The Pyramid Model

is a framework for implementing a multi-leveled and responsive system of support to enhance development in infants, toddlers, and young children, especially in the social and emotional domain. It offers evidence based strategies for parents and professionals to support optimal development and prevent challenging behaviors.

Project Vision

The State of Wisconsin will have comprehensive, cross disciplinary professional development to support professionals working to ensure the social and emotional well-being of infants, young children, and their families.

This annual report provides an update on progress in achieving this vision during 2014.

Since 2009, Wisconsin has been working to build infrastructure to support implementation of the Pyramid Model framework with fidelity. This work is guided by the implementation logic of Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS).

This annual report is organized based on the key components of Implementation Logic (see below) with the “Evaluation” component integrated into every section.
Leadership Team

Pyramid Model state leadership team (SLT) has been guiding the state implementation of the framework since 2009. The team meets quarterly with meetings facilitated by the state coordinator. The team includes representatives from different systems and disciplines that directly impact very young children and their families. Team meetings are regularly evaluated and the evaluation results and feedback are used to plan future meetings.

In addition, the state leadership team uses state Benchmarks of Quality – a tool that outlines critical elements of implementation to assess the current progress and action plan for the future. The graph below demonstrates yearly rates of Wisconsin’s state implementation of the Pyramid Model since 2011.

As a state, Wisconsin has 70% of critical elements in place and 30% partially in place. We are making progress on building systems for an effective workforce to support social and emotional competence of infants and young children in our state.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SLT Evaluation Criteria</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>The evaluation is based on a 1-5 rating scale. 1=low; 5=high</strong></td>
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<th>2013</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Degree to which the meeting objectives were achieved</td>
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<td>4.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Facilitation of the meeting was</td>
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<tr>
<td>I would rate my own contributions to the meeting as</td>
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<td>4.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Degree to which I think this meeting contributed toward achieving our purpose</td>
<td>4.54</td>
<td>4.60</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This table summarizes the meeting results for 2014.
The Pyramid Model Framework Training

The goal of Pyramid Model professional development is to increase the use of evidence-based practices with high fidelity. Research clearly demonstrates that training alone does not change practices. Coaching is an essential component of professional development.

With guidance from the Pyramid Model Consortium national and state partners, Wisconsin has created Pyramid Model training content. Pyramid Model training is based on the evidence-based practices promoted in the Pyramid Model framework. These practices address relationships, environment, intentional teaching and individualized intervention, and are correlated with enhanced social and emotional competence of children from birth through age 6. Content aligns with the Wisconsin Model Early Learning Standards and best practices to support child development in critical areas important to school success— including social and emotional development and foundations of emergent literacy. Research indicates that children who enter school with social and emotional competence demonstrate higher academic achievement. Pyramid Model training provides many examples and concrete strategies supporting use of recommended practices daily with young children and their families.

Participants in Pyramid Model trainings learn the importance of Universal Practices (blue tier) that include Nurturing and Responsive Relationships and Creating High Quality Supportive Environments. Research shows that implementing these universal practices can eliminate the need to use challenging behaviors for 80% of young children.

Participants learn strategies for adding Targeted Social and Emotional Supports like intentionally teaching emotional literacy, friendship skills, self-regulation strategies, and problem solving steps.

Adding this level of support addresses the needs of another 15% of children who are at risk for developing chronic challenging behavior. Determining the function of challenging behavior, then designing and implementing a behavior plan that includes preventions, teaching of new skills, and new responses begins the Intensive Intervention (red tier) process for the 3-5% of children who need support to address their chronic challenging behavior.

Wisconsin Pyramid Model training typically involves presentation, video demonstration and action planning for practice between training sessions. Wisconsin 8 Part Training series is held in multiple sessions spaced over time so that participants can receive feedback on the strategies they’ve tried.

Our goal is to support Wisconsin’s early care and education workforce with training content designed to promote evidence based practices of promoting social and emotional competence in their roles with children and families.
Wisconsin Pyramid Model offers several training options, provided by state funded trainers, based on participants’ roles in supporting young children and families (see side panel). We continue to build the infrastructure to increase capacity of trainers to offer all Pyramid Model content training in each of the five Wisconsin’s Early Childhood Collaborating Partners (WECCP) regions. Pyramid Model trainers are connected with regional Communities of Practice to continue their learning related to Pyramid Model philosophy and practices, to connect with other trainers and to address the needs of providers in their region.

“Pyramid model is the essence of our philosophy, a way of being. We instill relationships, by sharing our hearts, thoughts, feelings and challenges.”

New trainers are recruited and supported through WECCP Regional Collaboration Coaches and the regional Pyramid Model Communities of practice. Trainers must complete an application review process and work with a mentor to learn the training content, requirements and responsibilities.

In 2014, Pyramid Model training content was integrated into Wisconsin’s Technical Colleges’ Early Childhood Education Curriculum.
Training Provided in 2014

Approved Pyramid Model trainers reported completing 317 trainings in 2014. The graphic below indicates the primary content of the reported trainings as well as the primary role of the participants since the 2010.

Pyramid Model training participants indicate the county/counties they serve. The graphic on the left indicates the counties served by participants of 2014 Pyramid Model training. The graphic on the right indicates counties served by participants of all Pyramid Model trainings since 2010. The data indicate higher rates of training in counties with more programs, counties that correspond to technical assistance areas with higher numbers of Pyramid Model trainings, and counties with program wide implementing sites.
Coaching for Fidelity of Implementation

Implementation science indicates that training alone often does not result in the use of evidence based practice within education settings. Pyramid Model training content and implementation support were designed to maximize the likelihood of use of practices. Specifically, the 8 Part Training Series is designed to be delivered across multiple sessions. Participants begin with a self-assessment of their current practices, experience video demonstration of the practices, plan their opportunities for practice between sessions, and receive feedback on their practice at the next session. Program directors are strongly encouraged to attend training with their staff. Trainers guide directors to plan for supporting their teachers in implementation.

Teachers in program-wide implementation sites are provided with additional supports to ensure they use Pyramid Model evidence based practices with fidelity. These supports include: administrative support, practice based coaching, and data feedback.

**Administrative Support:** The program leadership team uses the Early Childhood Benchmarks of Quality to create/enhance program policies and practices to encourage/support a teacher to use evidence based practices.

**Practice based coaching:** Trained internal coaches use observation tools (Teaching Pyramid Observation Tool (TPOT) or Teaching Pyramid Infants & Toddlers Observation Scale (TPITOS)) to quantify a teacher’s use of Pyramid Model evidence based practices in a two hour observation. The data from the observation tool is shared with the teacher.

Together, the teacher and internal coach prioritize which practices should be enhanced. The internal coach provides classroom based resources, feedback, modeling, and reflection to support the teacher in applying training content daily in interactions with children.

**Data feedback:** The internal coach uses the observation tool every 6 months, providing consistent coaching between observations, until the observation data indicate the teacher has reached fidelity standards. Wisconsin data indicates that, on average, it takes one year of coaching for teachers to reach fidelity on the TPOT. This is consistent with national data.

“The social and emotional connections that young children develop with their caregivers literally helps to determine which neuronal connections are activated and strengthened within their brains, and these early neuronal connections form the foundation for lifelong brain function.”


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**Coaching for Fidelity of Implementation**

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Technical consultation as a bridge into coaching for fidelity

In 2014, Technical Consultation related to Pyramid Model implementation was developed for childcare programs participating in YoungStar. Programs are able to apply for Technical Consultation mini-grants that provide the program with 12 hours of on-site technical assistance related to Pyramid Model implementation. Technical consultants use a protocol manual to provide consistency in site support.

Overall, twenty eight programs (6 family child care and 22 group care) applied to receive Pyramid Model on-site consultation in 2014. Two hundred and eight seven hours of on-site technical consultation was completed. In addition, seventy-one hours of support was provided off-site.

**Young Star Technical Consultation Options for Pyramid Model Support**

- Needs Assessment and Goal Setting
- Shared Decision Making
- Building Relationships with Children
- Program Wide Expectations and Rules
- Descriptive Feedback
- Supportive Environments
- Schedules and Routines
- Emotional Literacy
- Child Friendships
- Problem Solving Process
- Function Based Planning
- Sustainability

“I’m so glad that I stayed in the classroom long enough to learn and use Pyramid Model teaching. Even after twenty years, I’ve learned a better way of teaching young children”

Pyramid Model External coach
Local Teams: Wisconsin’s Program-Wide Implementation Sites

Research indicates that early care and education professionals change their practices more effectively when program elements in place to support their growth. We have built a process for programs to convene a leadership team, gather and use data and coach teachers so that evidence-based practices promoted by Pyramid Model framework are implemented with fidelity. This process is called Program-Wide Implementation of the Pyramid Model. It uses a systems change model that echoes the PBIS school-wide implementation model.

Every year a new cohort of Program—Wide Implementation sites begins their journey. The program’s readiness is one of the key components for successful implementation. Programs that consider adopting the Pyramid Model go through a thorough readiness process and submit an application documenting their readiness for implementation. The application process, as well as the scoring rubric, was edited significantly in order to make the scoring process more objective and relevant to applicants.

As of 2014, Wisconsin has 27 sites that are using Pyramid Model Program Wide Implementation process. They include Child Care Centers, Head Start Programs and Public Schools. In 2014, the following teams applied and were selected for program wide implementation of the Pyramid Model:

- Verona Early Childhood Initiative, Verona
  - Pre-K community collaborative
  - Here We Grow
  - La Petite Academy
  - Once Upon a Time
  - 1,000 children

- St. Joseph Academy, Milwaukee
  - Child Care and Elementary School
  - 222 children (14 child care classrooms and 12 K4-3rd grade classrooms)

- The School for Early Development & Achievement, Milwaukee
  - Public Charter School
  - 82 children

- Woods Hollow Children’s Center, Fitchburg
  - Child Care Center
  - 130 children

- Acelero Learning, Milwaukee County
  - Head Start Program
  - To serve 866 children in 8 sites

A program’s implementation is most successful when guided by an external coach—a member of Wisconsin Training and Technical Assistance system who supports the program’s leadership team. Data shows that having an external coach is particularly important in the first two years of implementation. Every program in the 2014 cohort was matched with an external coach.
Program leadership teams are invited to attend a 2-day team kickoff training as part of Wisconsin’s Pyramid Model Implementation Academy. The goal of the Implementation Academy is to support and prepare teams for planful implementation of the Pyramid Model. The 2014 Implementation Academy took place in Milwaukee and featured specialized training for coaches and new program leadership teams, an implementation refresher for the current sites, Parent Module trainings and 2-day session on the general Pyramid Model preschool content.

Program leadership teams use a program Early Childhood Benchmarks of Quality tool to assess progress and guide implementation. Programs that have 80% or more of the critical elements in place are considered at fidelity of implementation. This is a significant achievement for a program that benefits children, families and teachers.

In 2014, the following six programs reached fidelity of program-wide implementation:

- A.C. Kiefer Early Learning Center, Wausau
- A Child’s Place, Kenosha*
- ThedaCare, Appleton
- Kids USA, Chippewa Falls
- Chippewa Falls Head Start, Chippewa Falls
- CAP Services, Stevens Point

These programs received a certificate of accomplishment and a window cling to display their achievement and commitment to social and emotional well-being. In addition, letters were mailed to key individuals in the area selected by the program’s leadership team (e.g., administrators, policy makers, legislators) acknowledging the program’s success in implementation.

National research indicates programs that have reached Pyramid Model implementation fidelity 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 Pyramid Model has provided us with hope and confidence that we can mange challenging behaviors better. We now have tools and data to validate what behaviors we see and help improve our skills in working with children and families.”

Director of a Program-wide implementation site
Funding:

Wisconsin’s Early Childhood Training and Technical Assistance cadre has a long history of blended funding and shared training and technical assistance content. Pyramid Model funding follows this long standing tradition of collaboration and quality. Four key elements are supported through blended funding. They are: Leadership Resources, Coaching Resources, Training Resources, and Program Wide Implementation Resources.
Coaching Resource

Internal coaches to support teachers in using PM practices
Funding Source
- Funded by program/collaborative agencies

External coaches to support program-wide leadership teams
Funding Source
- RTTT
- DPI
- Head Start T & TA
- United Way grant

YoungStar Technical Consultants with PM focus
Funding Source
- DCF/SFTA

Program-Wide Implementation Resource

PM Implementation Academy
Funding Source
- RTTT
- DPI
- WI-AIMH
- UWM
- SFTA

Program-wide selection committee
Funding Source
- DCF
- DPI
- WI-AIMH
- Head Start T & TA
- CTF

Ongoing implementation supports (e.g., web resources, networking, data support)
Funding Source
- DPI
- Collaborating Partners
- RTTT
Visibility:

The information sharing workgroup, charged with dissemination of information on the Pyramid Model, created a new logo, tag line, and window cling to acknowledge programs that reached implementation fidelity.

The Pyramid Model tag line is “Teach Coach Change” and reflects the essence of the framework: intentional teaching and coaching support leads to positive change for children, families and professionals. Wisconsin’s Pyramid Model’s Facebook page features regular updates (3 posts/week) and has reached over 300 followers during 2014. Pyramid Model announcements, training opportunities, and notes from the state leadership team meetings are posted on the Wisconsin Pyramid Model webpage which is housed on the Collaborating Partners website. Based on a Google analytics report, Wisconsin Pyramid Model pages get an average over 1,500 unique hits per quarter. (http://www.collaboratingpartners.com/wi-pyramid-model-about.php)

Pyramid Model work was presented at a number of state conferences and the overview of the framework is part of the curriculum at the University of Wisconsin—Madison Infant, Early Childhood and Family Mental Health Capstone Certificate Program. The 2014 Intersecting Interests Training and Technical Assistance state meeting and Preserving Early Childhood (4K conference) featured a panel presentation on Pyramid Model coaching led by the state coordinator, external coach and representatives from program-wide implementation sites. State coordinators presented information on Wisconsin’s embedding of Pyramid Model training into YoungStar at the National Training Institute for Addressing Challenging Behaviors in April 2014. In addition, the state coordinator and leadership team members wrote a paper describing the PIWI (Parents Interacting with Infants) groups with mothers in inner city Milwaukee. The paper titled “Breaking the cycle: Supporting parent-child relationships through the Parents Interacting with Infant intervention” was published in the national ZERO to THREE journal in July 2014.

Political Support:

Wisconsin’s Pyramid Model efforts were presented to the Wisconsin Legislative Committee on Supporting Early Brain Development. This committee developed policy suggestions that included integration of the “Pyramid Model with coaching in the classroom into requirements to teacher, childcare provider, and home visitors.” View the document at: (http://goo.gl/6ujf3S). Pyramid Model coordinators serve on several advisory and leadership teams to build connections between the Pyramid Model and other state efforts. These teams include: PBIS, Infant Toddler Policy Group, and the Children and Youth Committee of the Mental Health Council, Professional Development Initiative, WI Model Early Learning Standards Advisory Group, Office of Children’s Mental Health, Early Childhood Comprehensive Systems, and Response to Intervention Center (RtI).

Pyramid Model State Leadership Team members are charged with communicating about and advocating for support of the Pyramid Model initiative within their own systems. Quarterly state leadership team meetings feature a standing agenda item where members give updates on Pyramid Model support within their systems.

Tucker Solutions Wall of Fame.
A.C. Kiefer Early Learning Center, Wausau
Conclusion:

Wisconsin’s Pyramid Model Coordinators, State Leadership Team members and local “ambassadors” continue to work diligently to build the infrastructure necessary for sustainable implementation with fidelity of the evidence-based practices promoted by the Pyramid Model framework. Our Benchmarks of Quality data indicate we are making steady progress on implementation, yet we understand there is much more work to be done to grow and sustain the initiative.

We continue to learn every day from the good work done by Pyramid Model trainers, coaches, administrators, teachers, assistants, home visitors, early interventionists and families. We are humbled and inspired by the personal stories of success and by the tireless efforts to change the way we think about and become intentional in our support of young children and their families.

Our Goals and Hopes for 2015

- Expand the number of program wide implementation sites and provide sites with the supports they need to be successful
- Provide support for the increasing number of external and internal coaches
- Provide funding for communities to customize their support of Pyramid Model implementation
- Increase opportunities to support families of young children through the use of PIWI groups in communities throughout the state
- Infuse the Pyramid Model framework within the Infant Toddler policy agenda
- Enhance connections between Pyramid Model and PBIS implementation

We are deeply grateful to our families – Thank you for your patience, passion, understanding, and support.

“Across a range of studies, the emotional, social, and behavioral competence of young children—such as higher levels of self-control and lower levels of acting out—predict their academic performance in first grade, over and above their cognitive skills and family backgrounds.”
