



The Colorado Center for Social Emotional  
Competence and Inclusion

cde

COLORADO DEPARTMENT of EDUCATION

## **Implementing the Pyramid Model in Colorado: Pyramid Plus and CDE Collaboration 2.12.13**

### **The Pyramid Model for Supporting Social Emotional Competence in Infants and Young Children**

The Pyramid Model for Supporting Social Emotional Competence in Infants and Young Children (Pyramid Model) provides a tiered intervention framework of evidence-based interventions for promoting the social, emotional, and behavioral development of young children (Fox et al., 2003; Hemmeter, Ostrosky, & Fox, 2006). The model describes three tiers of intervention practice: universal promotion for all children; secondary preventions to address the intervention needs for children at risk of social emotional delays, and tertiary interventions needed for children with persistent challenges. The Pyramid Model has been used by two national training and technical assistance (T/TA) centers: the Center on Social Emotional Foundations for Early Learning (CSEFEL) and the Technical Assistance Center for Social Emotional Intervention (TACSEI).

### **Background**

In 2006, Colorado was selected as a “partner state” to work with CSEFEL. Colorado was one of the first states to receive training and technical assistance (T/TA) from CSEFEL national faculty to establish a state-wide system of professional development on the Pyramid Model. The first step in the partnership was the establishment of a State Leadership Team representing the major state agencies providing early childhood care and education. The State Team included representation from Child Care, Early Intervention Colorado, Colorado Department of Education (CDE), Head Start, Early Childhood Mental Health, Office for Professional Development, and the Community College system. The State Leadership Team provided Pyramid Model training events, selected coaches to assist in the local implementation of the Pyramid Model, and 3 demonstration sites. Over the course of three years, over 350 individuals across the state attended training events, 10 people volunteered to be coaches, 3 programs volunteered to be demonstration sites for the Pyramid Model and a community leadership training was conducted.

In 2008, Colorado was selected as a SpecialQuest state to promote and support inclusion of young children with disabilities. This nationally funded effort also provided training and technical assistance and established a state leadership team. Many of the same people were on both leadership teams. In addition to the training and professional development activities, both the SpecialQuest and Pyramid Model state teams worked on ways to sustain and expand these effective practices and resources.

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

In 2009, leaders representing both state teams (Pyramid Model and SpecialQuest) designed a grant process to fund the Colorado Center on Social Emotional Competence and Inclusion. The grant was awarded to the University of Colorado Denver in fall of 2009 as Pyramid Plus: the Colorado Center on Social Emotional Competence and Inclusion. The Pyramid Plus Center has developed a training curriculum that uses the Pyramid Model and embeds inclusion strategies and covers the full age range of birth through age five years (the Pyramid Plus Approach). Currently Pyramid Plus focuses on building the capacity of communities and programs to implement and sustain the Pyramid Plus Approach by providing T/TA to communities and by

certifying trainers and coaches to deliver the Pyramid Plus Approach with high fidelity. Additionally, Pyramid Plus holds at least one state-wide training and works with 4 Pyramid Plus Certified Demonstration Programs available for visits and consultation. Pyramid Plus has created a website that embodies a wealth of resources for administrators, teachers, child care providers and families. In addition, there continues to be a Pyramid Plus State Policy Team. Pyramid Plus has partnered with several programs and communities:

-Pyramid Plus Certified Demonstration Sites:

- Bal Swan Children’s Center, Broomfield
- Prime Time Early Learning Center and Norwood School District Preschool
- CP of Colorado’s Creative Options Program for Early Education, Denver/Aurora
- Fremont County Head Start, Canon City

-Pyramid Plus Implementation Communities:

- Gunnison/Hinsdale county
- Summit county
- Grand county
- La Plata county
- Denver

Demonstration programs and Implementation Communities agree to collect and submit outcome data at the community level, program level and child level. These data are reported annually on the Pyramid Plus website. Data measures include: Leadership Team Benchmarks of Quality, fidelity measures-Teaching Pyramid Observation Tool (TPOT), The Pyramid Infant/Toddler Observation Scale (TPITOS), Quality Program Indicators, Ages Stages Questionnaire-social emotional, and various demographics.

Additionally, Pyramid Plus has certified approximately 40 coaches and trainers throughout the state and data are collected annually on their efforts.

### **Colorado Department of Education (CDE) Pyramid Model Initiatives**

Also in 2009, CDE was awarded a five year State Personnel Development Grant (SPDG) funded from the Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP), US Department of Education, to implement Response to Intervention (RtI) and Positive Behavior Interventions & Supports (PBIS) within Colorado schools. One goal of the grant was specific to preschool with the outcome being to implement the Pyramid Model in early childhood programs serving children with disabilities. Support from CDE to administrative units (AUs) under this grant includes; a technical assistance consultant that meets with the leadership team monthly and provides on-going TA as needed, training on the Teaching Pyramid modules, Teaching Pyramid Observation Tool (TPOT) training, TA for coaching, and up to \$4000 for implementation expenditures.

In order to be eligible for the grant AUs must demonstrate that they have a leadership team, have sufficient capacity for coaching, and agree to submit Benchmarks of Quality (BOQ) and (TPOT) data annually. Each AU under the SPDG receives support for 3 years as long as they continue to meet requirements.

Since 2009, 13 AUs (making up 44 school districts) have benefitted from the grant. The AU’s, as of Fall 2012, are:

- San Luis Valley BOCES
- Gunnison Watershed school district
- Northeast BOCES
- San Juan BOCES
- Uncompahgre BOCES
- Academy 20 school district
- Cherry Creek school district
- Poudre school district

- Thompson school district
- Cheyenne Mountain school district
- Boulder Valley school district
- Englewood school district
- Canon City school district
- Falcon school district

## **Collaboration**

CDE and the Pyramid Plus Center collaborate on both the State level as well as on the local level. State collaboration includes CDE continuing to serve on the Pyramid Plus State Team; both staffs and consultants have attended each other's training events; some CDE technical assistant consultants hold Pyramid Plus certification; and CDE and Pyramid Plus staff engage in regular communication to ensure that efforts are connected. At the local level, some communities have effectively combined both initiatives with coordinated assistance from both CDE and Pyramid Plus (see below for examples). Some CDE Pyramid Model sites have people who have attended Pyramid Plus trainings and have enrolled people in the Pyramid Plus trainer and/or coach certification program.

## **Examples of Local Collaborative Efforts**

In Gunnison/Hinsdale Counties, which include the towns of Gunnison, Crested Butte, Almont and Lake City, the TA consultants from Pyramid Plus and CDE combine efforts to support the community leadership team. Members include representative from the Early Childhood Council, Child Find, Special Education services, School District, Child Welfare, Child Care Directors, and Health and Human Services. The TA from Pyramid Plus supports an implementation site which was selected by the community leadership team. This program serves children 6 weeks to 6 years of age. The program includes children receiving services under Individualized Family Service Plans (IFSP) and Individual Education Programs (IEP). The program also accepts children who are funded through the Colorado Preschool Program (CPP). The TA consultant from CDE supports additional site based leadership teams that serve preschoolers on IEPs. By combining efforts in communities, all infant, toddler, and preschool programs that participate in the community wide leadership team receive the benefit of the knowledge base of both consultants.

In the UnBOCS region, Norwood is a Pyramid Plus Certified Demonstration site for infant, toddler, and preschool. Sites in the region who are participating in the CDE Pyramid Model Initiative have the benefit of visiting and learning from the Norwood teaching staff. Norwood is an example of a site that started out as a Pyramid implementation site supported by CDE and chose to expand their implementation to include infant, toddler, and preschool through Pyramid Plus certification.

## **Frequently Asked Questions**

Q: What is the training and TA content of each Pyramid Model initiative?

- **Pyramid Plus** – Pyramid Plus Approach: Pyramid Model embedded with evidence based inclusion Practices and Strategies, for the age range, birth through age five. Additionally the Pyramid Plus includes effective teaching techniques, effective training and coaching techniques for those in certification, training on data tools and using data to make decisions, and the Pyramid Model Module 4: Leadership Strategies for Supporting Children's Social and Emotional Development and Addressing Challenging Behavior
- **CDE:** the Pyramid Model preschool modules, coaching, how to use data effectively, TPOT, mini-training sessions based on the TPOT, and other training and TA identified by the individual districts

Q: Who can access these two initiatives?

- **Pyramid Plus:** Anyone can attend annual Pyramid Plus Center training; communities can apply to partner with the Center and receive community based training and TA; communities and individuals can enroll in Pyramid Plus coach and trainer certification. In addition, Pyramid Plus supports the certified demonstration sites, coaches and trainers. The website is available to anyone who has access to internet.
- **CDE:** any AU through a grant application process is eligible to participate.

Q: Are there minimum requirements to access services?

- **Pyramid Plus:** Anyone can attend training. Anyone who has attended training can enroll in certification. Community teams apply to be a Pyramid Plus Implementation Community and must commit to: 1) sending 4 participants to Pyramid Plus Approach training, 2) enrolling 2 coaches and 2 trainers into the Pyramid Plus certification process, 3) establishing a Community Leadership Team, and 4) identifying an implementation site.
- **CDE:** AUs must commit to: 1) developing a leadership team, 2) adequate coaching FTE, 3) collecting and submitting data (BOQ, TPOT) to CDE annually for 3 years, and, 4) working with the CDE technical assistant consultant.

Q: What populations are served by each initiative?

- **Pyramid Plus:** professionals who serve children birth-5, including those in child care, early intervention, Head Start, mental health consultants, early childhood councils, early childhood special education, child welfare, nurse consultants, and health and human services. Pyramid Plus is committed to serving communities with at risk child populations.
- **CDE:** School district preschool programs serving children with disabilities.

Q: What data is collected by each initiative?

- **Pyramid Plus:** at the state level, State Team action plans, numbers and demographics of people trained, numbers of partnering communities; at the community level, demographics of the Leadership Team, numbers and demographics of people trained, numbers of certified coaches and trainers, Community Benchmarks of Quality, Leadership Team evaluations, number of children being screened for social emotional under CAPTA; at the program/child level, TPOT/TPITOS, Program Benchmarks of Quality, Quality Program Indicators, ASQ-SE, Program Demographics, Leadership Team Evaluations.
- **CDE:** Program Benchmarks of Quality, TPOT, and in some cases BIR and Results Matter (OSEP required child outcome data).

Q: What training and TA is offered?

- **Pyramid Plus:** annual state-wide Pyramid Plus Approach training (6 days); community Pyramid Plus Approach training in partnering communities; training for trainer and coach certification candidates which includes Adult Learning, Technology, Techniques and Strategies for coaching and training, Fidelity Tools and Data Collection, Module 4: Leadership Team; technical assistance to partner programs, communities and certified coaches and trainers. Each community is required to offer family training annually: Positive Solutions for Families or Parents Interacting with Infants (PIWI).
- **CDE:** Training workshop and TA topics that are available include; Teaching Pyramid module, coaching in early childhood settings, using data for program implementation, mini training based on the TPOT, Inclusion, developing functional IEP goals. Training and TA is provided based on the needs of the AU and at no cost to the AU. The CDE consultant also provides on-going TA as needed.

Q: What are the plans for sustaining these efforts?

- **Pyramid Plus:** ongoing fund raising; fee for service; TA to programs and communities regarding sustainability planning; increasing the number of Implementation Communities and increasing numbers and geographic spread of certified coaches and trainers who in turn increase the number of programs and communities implementing Pyramid Plus Approach with fidelity.
- **CDE:** Through this initiative, CDE is in the process of developing 2 documents to help with further implementation and sustainability. These documents are a Coaching BOQ and an Implementation Guide. The grant funding ends in June, 2014, however, there may be another round of State Personnel Development Grants for which CDE will apply. Implementation of the Pyramid Model in Colorado preschool programs will remain a high priority for CDE.

Q: Do some communities have both Pyramid Plus and CDE Pyramid Model initiatives in their communities?

- Yes, communities can benefit from both Pyramid Plus and CDE Pyramid Model initiatives simultaneously in their community. Having both initiatives in the community allows for shared resources and shared knowledge for the participating sites (see above for examples).

Resources:

- CSEFEL: <http://csefel.vanderbilt.edu/resources/strategies.html>
- TACSEI: <http://www.challengingbehavior.org/>
- Pyramid Plus: <http://www.pyramidplus.org/>
- CDE: <http://www.cde.state.co.us/early/PreschoolSpecialED.htm>

Contact Information:

- Pyramid Plus: The Colorado Center for Social Emotional Competence and Inclusion  
University of Colorado Denver  
1380 Lawrence Street, Ste. 643  
Denver, CO 80204  
Email: [pyramidplus@ucdenver.edu](mailto:pyramidplus@ucdenver.edu)
- CDE:  
Penny Dell  
Exceptional Student Support Unit  
Colorado Department of Education  
1560 Broadway, suite 1175  
Denver, CO 80203  
303-866-6720  
[Dell\\_p@cde.state.co.us](mailto:Dell_p@cde.state.co.us)