



Outcome 3: Pyramid Training Model and Outreach

Goals:

- 1. All of the CELC staff working with children in a classroom setting will be trained in Pyramid model practices.**
- 2. The CELC will engage in community outreach and establish CELC as a central location for outreach to providers of Birth to 5 services, and to families with children in the birth-to-five age group.**

Pyramid Training Model

The CELC agencies serving children on-site have agreed to adopt the Pyramid Model for Supporting Social Emotional Competence in Infants and Young Children. These agencies include: AASD Community 4K, Even Start Family Literacy Program, Head Start, and Project Bridges Childcare and Preschool. We first provide an overview of the Pyramid Model and implementation expectations, and then describe the training process at the CELC.

Overview of Pyramid Model

The Pyramid Model for Supporting Social Emotional Competence in Infants and Young Children provides a framework to support the social and emotional development of infants and young children (Cimino, Forrest, Smith, & Stainback-Tracy, 2007). It emphasizes the importance of both social and emotional development to school readiness and the prevention of challenging behavior. The Pyramid Model is grounded in evidence-based practices developed by the Vanderbilt Center for the Social and Emotional Foundations for Early Learning (CSEFEL) and the Technical Assistance Center on Social Emotional Intervention for young children (TACSEI). The Pyramid Model is comprised of four interrelated levels of practice that are designed to focus on the social and emotional development of children ages two through five.

Level 1 – Nurturing & Responsive Relationships: The first level provides a foundation of positive, supportive relationships with children, families and colleagues as it promotes the development of “nurturing and responsive caregiving relationships.” Family engagement is an important component of this level.

Level 2—High Quality Supportive Environments: The second level involves creating high quality learning environments that support appropriate behavior and social skills, and includes things such as establishing expectations and rules, providing encouragement and positive feedback, and adapting materials and activities that meet the individual needs of the child and promote engagement.

For the majority of children, levels one and two will be sufficient to meet their social and emotional development needs. However, some children will need the additional targeted social and emotional supports and teaching strategies that level three provides.

Level 3—Targeted Social Emotional Supports: Level three focuses on emotional expression, problem solving, impulse control, and developing friendship skills.

Level 4—Intensive Intervention: Level four offers intensive and individualized approaches for those children who continue to exhibit significant challenging behaviors or present with other social emotional needs that are not met by earlier levels (Fox, Dunlap, Hemmeter, Joseph, & Strain, 2003).



Program-wide adoption of the Pyramid Model involves the following components:

- **Leadership Team:** A leadership team is created that is composed of a program administrator, representatives from the teaching staff, an individual who can provide coaching to teachers, and a behavior specialist. The team meets monthly and guides implementation of a program-wide approach.
- **Staff Buy-In:** The leadership works to involve and support all staff in implementing the model. Staff are asked to indicate their willingness to participate.
- **Family Involvement:** Staff are expected to establish partnerships with families in adopting the model. Families are provided with information and support for their children's social and emotional development.
- **Program-wide Expectations:** Program-wide expectations are adopted that provide a shared focus and language. Program-wide expectations are posted in the program and are provided to families.
- **Classroom Implementation of Pyramid Model:** Program leaders assess teachers with an observation tool, and action planning allows for goals to be identified to help teachers implement Pyramid practices in their classroom.

- **Staff Professional Development and Support:** Pyramid coaches provide support and coaching to staff to help them implement Pyramid practices.
- **Behavior Support Practices:** The leadership team develops policies and procedures to support staff in addressing challenging behaviors.
- **Data-based Decision Making:** The leadership team gathers data to monitor outcomes and assess implementation success (TACSEI, 2011).

Programs that have adopted the Pyramid Model have experienced the following outcomes: reductions in challenging behaviors, increases in children's social skills, increased satisfaction of program staff and families, reduced turnover in the program, increases in teacher competence and confidence in the support of children, changes in classroom and program climate, and sustained implementation of the Pyramid model (Yates, Ostrosky, Cheatham, Fettig, Shaffer, & Santos, 2008).



Pyramid Model Implementation at the CELC

The goal of the CELC in their first year was to train all staff working with children in classroom settings in Pyramid Model practices. This includes teachers for AASD 4K classrooms, Even Start Family Literacy Program, Project Bridges Child Care Center and Preschool, and Head Start. To accomplish this goal, two leadership teams consisting of staff members from Head Start and Project Bridges participated in a four-day Pyramid Model Implementation Academy training sponsored by 4K in Wausau in May 2015. The leadership team from Head Start consisted of a program administrator (Lynn Hammen), an internal Pyramid coach (Jenny Thorn), a behavior specialist (Cheryl Daily), a data coordinator (Suzette Preston), and external Pyramid coaches (Deb Kozak & Joan Rice). The leadership team from Project Bridges consisted of a program administrator (Nicole Desten), an internal Pyramid coach (Karie Sager), a data coordinator (Suzette Preston), and two classroom teachers (Katie Donaldson and Jodi Strube). The internal Pyramid coach works with teachers and staff in implementing Pyramid practices and strategies, while the external Pyramid coach assists the leadership team, supports ongoing professional development, and provides support to the internal coach to ensure implementation

success. The behavior specialist provides behavioral support for children with persistent challenging behavior and assists in collecting child level data. The overall responsibilities of the leadership team are to:

- guide the implementation process;
- develop the supports and infrastructure needed to ensure adoption of the Pyramid Model within classrooms;
- ensure that services are provided to children and their families;
- provide support to staff through coaching, mentoring, and observation;
- use data-based decision making to actively monitor outcomes;
- assess implementation success (TACSEI, 2011).

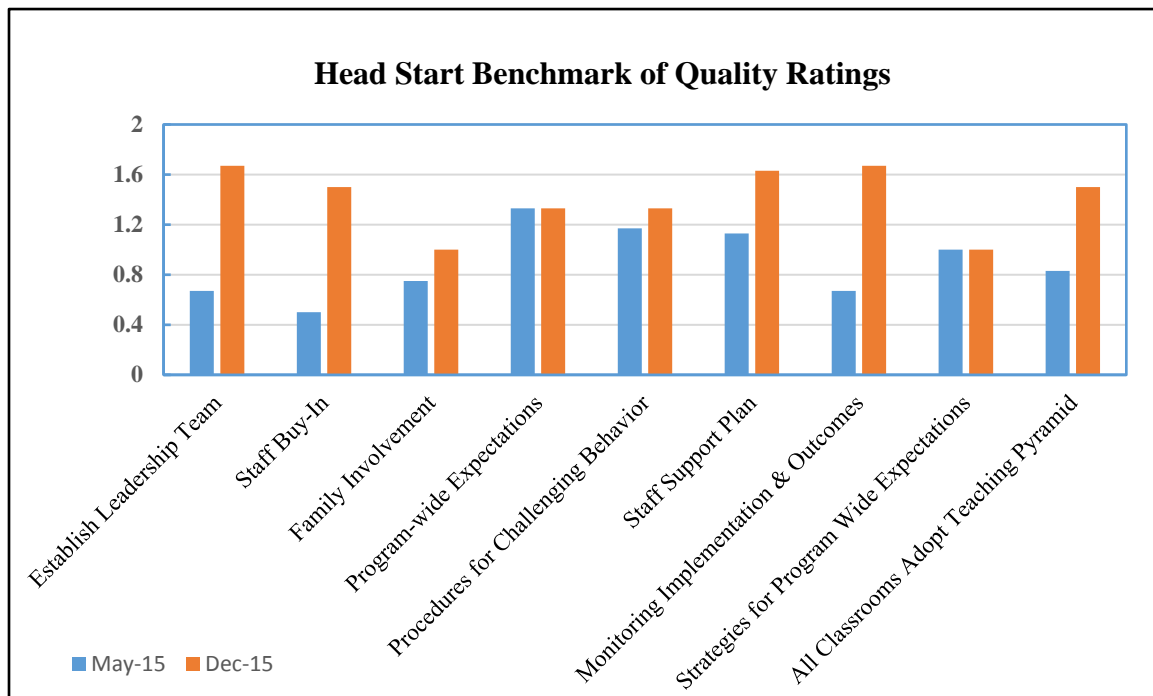
Seven staff members from above listed Leadership teams also completed the Teaching Pyramid Observation Tool (TPOT) training and certification to ensure reliable implementation of the TPOT assessment. TPOT is completed based on a 2-hour observation of a preschool classroom and 15-20 minute interview with the teacher. TPOT observations include teacher-directed (circle time, small groups) and child-directed (free play, center time) activities as well as the transitions between activities.

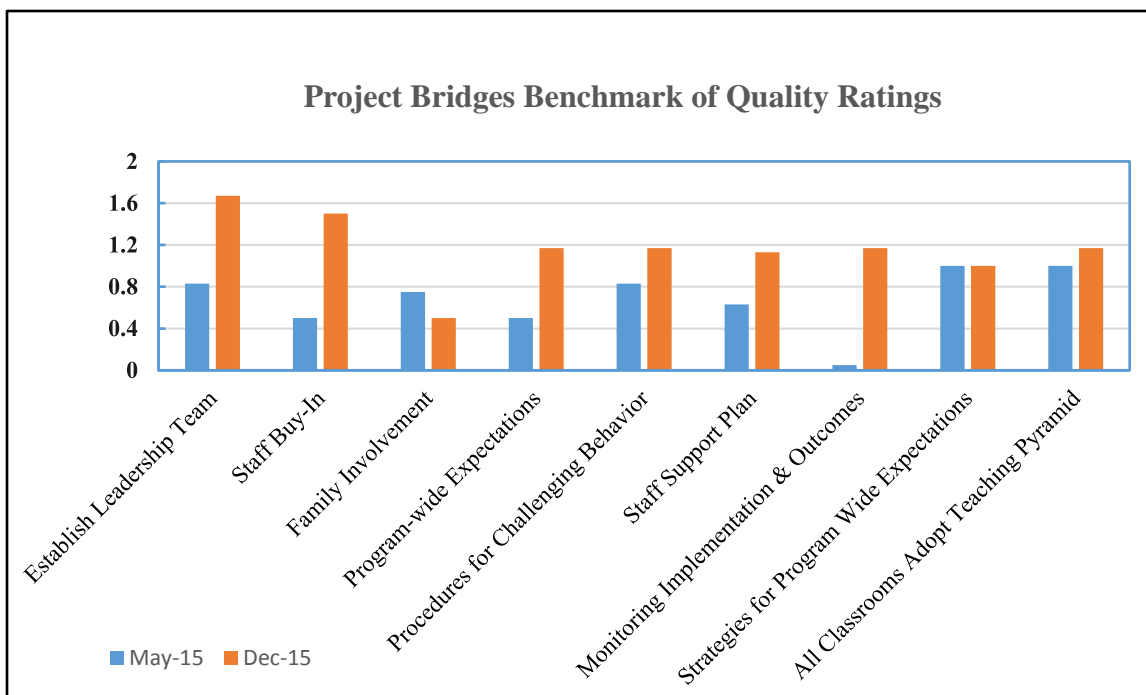


In addition to training for the leadership team, staff members from Head Start participated in eight module training sessions (3 hours each) for a total of 24 hours of training. Each module/training session focused on a different aspect of social emotional development. These training sessions were presented by an external Pyramid Model trainer employed by Head Start. Community partners from Theda Care Child Development Center and Head Start in Seymour, Kaukauna, and Oshkosh also participated in the training. Staff members from Project Bridges participated in the Pyramid Model training prior to their move to the CELC. In addition, AASD's 4K Institute in August, 2015, provided an additional 20 hours of Pyramid training for 4K teachers. Six Head Start staff and four Project Bridges staff attended the Institute. In summary, the Head Start and Project Bridges staff completed Pyramid training in 2014-2015 as planned, and the Even Start teachers are doing Pyramid training during the 2015-2016 school year.

Assessment of the implementation of the Pyramid Model is done at a program-wide, teacher/classroom level, and child level. Program-wide assessment measures the processes and program level infrastructure needed for implementation with benchmarks of quality evaluated twice a year through team self-assessment and reported in September and April. There are 43 Pyramid program benchmarks of quality that reflect critical elements of implementation, including establishment of the leadership team, staff buy-in, family involvement, program-wide expectations, teaching program-wide expectations, classroom Pyramid practices, procedures for responding to challenging behavior, professional development and staff support plan, and data-based decision making. Each benchmark is scored as “in place,” “partially in place,” or “not in place” (Hemmeter, Fox, & Snyder, 2013). Benchmark ratings were available for UW Oshkosh Head Start-CELC and Project Bridges for May 2015 and December 2015 (see table below). In addition, specific ratings (ranging from 0 to 2) of critical elements of the benchmarks of quality for Head Start and Project Bridges for May 2015 and December 2015 are shown in the graphs below.

	Benchmarks of Quality		
	Not in Place	Partially in Place	In Place
Head Start			
May 2015	28%	51%	21%
December 2015	2%	51%	47%
Project Bridges			
May 2015	45%	45%	11%
December 2015	13%	57%	30%





In order to assess the implementation of Pyramid Model practices in the classroom, teachers in eight classrooms (two 4K classrooms and two other classrooms at each site) are observed by the internal coach using the Teaching Pyramid Observation Tool (TPOT) for children ages 3 to 5 years and the Pyramid Infant Toddler Observation Scale (TPITOS) for children ages 0 to 3 years. The goal is 80 percent in implementing Pyramid practices. These measures consist of three types of items marked “yes” or “no” based on observation:

1. Environmental items (7): Includes things such as clear boundaries, classroom rules, adequate number of centers, and materials that support play.
2. Ratings of practices (15): Includes items such as schedule and routines, transitions between activities, providing directions, teaching problem solving, and supporting friendship skills. Scores are based on observations and/or provider reports.
3. Red flag items (6): Includes items such as whether transitions are smooth or chaotic, whether emotions are discussed in the classroom, and whether learning centers have clear boundaries (Snyder, Fox, & Hemmeter, 2010).

Coaching is also an important part of the classroom assessment process and consists of preparation, observation, debriefing and follow-up.

- **Preparation** for coaching includes baseline observations and a meeting with the teacher to review the TPOT/TPITOS and develop a plan of action.
- **Observation** focuses on the action plan items and uses relevant TPOT/TPITOS items and other observational measures.
- **Debriefing** consists of providing both positive and corrective performance feedback, discussion of issues related to individual children, development of implementation steps, and planning for the next observation.
- **Follow-up** and providing additional materials as needed is the final step (Snyder, Fox, & Hemmeter, 2010).

Finally, child level data used to assess implementation of the Pyramid Model includes the Ages and Stages Social-Emotional Questionnaire (ASQ-SE) which is completed in October and April. The ASQ-SE (Squires, Bricker, & Twombly, 2002) is a screening tool completed by the child's caregiver that is used to measure social and emotional competence in children between the ages of 2 and 60 months. In addition, behavior incident reports are collected to document challenging behavior throughout the program with the goal of reducing the total number of behavior incident reports.

CELC Outreach Efforts

Overview of Outreach Goals for the CELC

Outreach is central to the mission of the Community Early Learning Center (CELC) and includes outreach to families in the community as well as connections to the early childhood community through outreach and professional development opportunities. Outreach programs play a key role in increasing community awareness about the importance of early screening for developmental concerns and delays and referral to appropriate services. These programs often work with agencies in the community to coordinate universal screenings for developmental and behavioral concerns and referral services for families. They also provide families with information regarding healthy development and best practices in supporting children.



Making connections to the early childhood community through outreach and professional development opportunities is also a goal for the CELC. The CELC provides a central location to bring together providers of birth to five services both at the CELC and in the broader Fox Valley community. Outreach of this type allows individuals to make direct connections with other providers and their agencies, and to become more familiar with the services that other agencies offer. Providers learn more about the other resources available in the community and this facilitates their ability to refer children to them, which in turn benefits families. Outreach through professional development classes and programs that are offered at the CELC also provides ongoing training and education for birth-to-five providers in the community. Many of these events have been hosted by CELC partners as well as outside agencies that have used the space at the CELC for their own professional developmental activities and invited members of the CELC staff to participate.

Outreach Accomplishments

The Appleton Area School District (AASD) Birth to Five Outreach program connects families with school and community resources. It is headed by the Birth to Five Outreach Coordinator and Birth to Five Site Resource coordinators that are located at the CELC. The Birth to Five Outreach program offers a number of activities and events for families in the community,

including parent/child playgroups, welcome visits to families with children five and under in the community, and themed parent/child events (e.g., *Let's Get Fit Night*, *Exploring Our Senses Through Play*). While many of these outreach programs were held this year at the CELC, program locations also included community parks, libraries, and AASD elementary schools. The Birth to Five Outreach program also partnered with Even Start Family Literacy this year to offer parent/child playgroups (*Parents Interacting with Infants* (PIWI)) for parents and their infants (0-12 months) or toddlers (13-24 months). These weekly playgroups focused on different developmental topics and were based on resources available through Vanderbilt's Center on the Emotional and Social Foundations for Early Learning. These playgroups are offered as part of Even Start's Interactive Literacy activity time with the goal of increasing parents' competence and confidence in their parenting skills and are also connected to the Pyramid Model for Supporting Social Emotional Competence in Infants and Young Children.



Periodically, staff members from partner agencies, such as WIC, Partnership Community Health Center, AASD, and Winnebago County Birth to 3 were also brought in to speak with families. In addition to PIWI playgroups, the Birth to Five Program also offered multi age “*Learning to Play*” sessions on Tuesday and Thursday mornings and Tuesday evenings for children birth to five accompanied by an adult. The maximum number of attendees for these literacy-themed sessions was capped at 12. Finally, there were several themed Birth to Five events held throughout the year, including *Autumn Adventure*, *Dr. Seuss Night*, and *Music Night*.

The Birth to Five Outreach program also plays an important role in coordinating the 4K requirement for 87.5 hours of parent outreach. While community agencies are responsible for 20-30 hours of these outreach activities, the remaining hours are planned by AASD. Activities include *4K Parent Information sessions*, *4K Registration days*, *Fun in the Sun park outings*, *Learning through Play parent/child playgroups*, *Yoga for Kids*, *Evening playgroups*, and *Parent Cafes*.

Outreach activities for the Birth to Five Program are promoted through monthly email blasts sent to about 2000 recipients including 4K families, classroom teachers, and parents who attend Birth to Five events. Birth to Five also encourages participation through flyers and newsletters, as well as a monthly family events calendar that includes Birth to Five Outreach Programs along with broader community events.

Between September 2014 and May 2015, the Birth to Five Outreach Program offered 24 *PIWI Infant Playgroups* (with 156 total attendees), 24 *PIWI Toddler Playgroups* (with 354 total

attendees), and 70 “*Learning Through Play*” Groups on Tuesdays and Thursdays (with 845 total attendees). In addition, they sponsored 14 parent/child events (with 1,193 total attendees). In its first year at the CELC, the Birth to Five Outreach Program offered a total of 132 playgroups and events that were attended by more than 2,500 parents and children as summarized below.

Birth to Five Outreach Program Parent/Child Playgroups and Events (September 2014-May 2015)

	Number Offered	Attendance
PIWI** Infant Playgroups	24	156
PIWI** Toddlers Playgroups	24	354
Learning through Play Tuesday Morning	24	208
Learning through Play Tuesday Evening	22	190
Learning through Play Thursday Morning	24	447
Parent/Child Events***	14	1,193
Totals for Activities	132	2,548

** *Parents Interacting with Infants*

***Includes *Autumn Adventure, Movin’ at the Park, Community Helpers Day, Music Night, Let’s Get Fit Night, Parent Make ‘n Take, Dr. Seuss Night, Parent Cafes (3), Week of the Young Child Event, Exploring Our Senses Through Play, Muffins with Mom*

Note: Information regarding the number of parent/child playgroups and events offered & attendance figures was provided by Amy Wilson, Birth to Five Outreach Coordinator.

In addition to these specific outreach activities, the CELC also held a number of events to celebrate its inaugural year and increase its visibility in the community. The CELC Grand Opening event was held on October 28, 2014, and was attended by families and community members, donors and supporters, CELC board members, CELC partners, and a number of local dignitaries. A community open house titled “*Together We CAN Make a Difference*” was held at the CELC on April 14, 2015, to celebrate the Week of the Young Child. This family fun event was attended by 355 parents and children and also included a Resource Fair with 17 community agencies participating. Finally, the “*Experience*” Tour was held at the CELC on July 29, 2015, and provided an opportunity for United Way Fox Cities supporters to tour the facilities and ask questions.

The shared space at the CELC has not only allowed for the expansion of current outreach activities but it has also facilitated new opportunities for outreach and engagement. Universal screenings for birth to five children were held this year at the CELC and represented a collaborative effort between AASD’s 3 -5 Year Old Developmental Screening and Outagamie County Early Intervention (see Outcome 2 report for further details). Universal screenings

allowed parents to bring their children, ages birth to five, to the CELC to be screened at one time and in one convenient location. In the past, families would have had to make separate appointments at different locations to have their children screened. In making the screening process more convenient for families, the CELC hopes to increase the number of screenings in the community. Staff members noted several additional benefits of holding screening events at the CELC, including the ease of referring families to other agencies in the same building and being able to walk them directly to these programs and connect them with the staff members who would be working with their child.

The partnerships between agencies to offer weekly parent/child play groups and universal screenings illustrates not only the use of shared space at the CELC but also the collaborative opportunities that are possible when agencies are in one location. Weekly “sandbox” meetings are held with representatives from each CELC agency attending. Staff members are able to collaborate with each other and network across agencies, as they meet together to discuss ideas for better serving families and to plan community events.

One important step in outreach has been the creation of the CELC website (<http://www.communityearlylearningcenter.com/>), which went live in the fall of 2015. The website includes:

- information about each of the partnering agencies, the programs and services they offer, and contact information for each program;
- professional development opportunities for early childhood educators in the community;
- research and resources, including 2014-2015 outcome goals and findings, links to reports on the brain science of early childhood and the economic value of investing in early childhood, and videos on the science of early child development;
- CELC events, including screenings, playgroups, and classes; donation and contact information.

Summary and Conclusions

In conclusion, the CELC was successful in increasing its outreach efforts both to the birth to five population in the Fox Valley through a number of playgroups, classes, and community events, as well as to community providers of birth to five services through Pyramid training events and other professional venues. With the hiring of Terry Petrenchik, Ph.D., as the Early Childhood Community Outreach Director for the Fox Valley region in January, 2016, the CELC is well prepared to continue to expand their outreach efforts to children, families, and the broader Fox Valley community. In addition, the CELC partners continue to explore ways to strengthen existing and forge new professional learning connections with early childhood providers in the community.

The CELC was also successful in regard to the goal of training all CELC staff working with children in classroom settings in the Pyramid Model for Supporting Social Emotional Competence in Infants and Young Children. The Head Start and Project Bridges staff completed Pyramid training in 2014-2015 as planned, and the Even Start teachers will be completing Pyramid training during the 2015-2016 school year.



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