




**B9 Powerful Practices: Improving
School Climate and Changing
Children's Future Through the
CA Center on the Social and
Emotional Foundations for Early
Learning (CSEFEL) Teaching
Pyramid Framework**

Wednesday, June 13, 2018 1:30 - 3:00 p.m.

Linda M. J. Brault


Salon 2

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**Powerful Practices:
Improving School
Climate and
Changing Children's
Future Through the
CA CSEFEL Teaching
Pyramid Framework**


Linda Brault, Project Director
CA CSEFEL is part of the MAP to Inclusion & Belonging
WestEd Center for Child & Family Studies
www.CAinclusion.org



Agenda

- Overview of the CSEFEL Conceptual Framework and Evidence
- Promoting Social-Emotional Competence
- Samples From Each Tier
 1. Promotion
 2. Prevention
 3. Intervention





Introduction


The California Collaborative on the Social and Emotional Foundations for Early Learning (CA CSEFEL) is part of the MAP* to Inclusion & Belonging... *Making Access Possible, WestEd Center for Child & Family Studies

www.CAinclusion.org

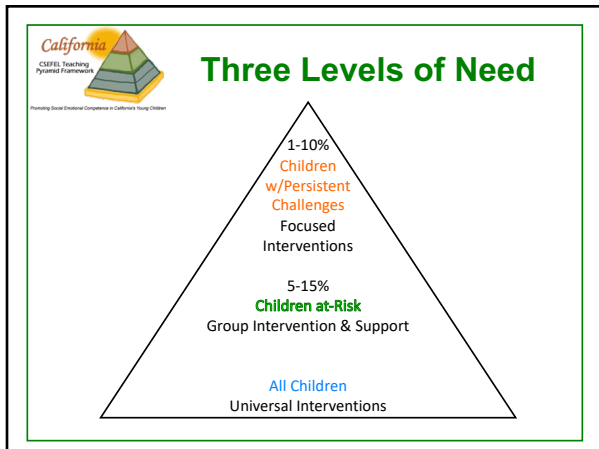
- Projects on this website focus on inclusion and belonging
- Children with challenging behavior are frequently excluded from early childhood settings
- Information on the prevalence of behavior problems in young children has been documented

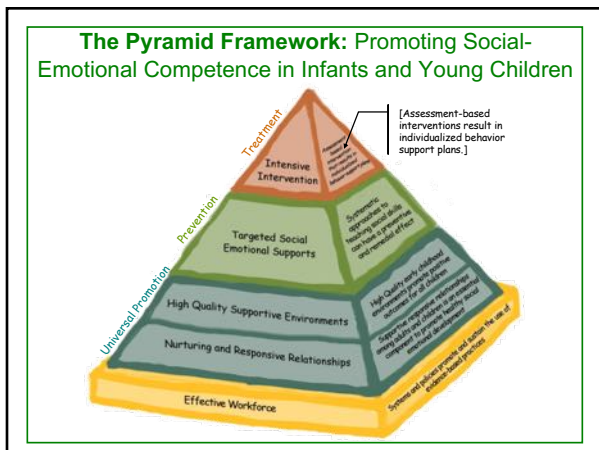


Promoting Social-Emotional Competence in California's Young Children



- **WestEd Teaching Pyramid Team**
 - A part of the WestEd Center for Child & Family Studies
 - Our projects focus on quality practice for **all** children
 - Website: www.CAinclusion.org
- **National Center for Pyramid Model Innovations (NCPMI)** **Federally funded Office of Special Education Programs**
 - Supporting national and international work on the Pyramid
 - Website: www.challengingbehavior.org



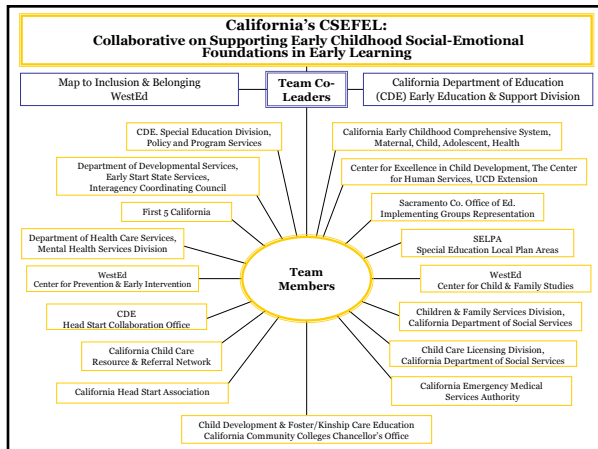




California
CSEFEL Pyramid Model
Partnership

Promoting Social Emotional Competence in California's Young Children

CA CSEFEL (The California Collaborative on Social Emotional Foundations for Early Learning) is a state-wide, multi-agency group focused on spreading the Teaching Pyramid framework throughout California






California
CSEFEL Teaching
Pyramid Framework

Promoting Social Emotional Competence in California's Young Children

California's Vision



Social-emotional development is foundational for learning and development in young children, and California is committed to promoting and supporting healthy social-emotional development in all of its children



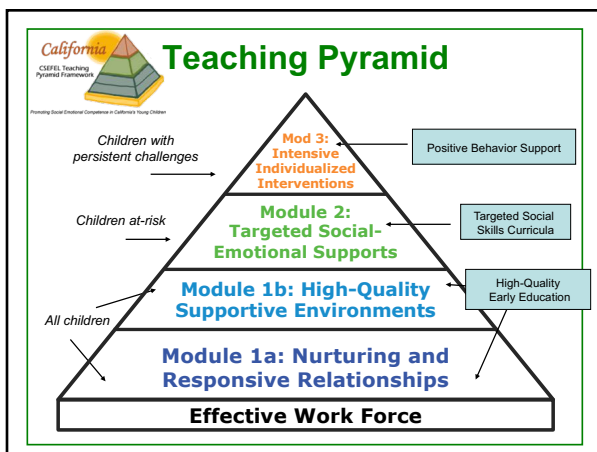



Positive Behavioral Interventions & Supports

- PBIS (Positive Behavioral Interventions & Supports) is a framework or approach for assisting school personnel in adopting and organizing evidence-based behavioral interventions into an integrated continuum that enhances academic and social behavior outcomes for all students.
- PBIS IS NOT a packaged curriculum, scripted intervention, or manualized strategy.
- PBIS IS a prevention-oriented way for school personnel to (a) organize evidence-based practices, (b) improve their implementation of those practices, and (c) maximize academic and social behavior outcomes for students. PBIS supports the success of ALL students.


- The **Teaching Pyramid** is the name used by CA CSEFEL to describe the training and technical assistance for the tiered approach developed by the national Center on the Social Emotional Foundations for Early Learning (CSEFEL)
- Teaching Pyramid is Positive Behavioral Interventions & Supports (PBIS) for young children
- There are California adapted versions for preschool-K, infant/toddler, early interventionists and home visitors, family child care, and TK-1st grade
- The Teaching Pyramid Framework was built on evidence-based practices and has been shown to increase social-emotional competence and decrease challenging behavior






Developing Our Approach

- CA CSEFEL has built a professional development model utilizing implementation science for evidence-based practice
 - Information from the national program regarding administrative practices leading to high-fidelity of implementation
 - Experience of implementing programs in California
- Using data collection to learn more
 - Teaching Pyramid Observation Tool (TPOT) to measure implementation fidelity in classrooms
 - Benchmarks of Quality for program implementation
 - Other measures to share data across programs (CLASS, DRDP, ERS)
- UCLA conducted an external evaluation of CA CSEFEL
- National Pyramid Model continues to do research as well (Handout included)




Evidence-Based Interventions

- An evidence-based program is one thing . . .
- Implementation of an evidence-based program is another thing



Evidence-Based Implementation

- Implementation Science:
 - The study of how individuals and programs adopt new practices
 - There is evidence that shows what we can do to help more teachers adopt the practices and use them with fidelity
 - These practices happen at systems and social network levels
 - CA CSEFEL Teaching Pyramid not only has evidence-based classroom interventions—It also has evidence-based implementation strategies

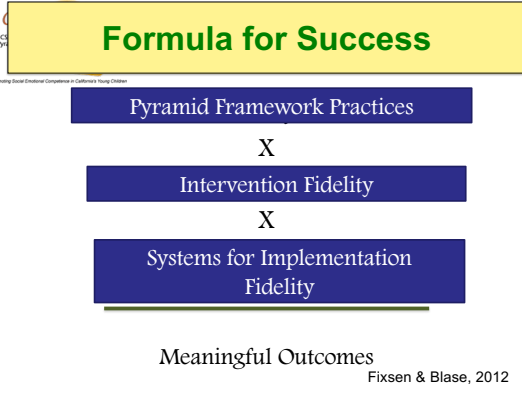


The Problem

Practices seem to be influenced by fads and fashions that are:

- Adopted overenthusiastically
- Implemented inadequately
- Then discarded prematurely in favor of the latest trend

Fixsen and Blasé/NIRN (2006)



Formula for Success

Pyramid Framework Practices

X


Intervention Fidelity

X

Systems for Implementation Fidelity

Meaningful Outcomes

Fixsen & Blase, 2012



CA CSEFEL Teaching Pyramid Components

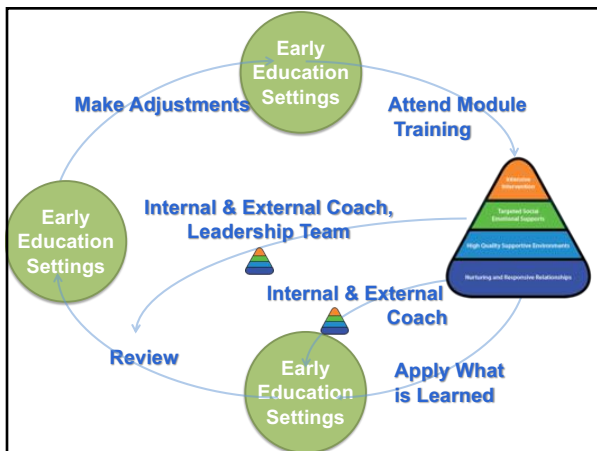
Leading to systemic change in programs

- Leadership Team
- Training over Time
- Coaching Teams
- Plans for sustainability
- Specialized Training
 - Top of the Pyramid
 - Teaching Pyramid for Families



Program-Wide is What Makes CSEFEL Unique!

- The power of CSEFEL is most clearly seen when it is implemented across an entire site, district, or agency – Program-Wide!
- Training is only one small part of the approach
- It takes planning by a group of leaders, training in a systematic way, and coaching/technical assistance to support implementation in order to be “doing CSEFEL”
- There are programs actively implementing the CA CSEFEL Teaching Pyramid for Preschool in over 25 counties throughout California






Infants & Toddlers


- There have been many CA CSEFEL training events focused on preschool children in centers
- Recently some training has been held on the use of the CA CSEFEL Teaching Pyramid Framework for infants & toddlers in centers as well as those served by home visitors
- This trend is continuing






Key Points about the Teaching Pyramid Framework


- Most social/emotional development and behavior is promoted through positive preventive measures
- Most children's behavior and development does not require intensive intervention





Who Has Challenging Behavior?

- For children under age three:
 - Behavior is how they communicate their needs
 - They are generally not capable of intentional misbehavior
 - Children will often develop coping skills that may be interpreted as challenging behavior
- Adult's can find some behaviors challenging, however it is the adult who needs to adjust and change, not the child



Persistently Challenging Behavior

- What do we mean when we say “persistently challenging behavior”?
 - Any repeated pattern of behavior that interferes with learning or engagement in pro-social interactions with peers and adults.
 - Prolonged tantrums, physical and verbal aggression, disruptive vocal and motor behavior (e.g., screaming, stereotypic movements), property destruction, self-injury, noncompliance, and withdrawal.
 - Behaviors that are not responsive to the use of developmentally appropriate guidance procedures.




What is Social-Emotional Development?

★ The developmentally and culturally appropriate ability to:

- ❖ Experience, express and manage emotions
- ❖ Establish positive and rewarding relationships with others

California Infant/Toddler Learning and Development Foundations, 2009






It Begins Early...


Capacity to:

- Form relationships
- Express emotions
- Self-regulate
- Explore with security
- Develop “emergent” emotional literacy

Capacity to:

- Feel confidence/competence
- Develop relationships
- Make friends
- Persist
- Follow directions
- Be emotionally literate
- Manage emotions
- Be empathetic






Looking at Behavior from a Reverse Chronology...

Gaps in ability to:

- Form relationships
- Express emotions
- Self-regulate
- Explore with security
- Develop “emergent” emotional literacy

Challenging Behavior:

- Has roots
- Has meaning
- Unlikely to begin suddenly “at 3.”





The screenshot shows the 'All About Young Children' website. At the top left is the 'California CSEFEL Teaching Pyramid Framework' logo. The main heading is 'Resource for Families' with the URL 'www.allaboutyoungchildren.org'. Below this, it says 'INFORMATION ON CHILDREN AGES 8 months to 18 months' next to a photo of a baby. A section titled 'What would you like to find out about?' has two options: 'How are children learning about feelings and relationships?' (SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT) and 'How are children learning language?' (LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT & LITERACY).



The Key Word is Development

- Social and emotional skills develop as children age
- All children depend on responsive, secure relationships in order to develop and learn in any domain
- Social and emotional skills may develop in different ways and at different rates, yet are very dependent on experiences, interactions, and the adults surrounding each child

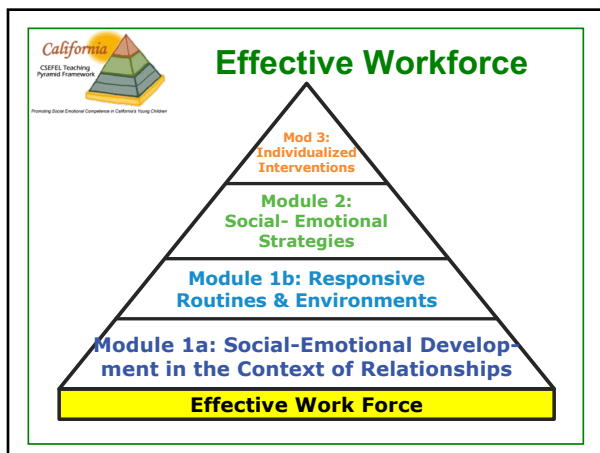




When There is NOT Healthy, Social-Emotional Development

- What do children do when they don't develop these skills?
- When children do not have these skills, they often exhibit challenging behaviors
- We must focus on TEACHING the skills!






But I Already Knew That!

- The first tiers are filled with information that people often know
- Most people know that the speed limit on the freeway is 65 mph, yet the flow of traffic is often higher
- Knowing something and doing it are two different things
- A tool is available to help us do what we know


Close to Magic #1 Teacher Reflection


- Using reflective thinking can have magical results
- When you stop, think, and then act, you can consciously and carefully apply the knowledge and experience you have gained through your training, education, and work with children & families
- You can also reflect upon the child's experience and perspective - seeing the world as the child sees it can provide new insights and ideas



Behavior Is In the Eye of the Beholder

- Our views of behavior are shaped by our family, values, culture, beliefs, and information we receive
- Many ideas about safety, expectations for how children should behave, and more are learned early
- What do you believe about behavior?
- What ideas do you bring from your family and culture about behavior?





Promotion: Tier 1a

Mod 3:
Individualized Interventions

Module 2:
Social- Emotional Supports

Module 1b: Responsive Routines & Environments

Module 1a: Social-Emotional Development in the Context of Relationships

Effective Work Force



Tier 1—Universal Promotion: Nurturing and Responsive Social Relationships

- Responsive relationships with consistent primary caregivers help build positive attachments that support healthy social-emotional development.
- These relationships form the foundation of mental health for infants, toddlers and preschoolers.



www.zerotothree.org/child-development/early-childhood-mental-health/



Getting Your Attention Is Their Job!

Ensuring Basic Emotional Competence in California's Young Children

- Adults' time and attention are very important
 - Attention and interaction are how children learn
 - They need relationships
- We tend to give time and attention when children are engaging in challenging behavior
- We need to focus our time and attention on appropriate behavior





Attention: What Do They Really Want?

Ensuring Basic Emotional Competence in California's Young Children

- Connection
 - Quest for security
 - Attachment
- Interaction
 - Social beings
 - Building brains
- Help
 - To do something, get something, initiate play, be successful



- And sometimes Look At Me!!!




Authentic Relationship Building

Ensuring Basic Emotional Competence in California's Young Children




- Teachers often use brief praise comments with children
 - Good job
 - Nice work
 - I like what you did
- With a bit more focus, you can change from generic statements to comments that will really build and deepen relationships



Praise Does Not Teach

Promoting Social Emotional Competence in California's Young Children


- Generic praise statements aren't specific enough to let a child know what they should do more of
 - "Good job!" "Nice work!" and similar statements don't give children information about their skills
 - What did I do that was good? Am I a "good job"?
- Praise promotes external/extrinsic motivation, doing something only for a reward or attention
 - "Good job" or "I like the way you..." puts the emphasis on the adult's judgment of the child's behavior
 - The child's internal narrative is, "I'm a good job" or "I must please my teacher"



Acknowledgement vs. Praise

Promoting Social Emotional Competence in California's Young Children

- **Acknowledgement** promotes internal/intrinsic motivation
 - By giving the child the credit through acknowledgement, the internal narrative is, "I am a friendly person," "I know how to build a tower," or "I can walk carefully when carrying a drink"
 - Acknowledgement helps children develop a sense of self-efficacy (confidence in their ability) and agency (ability to have an impact on the world)
 - There is a summary of alternative ways to respond in your handouts based on the work of Alfie Kohn (Moving From Praise to Acknowledgement)




Close to Magic #2

Positive, Descriptive Acknowledgement (PDA)


Promoting Social Emotional Competence in California's Young Children

- Say what you see, describe the appropriate behavior (narration)
 - "You are using walking feet in the classroom."
 - "You are building with blocks."
- *NOTE: This is not a reminder, but said while the child is doing the behavior you desire*




More Close to Magic #2
PDA Plus

- Make comments specific, linking the description to an expectation or a desired characteristic
 - Specific descriptive comments provide further definition and information regarding the desired characteristics (*See Handout: Tell Me What To Do*)
 - “You are using walking feet in the classroom. That keeps you safe.” “You gave him some of the crayons, that is sharing. Now you can both color.” “So gentle! You are touching his arm so softly.”
 - Instead of saying “You really were a big help to Juan,” say “Holding the jar for Juan as he fills it is very helpful.” Instead of “You were so nice to Kendra,” say “When you gave Kendra the toy, that was very friendly and nice.”




PDA with Adults


- Using PDA with adults is also a way to build relationships and to focus on strengths or the activities you want to promote
- Some think of it as positive commenting
- With adults, your statement has to be authentic, the PDA needs to meet shared goals, and you should practice with colleagues or your own family!



Building Brains





- Healthy interactions promote brain development
 - Narration and PDA increase children’s awareness of their actions, skills, and characteristics
 - This leads to an internal narrative that increases the child’s sense of identity, confidence, and competence



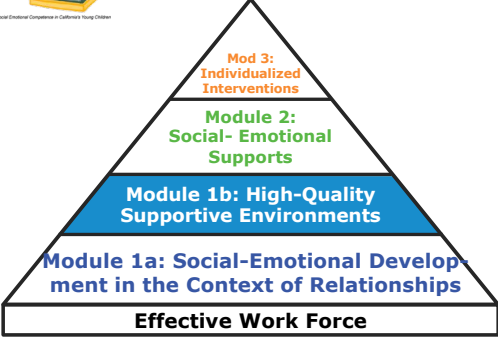
Descriptions Connect


- Talking to children about their actions is one way to help connect the emotional part of the brain (the downstairs brain) with the thinking part of the brain (the upstairs brain)
 - Connecting these two parts of the brain helps build a “staircase in the mind” so they work together
 - This connection can prevent challenging behavior and promote emotion regulation
 - The connection also builds toward executive function



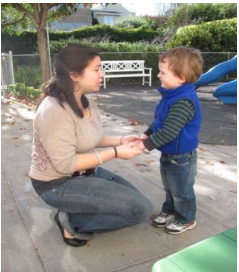


Promotion: Tier 1b





Tier 1—Universal Promotion: High Quality Supportive Environments



- A program’s physical space, organization, activities and routines contribute to children’s behavior
- Teacher behavior is an important aspect of the child-care environment (providers often leap to structural solutions [and] may overlook themselves)

Johnston, K., and Brinamen, C. (2006) Mental health Consultation in Child Care. Washington DC: Zero to Three. Pp. 251-252.




Designing Supportive Environments

High Quality ECE


- Physical Environment
- Schedules & Routines
- Transitions
- Large/Small Group Activities
- Expectations for Behavior
- Observing & Positive Focus


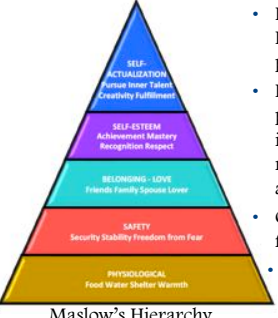




Providing Physical and Emotional Security

- Before training on these areas, we want to stop and recognize the incredibly important role adults have in setting the Emotional Environment
- Our approach, attitude, and behavior influences all other parts
- Infants, toddlers, and young children need physical and emotional security
- They need a “yes” environment




Maslow's Hierarchy


Predictability Builds Security

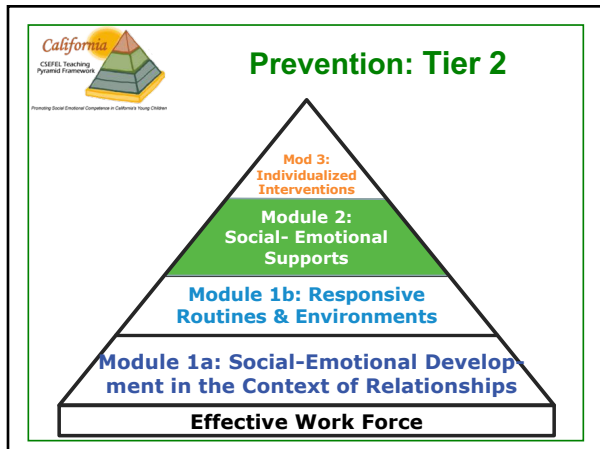
- Each section of Maslow's Hierarchy builds upon the previous section
- For young children, meeting physiological needs is important, and meeting those needs predictably builds safety and security
- Once children feel secure, they find connection and belonging
- From there they can learn and grow




Program-Wide Expectations

- The Teaching Pyramid encourages Preschool programs to use Program-Wide Expectations
- Expectations are the “why behind the rules”
 - We are Friendly
 - We are Respectful
 - We are Safe & Healthy
- Rules become the examples of the expectations in action








Tier 2—Prevention: Teaching Social & Emotional Skills

- Some children with challenging behavior might need fairly simple interventions to help them cope with group care.
- These “Tier Two” interventions are targeted to children who might have social-emotional delays or are at-risk for challenging behavior.
- The goal is for the classroom to offer a rich milieu of intentional practices to guide the development of social-emotional skills.



Blair, K.C., and Fox, L. (2011). Facilitating individualized Interventions to Address Challenging Behavior. P. 2. Available at http://www.ecmhc.org/facilitating_toolkit.htm

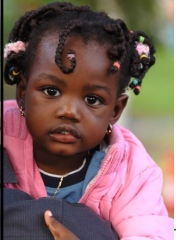
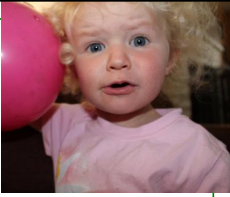



Teach Me What To Do Instead!

Targeted Social-Emotional Curriculum

- Friendship Skills
- Emotional Literacy
- Emotion Regulation: Managing Strong Emotions
- Problem Solving/Conflict Resolution






Emotional Literacy

Emotional literacy is the ability to identify, understand, and express emotions in a healthy way



Children with a Strong Foundation in Emotional Literacy:



- Are more focused
- Have greater academic achievement
- Are healthier
- Tolerate frustration better
- Get into fewer fights
- Engage in less destructive behavior
- Are less lonely
- Are less impulsive


California Preschool Learning Foundations, pg. 23



Co-Regulation to Self-Regulation



- Strong emotions can swamp a child's brain with "fight, flight, or freeze" chemicals
- Infants depend on adults to respond to their distress
- Our soothing reassurance and physical presence builds the neural pathways that lead to self-regulation



Strengthening Families


- This is a national movement to provide a framework for promoting family strengths and a family environment that promotes optimal child and youth development
- There are five "protective factors" that, when well established in a family, diminish the likelihood of child abuse and neglect
- Information on the Protective Factors are provided in a handout



Five Protective Factors


1. Parental resilience
2. Social connections
3. Concrete support in times of need
4. Knowledge of parenting and child development, and
5. Social and emotional competence of children





CA CSEFEL Addresses the Protective Factors

- The materials shared today and the CA CSEFEL Teaching Pyramid approach support most of the protective factors
- They directly address knowledge of child development and social emotional competence of children
- When support is provided to families in groups it can increase parental resilience and lead to social connections
- And all early care and education providers need to learn about concrete supports in times of need available in their community



Family Tools

- There are many articles and tools that will give strategies to address typical, yet challenging, behavior
- On the website, these are organized by module topic
 - Module 1: Relationships and Environment
 - Module 2: Teaching Social-Emotional Skills
 - Positive Solutions for Families Series
- The resources can either be shared directly with family members, or they can provide you with background information and tools to use with family members



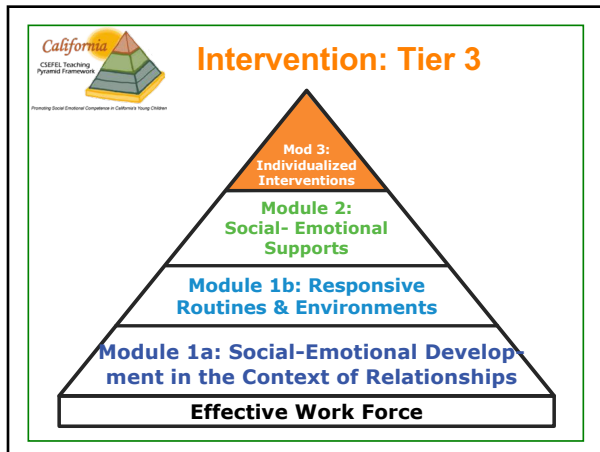
Material on Websites

The Teaching Pyramid Website has a page dedicated to materials you can use with families

- There are several great articles
- Strategies to help parents
- Material for facilitation of parent/family member groups
- Most are in English, Spanish, and Chinese

www.cainclusion.org/teachingpyramid/materials_family.html

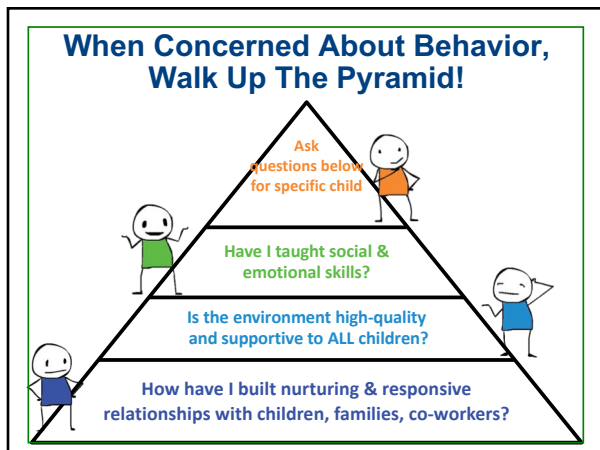





Tier 3—Treatment: Intensive Individualized Interventions

- A small proportion of children with challenging behavior that persists and is unresponsive to guidance might need very focused individualized interventions.
- These “Tier Three” interventions typically use the process of functional assessment and teaming to develop a comprehensive behavior support plan.

Blair, K.C. and Fox, L. (2011). Facilitating individualized Interventions to Address Challenging Behavior. Pp. 15. Available at http://www.ecmhc.org/facilitating_toolkit.html






Use the Tiers as Steps When Concerned About Individuals


- What are 3 things you have done to strengthen your relationship with the child and the family?
- What are 3 things you have done to examine the environment with this child in mind?




- What specific social and emotional skills should be targeted for this child? Can you find 3 times in the day to practice the skills when this child is calm?



Tier 1 & 2 Strategies Are Useful for Behavior That Challenges





- One strength of the Teaching Pyramid Framework is the fact that most strategies for behavior that is challenging are drawn from Module 1 or Module 2 strategies.
- In other words, for severe and persistently challenging behavior, these strategies will be used, often with some individualization or in combination with other strategies.



But I've Tried Everything!

- If you have ever said this, you may be missing out on the “function” or meaning of behavior – what is motivating the child to persist
- If you are using strategies for the wrong reason, they won't work!
- We have to really stay open to new ideas when we need to focus on children who puzzle us!






Functional Assessment

Promoting Social Emotional Competence in California's Young Children

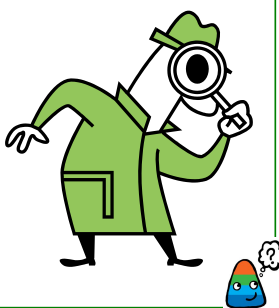
- To address persistently challenging behavior, we need to determine the function of the behavior
- This is called a **Functional Assessment**:
 - A process for developing an understanding of a person's challenging behavior and, in particular, how the behavior is governed by environmental events
- Observe carefully to identify the **form** and assess the **function** (*Behavior Equation Chart*)
- This is the first step in designing a Positive Behavior Support (PBS) plan




When Looking for Function

Promoting Social Emotional Competence in California's Young Children

- What is the child trying to
 - Obtain (Get)
 - Avoid
 - Express
- This is the key!






Positive Behavior Support (PBS)

Promoting Social Emotional Competence in California's Young Children


- An approach for changing a child's behavior
- Based on humanistic values and research
- An approach for developing an understanding of **why** the child has challenging behavior and teaching the child **new skills** to replace challenging behavior
- A holistic approach that considers all of the factors that impact a child, his or her family, and the child's behavior



Basic Components About Behavior


Some people learn this as ABC – we add DEF

- A** = Antecedent (what happens before the behavior, also called a trigger)
- B** = Behavior (what the child or person does)
- C** = Consequence (what happens after)
- D** = Don't jump to conclusions! Be a Detective
- E** = Eyes & Ears (what did you see and hear)
- F** = Function (what is the purpose or motivation)



New Resource

- Given the ongoing concerns about suspension and expulsion of very young children, the CA CSEFEL State Leadership Team is making resources available through
- PreventingChildCareExpulsionCA.org



Thank You!

For more information:
teachingpyramid@wested.org

CA Map to Inclusion & Belonging
<http://www.CAinclusion.org>

A CLASSROOM-WIDE MODEL FOR PROMOTING Social Emotional Development & Addressing Challenging Behavior In Preschool Children

Principal Investigators: Mary Louise Hemmeter, Lise Fox, Patricia Snyder, and James Algina

July 2014

TEACHING PYRAMID RESEARCH PROJECT



VANDERBILT UNIVERSITY • UNIVERSITY OF FLORIDA
UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH FLORIDA



Background

Research in early education indicates that social-emotional competence is critical for children's readiness for school and early school adjustment. Early childhood educators encounter young children who demonstrate a range of social-emotional skills and varying needs for social and behavioral support. Early educators are challenged by how to support children with significant social emotional and behavioral needs while also providing a developmentally appropriate and supportive learning context for all children.

The *Pyramid Model* (Fox, Dunlap, Hemmeter, Joseph, & Strain, 2003; Hemmeter, Ostrosky, & Fox, 2006) is a promotion, prevention, and intervention framework early educators can use to promote young children's social and emotional development and prevent and address challenging behavior. The *Pyramid Model* organizes evidence-based practices that include universal promotion practices for all children, practices for children who need targeted social-emotional supports, and individualized behavior support practices for children with significant social skill deficits or persistent challenging behavior.

The Study

Researchers from the University of South Florida and Vanderbilt University conducted a randomized study examining the implementation of the *Pyramid Model*. Teachers were recruited from public preschool classrooms in Florida and Tennessee that served children with, at risk for, and without disabilities. A total of 40 teachers (20 intervention; 20 control) participated and were randomly assigned to condition. Data were collected on a total of 484 children in these classrooms (252 intervention; 232 control), including two to three target children per classroom who were identified as having behavioral challenges (54 intervention; 43 control).

Teachers in the intervention condition received training workshops, individualized coaching, and materials (i.e., implementation guides and classroom materials) related to the implementation of the *Pyramid Model*. Weekly coaching sessions took place for 16 weeks, consisting of in-class observation of teacher practices, debrief meetings, and email follow-up. Teachers in the control condition received the training workshops at the end of the school year.

Work reported in this paper was supported by a grant from the National Center for Special Education Research in the Institute of Education Sciences to Vanderbilt University (R324A07212). The opinions expressed are those of the authors, not the funding agency.

Data were collected on four occasions in all classrooms during the school year. Teachers reported on children's social skills and problem behavior by completing the Social Skills Improvement System (citation). Trained observers rated teacher implementation of the *Pyramid Model* implementation and conducted a direct observation of target children's social skills and problem behavior. Data were analyzed to examine whether (a) the intervention resulted in differences of teachers' implementation of *Pyramid Model* practices and (b) teacher implementation of *Pyramid Model* practices resulted in differences in social and behavioral outcomes for children, including target children.

Results

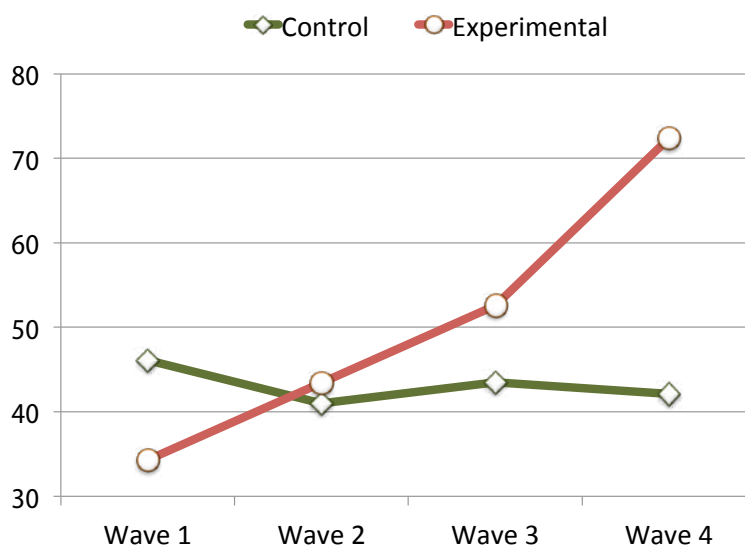
Teacher outcomes. Figure 1 shows data on teachers' implementation of *Pyramid Model* practices across waves for intervention and control groups. Results show that teachers in the intervention group progressed steadily toward higher levels of *Pyramid Model* implementation when compared with teachers in the control group. At the end of the school year, there were statistically significant and noteworthy differences in practice implementation between intervention and control teachers.

Child outcomes. Following intervention, non-target children whose teachers were in the intervention group were rated significantly higher on social skills than non-target children whose teachers were in the control group. Target children within classrooms in the experimental condition had statistically significant and noteworthy reductions in problem behavior as rated by teachers in comparison to target children whose teachers were in the control group.

Conclusion

This study provides evidence that training and coaching resulted in increases in teacher practices for promoting social emotional development and addressing challenging behavior, as well as increasing positive social skills and decreasing challenging behavior in preschool children. This study represents one of the first experimental evaluations of the effects of a comprehensive model such as the Teaching Pyramid on children with varying levels of need around social skills and challenging behavior. The findings provide evidence for the effectiveness of a systematic professional development intervention on teachers' implementation of practices and that practices associated with the *Pyramid Model* can be effective for promoting social skills reducing problem behavior of children in a preschool classroom.

Figure 1.
Average Percent of Practices Implemented
by Teachers Across Waves by Experimental Condition



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Promoting Social Emotional Competence in California's Young Children



Moving from Praise to Acknowledgment: Providing Children with Authentic Support

*"The only lifelong, reliable motivations are those that come from within,
and one of the strongest of those is the joy and pride that grow from knowing
that you've just done something as well as you can do it."*

-- Lloyd Dobens and Clare Crawford-Mason

When a child has done something impressive, instead of saying, "Good job," try one of the following:

1. Report what you see (PDA: Positive, Descriptive Acknowledgment).

A short, objective statement such as, "You put your dishes in the tub," or "You figured out a solution to the problem," acknowledges children's efforts and allows them to judge for themselves the merits of their achievement. Elaborate on the details of their actions to provide more specific feedback. For example, "It looks like you used blue and green to make an ocean."

2. Connect it with a desired character trait, value, or expectation (PDA Plus).

When a child does something that is an example of a character trait, value or expectation, add the expectations language to the comment. For example, if a child has put away toys on the floor say, "You cleaned up the blocks. You are keeping the area safe." Or if they helped a friend you might say, "You gave Yoon Seo the fire truck. That's being friendly." Expectations language provides definitions for the character words, builds self-efficacy (belief that you have the ability to succeed at a task), and helps the child to internalize the behaviors.

3. Emphasize the impact on others (PDA Plus).

If a child does something caring or something that benefits the community, acknowledge the positive impact. For example, if a child has put away toys on the floor say, "You cleaned up the blocks. Now someone else can have a turn." Or if they helped a friend you might say, "You gave Yoon Seo the fire truck. He looks really happy to have it." Such language builds a sense of agency (ability to intentionally make things happen through your actions) by drawing the child's attention to the impact his/her actions have on another child.

4. Ask open-ended questions (PDA Plus).

Being curious encourages the child to reflect. "What do you like best about your tower?" or "How did you know to put the puzzle piece there?" Asking open-ended questions builds language and engages the children in abstract thinking.

5. Say nothing.

When children are playing, we often feel the need to continually comment on their actions. This can be disruptive and can create an extrinsic motivation to explore. Balance attuned interactions with silent observation. Let children take joy in their own learning and allow them to experience the pride of their own accomplishments.

Tell Me What To Do Instead!

Classroom Version



COMMUNICATION IS THE KEY

1. Tell a child what to do instead of what not to do.
2. Show the child by modeling or using a picture of the action.
3. Clearly and simply state what you expect the child to do.
4. Remember that young children may use inappropriate behavior because they do not understand the social rules and/or because they are unable to consistently apply what they are in the process of learning.
5. Talk to young children using language they understand. Young children may not understand a word like “don’t” because it is a short word for “do not” and he/she may not know what the “negation” of a word means.
6. Encourage the child in a way that lets him/her know that he/she is exhibiting the desired behavior. Use positive, descriptive acknowledgement while the child is making an effort or is doing the desired behavior.
7. Some children will respond better to more subdued expressions, and acknowledging them in a “matter of fact” way might be more effective.
8. For the most part, be enthusiastic and generous with encouragement. Most children can never get enough!

Examples:

Avoid	Say/Model	Positive Descriptive Acknowledgement
Don't run!	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Walk Use walking feet Stay with me Hold my hand 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> You're holding my hand. That is so respectful. You walked across the classroom. You made a safe choice. You are walking beside me and keeping me company. That is so friendly!
Stop climbing!	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Keep your feet on the floor Do you need something up high? Let's find a safe way to reach it 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Wow! You have both feet on the floor! You are being safe. You asked for help to get something, you are being careful.
Don't touch!	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Look with your eyes Keep your hands down 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> You were really listening; you are looking with your eyes! You kept your hands down. That is respectful.
No yelling!	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use a calm voice Use an inside voice Turn the volume down 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> You are using a calm voice! You look happy. You are using a soft voice inside the classroom. How respectful.
Stop whining!	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use a calm voice Talk so that I can understand you 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> You are talking so clearly! That is so helpful. You told me with your words what was wrong. That is respectful. You used your words. How respectful!
Don't stand on the chair!	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sit on the chair Chairs are for sitting Do you need something up high? Let's find a safe way to reach it. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> You are sitting on the chair. What a careful girl. You were responsible when you sat in the chair. You stood on the ladder. You chose to be safe.
Don't hit!	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gentle hands Hands are for playing, eating, and hugging 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> When you used gentle hands you were being respectful. You used your hands for clapping! You like being safe. You are hugging her. What a friendly girl.
No coloring on the wall!!	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Color on the paper Put the paper on the easel if you want to color standing up 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> You put the paper on the easel. That is being responsible. Wow. You are coloring so carefully. You are focused. You are an artist standing at the easel.
Don't throw your toys!	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Play with the toys on the floor Toys stay close to the ground Please keep the toys on the table 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> You are playing with the toys on the floor. So safe. You decided to keep the toys on the table. You are respectful.
Stop playing with your food!	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Food goes on the spoon and then in your mouth Say “all done” when you are finished eating 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> You're using your spoon. You're being careful. You said “all done.” That is helpful. You are eating your food using your spoon and fork. That is practicing manners.
Don't play in the water/sink!	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Wash your hands If you're finished washing your hands, please dry them 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> You washed your hands. What a healthy guy! You followed the hand washing steps! You try hard.