and mental health. These grants are representative of statewide efforts to address needs expressed by the field over the last two decades. These efforts can be traced through the development of the state's Professional Development Committee, OSEP funded professional development and demonstration projects at UVM's Center on Disability and Community Inclusion, (formerly UAP), CUPS, Northern Lights Career Development Center, and the Higher Education Collaborative.

Service Delivery Model:

CSEFEL and CELL staff will be providing the initial T/TA, materials, and will participate in the planning process. FEL will utilize an in-depth train-the-trainer's model for trainers and coaches to build capacity in each of five regions over the next five years. Trainers who complete the five-day FEL training institute will become part of a network providing professional development opportunities to early childhood professionals at the local level. A trainer's network, facilitated by the state core team, will function as a learning community to ensure support and continued learning. Those invited to be coaches will also participate in the FEL institute, including additional training opportunities focused on coaching

strategies. Coaches will be expected to provide ongoing support to staff at a selected demonstration site (e.g., center-based programs, such as Head Start, child care centers and publicly funded preschools; and home-based programs, such as family child care, FITP). The three to four demonstration sites recruited will be high quality programs and expected to commit to implementing the CSEFEL and CELL practices with fidelity.

Trainers, coaches and demonstration sites from an identified region will be invited to apply to become a FEL training participant. Trainers from outside a region can apply and, dependent on availability, may be given an opportunity to participate. Although the target region for professional development will shift, trainers from previous regions will continue to be part of the project, giving valued feedback and receiving continued support.

The work of FEL is guided by a State Collaborative Planning Team, comprised of liaisons from the two national grants and representatives from the Department of Education, University of Vermont, Vermont Parent Information Center, and programs from AHS/Child Development Division including Family, Infant Toddler Program; Healthy Babies, Kids and Families; CUPS; Head Start; and Northern Lights Career Development Center. The State team also partners with regional representatives from Building Bright Futures and Children's Integrated Services to plan and implement training activities that address regional characteristics.

Project Outcomes:

FEL will review progress based on CSEFEL and CELL evaluations to ensure:

- Early childhood providers and families are competent in promoting social, emotional, and language and literacy development in all infants, toddlers and preschoolers.
- Early childhood providers are competent in addressing children's challenging behaviors and, as a result, fewer children are expelled from child care.
- Statewide trainers, coaches and demonstration sites can teach and model evidence-based social, emotional and literacy practices and support sustainability.
- Young children, birth to age five, improve functioning in social, language and literacy skills.
- Young children enter kindergarten with the social, language and literacy skills necessary to succeed.

Project Timeline and Location:

FEL begins in summer 2008 and continues through 2013 with an emphasis on sustainability and practice fidelity. In 2008-2009, FEL efforts will concentrate on the Northeast Kingdom counties of Caledonia, Essex, and Orleans.

State Team Contacts:

Kate Rogers, kate.rogers@state.vt.us 802-828-5115

Maureen Sullivan, maureen.sullivan@uvm.edu 802-241- 3602

Janice Stockman, jjstock@sover.net 802-257-8015