



THE PYRAMID MODEL for PROMOTING THE SOCIAL & EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT OF INFANTS AND YOUNG CHILDREN: A COLORADO COLLABORATIVE INITIATIVE

Social skills in young children are more closely associated with school readiness and success in kindergarten and first grade than cognitive and academic skills (Raver & Knitzer, 2002; Smith, 2004). And yet, in a study commissioned for the Colorado legislature, early childhood (EC) teachers in Colorado rank their need to learn how to teach social skills and deal with challenging behavior as their number one training need (Hoover, 2006). Likewise, nationally, EC teachers report that challenging behavior and social skill problems are their greatest challenges and programs report expelling preschoolers at a rate three times that for school age children (Gilliam, 2005; Hemmeter et. al, 2007).

The Pyramid Model for Promoting the Social and Emotional Development of Infants and Young Children is a conceptual framework of evidence-based practices developed by two national, federally-funded research and training centers: The Center for the Social and Emotional Foundations for Early Learning (CSEFEL) and the Center for Evidence-based Practices: Young Children with Challenging Behavior (CEBP). These centers' faculty, including faculty at the University of Colorado at Denver and Health Sciences Center (UCDHSC), 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 appears to be a sound framework for early care and education systems, and extensive training materials, videos, and print resources to help states, communities and programs implement the model have been developed (see www.vanderbilt.edu/csefel/).

State Partnership

CSEFEL is partnering with 2-3 states per year to build the capacity of the state to increase the social and behavioral competence of young children. **The broad goal of the intensive training and technical assistance (T/TA) initiative is to foster the professional development of the early care and education workforce.** CSEFEL will work with each state to accomplish four specific goals:

- Convene an interagency, collaborative work group (this may be an existing group) to develop policies, procedures and other mechanisms to implement, evaluate and sustain the Pyramid Model;
- Train trainers and coaches to build the capacity of the workforce and support local implementation;
- Identify 3 local programs to serve as demonstration sites to demonstrate the effectiveness of the Pyramid Model and practices; and
- Evaluate outcomes.

Colorado is currently partnering with CSEFEL in this initiative. Several state and local groups have joined with the UCDHSC faculty of CSEFEL in **training trainers and local coaches and developing demonstration sites** in the Pyramid Model. **Additionally,** the state agencies are **engaging in**

collaborative planning to build policies, systems and other infrastructure necessary to sustain and expand these efforts.

Projected outcomes include: teachers competent in promoting young children's social skills and preventing and addressing challenging behavior, a cadre of trainers and coaches, demonstration programs that can show what evidence based practices look like on a daily basis, improved child social skills and school readiness, and state infrastructure to sustain the effort and outcomes.

Colorado/CSEFEL State Planning Team

The state interagency team working to develop policies, procedures and other mechanisms to implement, evaluate and sustain the Pyramid Model includes: **Rosemarie Allen**, Division for Child Care, CO Dept. of Human Services; **Darcy Allen-Young**, Head Start-State Collaboration Director; **Penny Dell** and **Tom Patton**, Colorado Department of Education; **Barbara J. Deloian**, Health Care Program for Children with Special Needs; **Ardith Ferguson**, CDHS-Division for Developmental Disabilities; **Linda Forrest**, Arapahoe Community College; **Sarah Hoover**, Project Bloom, and **Cordelia Robinson**, JFK Partners; **Kathleen Stiles** and **Holly Wilcher**, Smart Start CO Office of Professional Development; **Claudia Zundel**, Division of Mental Health Services, CO Dept. of Human Services.

The **Goal** of this work is:

To promote the social and emotional development of children, birth-five years, through a collaborative professional development system that fosters and sustains the state-wide, high-fidelity use of the Pyramid Model integrated with other relevant Colorado efforts.

The **Objectives** are:

- **Infrastructure**
Objective: To develop an infrastructure that fiscally supports high fidelity, sustained statewide implementation of the Pyramid Model.
- **Professional Development**
Objective: To ensure the Pyramid Model and practices are embedded in all early childhood and related interdisciplinary higher education and continuing education initiatives.
- **Public Awareness**
Objective: To ensure the public recognizes the Pyramid Model as an evidence-based approach that promotes the healthy social and emotional development of young children.
- **Access**
Objective: To ensure families have access to programs that implement the Pyramid Model and professionals have access to resources that support the implementation of the Pyramid Model.
- **Colorado as a Leader**
Objective: To promote Colorado as a national leader for implementing the Pyramid Model statewide.

Action Planning

The Goal and Objectives are the framework for action planning by the Colorado/CSEFEL Pyramid Model Partnership state planning team, including: identifying the timeframe, action steps and evaluation methods for meeting the goal and objectives for developing implementing and sustaining the Pyramid Model and practices statewide.