Implementing the Pyramid Model in Early Childhood Settings: Let's Take a Peek

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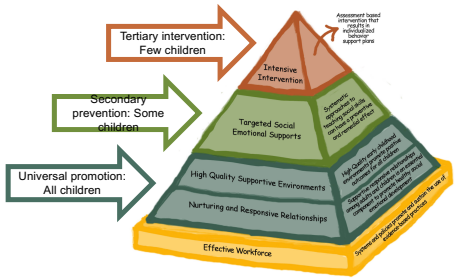
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Agenda

- The "Philosophy" of the Pyramid model
- Let's take a peek into a classroom…
- "Wow, how do we make that happen?"

The Pyramid Model: Promoting Social-Emotional Competence and Addressing Challenging Behavior



Pyramid Model

- An approach, not a curriculum
- Not just about adding on strategies like the solution kit
- Not a quick fix or magic bullet to change behaviors
- Implementing successfully often involves a change in philosophy

What does it look like when we are successful?





Key Social-Emotional Skills

- Confidence
- Capacity to develop good relationships with peers and adults
- Concentration and persistence on challenging tasks
- Ability to effectively communicate emotions
- Ability to listen to instructions and be attentive
- Ability to solve social problems

What do children do when they don't have each of these skills?

NCPMI

"If a child doesn't know how to read, *we teach*."

"If a child doesn't know how to swim, *we teach*."

"If a child doesn't know how to multiply, *we teach*."

"If a child doesn't know how to drive, *we teach.*"

"If a child doesn't know how to behave, *we……. ……teach? ……punish?*"

"Why can't we finish the last sentence as automatically as we do the others?"

Tom Herner (NASDE President) Counterpoint 1998, p.2)

Some Basic Assumptions

Challenging behavior usually has a message



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Some Basic Assumptions

Challenging behavior usually has a message



Some Basic Assumptions



Children often use challenging behavior when they don't have the social or communication skills they need.

Some Basic Assumptions

Behavior that persists over time is usually working for the child.



Pyramid Model: Examining Philosophies

- What are some commonly heard statements about children and behavior?

Pyramid Model: Examining Philosophies

- What did you notice about the statements that made it through the filter compared to those that did not?

Goal

- To promote children's success by:
  - Creating an environment where EVERY child feels good about coming to school
  - Designing an environment that promotes child engagement
  - Focusing on teaching children what TO DO!
    - Teach expectations and routines
    - Teach skills that children can use in place of challenging behaviors

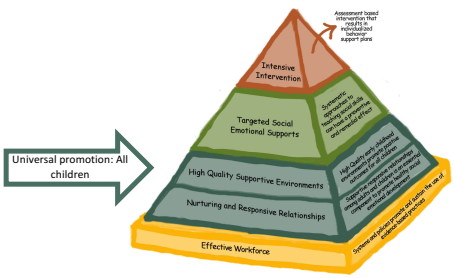
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"An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure."

- Benjamin Franklin



The Pyramid Model:
Promoting Social-Emotional Competence and Addressing Challenging Behaviour



Universal: Nurturing and Responsive Relationships

- Foundation of the pyramid
- Essential to healthy social development
- Includes relationships with children, families and **other professionals** (e.g., mental health, PT, OT)





Supportive Conversations

- Have conversations with *every* child
  - In the context of play
  - Extended conversations
  - On topics that interest the child
- Support children's conversations with other children

Relationships with Colleagues in the Classroom

- Your turn….
- Talk with your colleagues
- What would you see in a classroom if teaching teams and other staff were working well together?
- How might that be related to the Pyramid Model practices?

Relationships with Colleagues

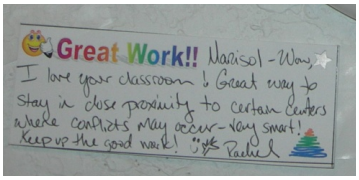
- A common goal of supporting children where children spend time
- Respect for each other's expertise
- Absence of blame
- Nonjudgmental
- Transparency
- Within a classroom:
  - Behavior support approach
  - Modeling what we want children to do

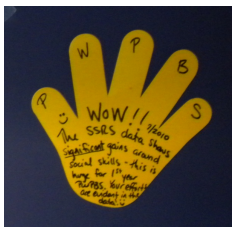


Staff Tree:

Staff members put notes to each other on the leaves and post

Support Notes to Staff





Relationships with Families



Some Things to Think About

- How do families know that we care about their children?
- How have we shared with families our approach to behavior support?
- How do families know how to support social skills and behavior at home?
- Are we talking with families or to families?



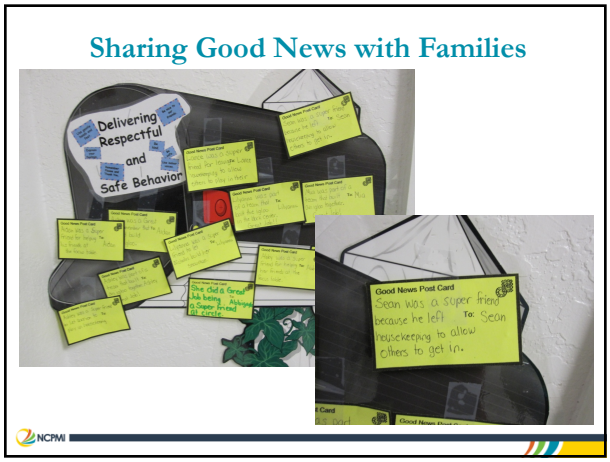
Sharing Information with Families



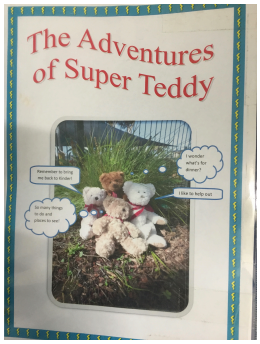




Sharing Good News with Families



Bridging Home and School

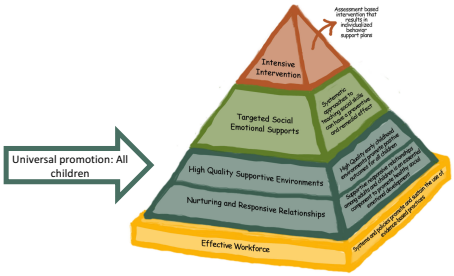


Some suggestions for reflecting on your practice

- Do you have ongoing, meaningful conversations with every child on a regular basis?
- Do you spend more time engaging with children around their positive behaviors than correcting their inappropriate behaviors?
- Does every child know you care about him or her? How do they know?
- What do you do to build relationships with families before there is a problem behavior?
- Do you individualize your support to families based on their needs or preferences?

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The Pyramid Model:
Promoting Social-Emotional Competence and Addressing Challenging Behavior



High Quality Supportive Environments

- Classroom arrangement and design
- Environmental/visual cues
- Schedules and routines
- Transitions
- Supporting engagement during large and small group activities
- Giving directions

Are our classrooms designed to promote engagement, teach social skills and prevent problem behavior?







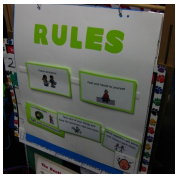




Large Group Activity Schedule







Individual Supports





Ideas for Reflecting on Your Practice

- On paper, write out your daily schedule.
  - Put a ☺ next to the activities that work well and a ☹ next the activities where there is often challenging behavior.
  - Consider what might be contributing to the problem.
    - Length of adult-directed activities
    - Number of transitions
    - Engagement in activities
    - Unclear directions/environmental cues
- On a paper, draw your classroom
  - Put a ☺ in the areas where there is not much challenging behavior and a ☹ next the areas where there is often challenging behavior.
  - Consider what might be contributing to the problem
- What changes might you need to make?

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Teaching Social Skills and Emotional Competencies





What to teach

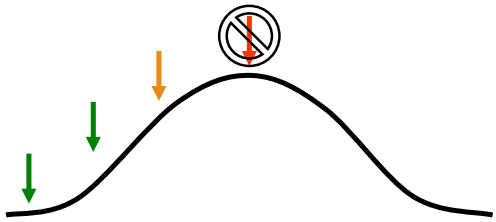
- Friendship skills
- Emotions
- Problem Solving
- Calm Down Strategies



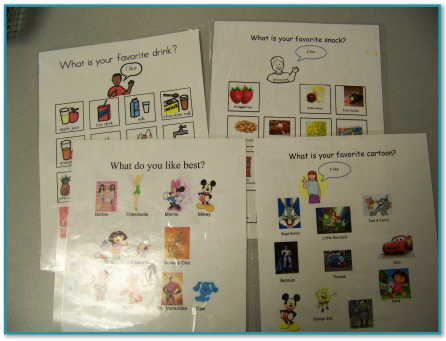


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When to Teach



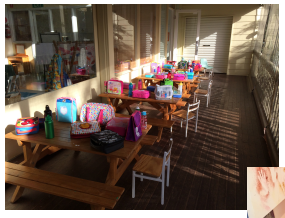
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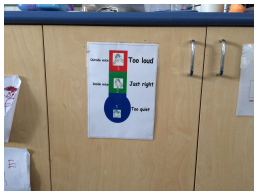
Super Friend

- Teach children what it means to be a "Super Friend"
- Positive feedback given when being a "Super friend"







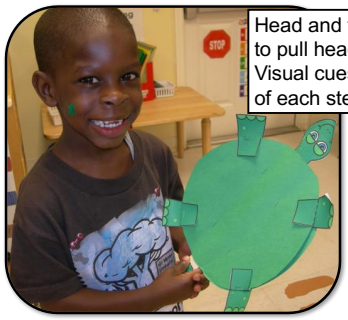




Emotions



Partnering with Families: Tucker Goes Home



Head and tail are on a stick to pull head in and out. Visual cues are on the back of each step.

Super Turtle Letter



Dear Parent,

Billy did a great job today handling frustration and not getting angry when we ran out of his favorite cookie at snack. Instead of getting upset, Billy took three deep breaths and decided he would try one of the other cookies. That was a great solution and he really liked the new cookie too!

You can help Billy at home by: Asking him what he did at school today when we ran out of his favorite cookie. Ask him how he calmed down. Comment on what a great job he did. Tell him that you hope that he will do that again when he gets frustrated about something.

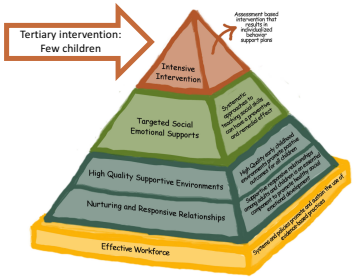
Thank you so much!

Mr. Phil

Reflecting on your practice

- What skills do you teach?
- How do you teach them?
  - Do you teach them differently to different children?
- How do you ensure there are many opportunities to practice?
- How do you individualize instruction for children who need more support?

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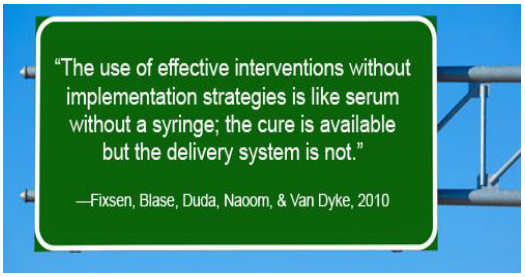


Tertiary: Individualized Intensive Interventions

- Comprehensive interventions across all settings
- Assessment-based
- Collaborative team
- Skill-building

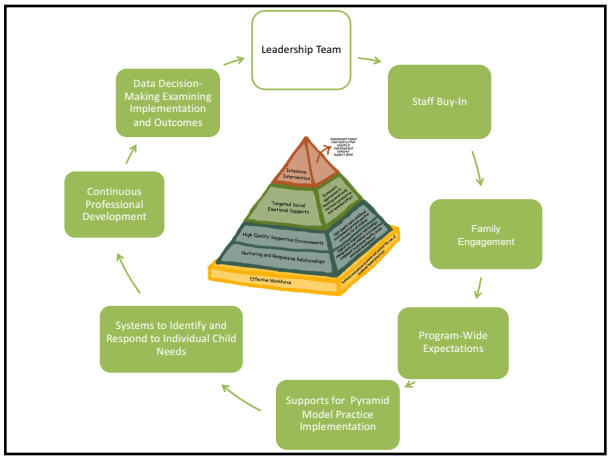


Wow, how do we make that happen?



Managing Complex Change

Vision	Skills	Incentives	Resources	Action Plan	Change
	Skills	Incentives	Resources	Action Plan	Confusion
Vision		Incentives	Resources	Action Plan	Anxiety
Vision	Skills		Resources	Action Plan	Resistance
Vision	Skills	Incentives		Action Plan	Frustration
Vision	Skills	Incentives	Resources		False Starts



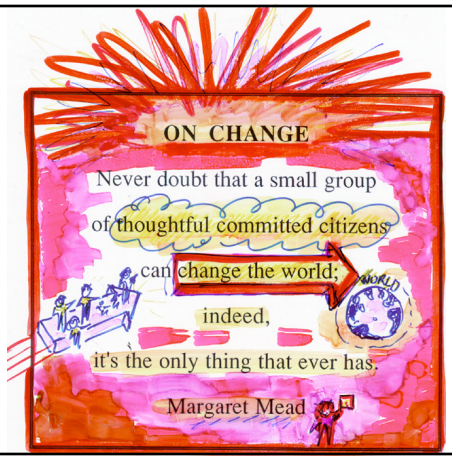
Program Wide Implementation?

- Make a program wide commitment to all children
- Develop program policies that reduce the likelihood of suspension/expulsion
- Support teachers:
  - Coaching and support in the classroom
  - Reduce stress
- Engage with families around promotion, prevention and intervention

- Develop process around behavior support for children with the most persistent problem behavior
- Provide access to mental health consultants
- Use data to track program incidences, behavior support planning, implementation etc.

Outcomes Associated with Program Wide Implementation

- Improvements in classroom quality
- More intentional instruction around social skills and emotional competencies
- Better relationships with families
- Decrease in problem behavior, increase in social skills
- Decrease MH dollars spent on intervention
- Decrease turnover



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Fred Rogers

What makes the difference between wishing and realizing our wishes? Lots of things, and it may take months or years for a wish to come true, but it's far more likely to happen **when you care so much about a wish that you'll do all you can to make it happen.**