

# Executive Summary

## Wisconsin Pyramid Model

A snapshot of the work being done to support the foundational early learning of Wisconsin's babies, toddlers, and young children.

Promoting the social and emotional well-being of infants and young children



### The Pyramid Model is:

- a relationship-based nationally recognized professional development framework to guide teaching, learning, and policy decisions
- child and family centered
- NOT a curriculum package, but a collection of evidence-based practices carefully chosen by Early Childhood researchers

### Implementation of the Pyramid Model:

- a relationship-based, nationally recognized framework to guide teaching, learning and policy decisions.
- prevents challenging behaviors
- reduces racial disparities
- enhances social and emotional competence

### The Pyramid Model in Action

Tricia Peterson remembers when the young children in her care threw chairs and screamed for hours. She recalls asking herself, "What can we do; how can we help?" Tricia is aware of the research that proves that children's social and emotional well-being is a key factor in Kindergarten readiness, which meant that as a child care center director she has the opportunity to make a positive impact that can create lifelong benefits.

The Pyramid Model has had a tremendously positive impact on Tricia, her staff, and the families and children they serve. "It has taken a lot of work, but it is SO worth it. Our whole mentality has changed. We take the time to understand why the child is the way they are and don't find fault with the child but now ask: what has happened to them? What is their story?" That shift, away from judgement and toward wholeness, has brought about



***"Pyramid Model is hard work, but child care is hard work anyway. Why not put the time and energy into something we know will bring positive results?"***

positive change that is observable in daily interactions and clear in the reports generated from data.

Tricia is passionate about the results she has seen and is a strong advocate for policies that support quality practices informed by evidence, research and professional guidance that reflect the needs of individual children. She has spoken with her legislative representatives and other leaders about the many data-supported benefits of the Pyramid Model. In Tricia's ideal world, our state budget would reflect our love of our children by funding the Pyramid Model in every program and school district.

### Vision

Each and every Wisconsin infant and young child will experience nurturing and authentic relationships within engaging, culturally responsive environments that honor diversity in all its forms in order to ensure healthy social and emotional development.

### Mission

We advocate, train, and coach to elevate awareness, honor relationships, and support adults to apply skills and strategies that ensure equitable outcomes for infants, young children and their families through intentional implementation of the Wisconsin Pyramid Model in programs and communities.

## Defining the Work: Needs and Actions

*Need: Build a comprehensive state policy strategy to prevent expulsion from early learning settings*

Actions:

- Updated and offered training in evidence-based, trauma informed practices, and added Spanish language offerings
- Supported communities of practice for shared discussion and learning
- Led two advisory projects exploring the *Teaching and Guidance Policy Essential Checklist* to inform policy

*Need: Inclusion of children with disabilities in early childhood programs*

Actions:

- Wisconsin recognized as a national leader in use of a data system to support programs in adjusting instruction so that the needs of all children can be met
- Built a cadre of co-training teams including both educational and mental health professionals
- Updated Individualized Intervention training

*Need: Equitable access and outcomes*

Actions:

- Piloted Spanish language trainings
- Led regional communities in the Culturally Responsive Practices implicit bias training that promotes nurturing, responsive relationships
- Developed a culturally responsive practices training to be piloted in 2022

*Need: Defining and Acknowledging Quality Care and Education*

Actions:

- Launched seven new sites across the state in 2021.
- Convened a collaborative workgroup to explore acknowledgement of programs intentionally supporting social and emotional development
- Created an IMH Endorsement® toolkit to streamline the endorsement process for attendees of Wisconsin Pyramid Model training. Infant Mental Health Endorsement acknowledges and professionalizes the field of infant/toddler caregivers
- Held Positive Solutions for Families (PSF) and Parents Interacting with Infants (PIWI) facilitator trainings to support parents and families
- Expanded supports for those who coach our educators:
  - Enhanced coaching training
  - Increased number of external coaches
  - Provided training and mentoring
- Enhanced our evidence-based practices to include intentional reflective support
- Supported programs by ensuring access to and physical materials for program-wide implementation



## Impact: Family Survey Data Shows

500 families were surveyed about their experience in a Pyramid Model Program.

83-93% of respondents agreed:

**Teachers and staff...**

- genuinely care about my child
- respect our family preferences
- say nice and kind things about my children

**My child is learning how to...**

- make friends and get along with others
- follow rules and expectations

**When children have problem behavior...**

- the program works hard to keep all children in the program
- the teachers/staff can usually help children to learn to behave better

*For additional data, see the full report\**

In 2021, we balanced the needs of professional development with the safety and staffing needs, continuing to offer trainings both virtually, and in the Fall, via a virtual/in person model. Our goal is to help professionals feel confident and competent in using practices in their work with children and families.

Despite barriers of 2021, program-wide sites indicate they are implementing these elements:

Program leadership:	Systems to address problematic behavior:	Systems to address problematic behavior:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Administrator support</li> <li>• Regular meetings</li> <li>• Clear mission/purpose</li> <li>• Broad representation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Written expectations</li> <li>• Developmentally appropriate</li> <li>• Posted in meaningful ways</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Opportunities to work together</li> <li>• Use of evidence-based approaches</li> </ul>



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