The Pyramid Model/EC-PBIS: Preventing Bias, Suspensions and Expulsions in Early Childhood Settings

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Federal Joint Policy Statement

- Depts of ED and HHS issued a Joint Policy Statement about the scope and nature of the problem with recommendations and resources

ED/HHS: What’s the Issue?

- Expulsions and suspensions occur at high rates in EC
- The practice raises compliance questions with 504, ADA, IDEA, Civil Rights Act of 1964, Title IX
- Help with challenging behavior is #1 PD request in EC
- Families and Personnel are frustrated
- Classrooms disrupted
- Expulsion and suspension practices are associated with negative later school and life outcomes
- There are racial and gender disparities in these practices, young boys of color treated disproportionately

ED/HHS Recommendations: Programs

- adopt preventive/promotional, developmentally appropriate practices
- develop policies re: exclusion is last resort
- collaborate with family re: the decision to exclude is “unanimous”; transition to new program and future plans for child
- provide training and support to teachers on promoting social emotional competence and preventing challenging behavior (EC PBIS); address staff stress
- Set goals and collect and analyze progress data
ED/HHS Recommendations: State

- Develop and communicate expulsion and suspension policies
- Set goals for improvement, collect and analyze data
- Ensure EC workforce has strong knowledge base and skills that promote social emotional competence and prevent challenging behavior
- Adopt a statewide EC PBIS framework; plan, implement and sustain a PD system re: social, emotional behavior
- Track EC workforce professional development

There is Good News!

- There are evidence-based practices to promote young children’s social, emotional, behavioral outcomes
- There are effective models of intervention
- There are national resources and supports

*This issue is: how to implement the practices at scale with fidelity*
Features of Positive Behavior Intervention and Supports (Dunlap & Fox, 2009)

- Emphasis on prevention
- Focus on supporting families and providers who work directly with children
- Implementation in children’s natural environments (e.g., child care, community, home)
- Pyramid Model = Early Childhood PBIS

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

Pyramid Model Consortium

www.pyramidmodel.org
Fully Developed Intervention

- Training materials
  - CSEFEL, TACSEI, ECMHC, NCQTL
- Implementation guides and materials
- Implementation Fidelity Tool
- TA: Pyramid Model Consortium

Lessons Learned from 12 Years of Work with States and Programs

- Fidelity matters
- Most social-emotional and behavioral issues are resolved when the first tier of the Pyramid is in place
- Families and providers need support around promotion and prevention
- Implementation of individualized PBIS is more efficient when first two tiers of the Pyramid are in place
Pyramid Statewide Systems Building
(Since October 2006)

Lessons Learned

- Model of Implementation, Scale up and Sustainability
- Incorporates best practice from:
  - Systems Thinking
  - Implementation Science
  - Cross-Agency Collaborative Planning
Model for Installing, Sustaining and Scaling up the Pyramid Model: 4 components

1. State Leadership Team to plan and implement a sustainable, cross-agency, state infrastructure; develops sustainability and scale-up plans

2. A Master Cadre of training and technical assistance (T/TA) professionals that support high fidelity use of the Pyramid Model practices

3. Implementation/Demonstration Sites with Leadership Teams to demonstrate effectiveness of Program Wide (PW) implementation others; and help scale-up to other implementation or expansion sites

4. Data/Evaluation and data feed-back systems for data-based decision making at all levels, ensuring fidelity, demonstrating effectiveness, and making system recommendations
System Components

State Leadership Team
  State Coordinators

Master Cadre
  External coach to sites; state T/TA

Data
  Systems to support Data Decision-Making at state and local levels

Demo Sites
  Program Leadership Team: administrator, internal coach, data coordinator, others

Implementation Sites
  Program Leadership Team: administrator, internal coach, data coordinator, others

Resources

Center on the Social and Emotional Foundations for Early Learning
www.vanderbilt.edu/csefel/

Technical Assistance Center on Social Emotional Intervention
www.challengingbehavior.org
http://www.pyramidmodel.org/
11/30/2015

Rosemarie Allen, University of Colorado Denver

Culturally Responsive Pyramid Model Practices
Foundation of the Pyramid Model

- Nurturing and Supportive Relationships
- High Quality Supportive Environment
- Culturally responsive practices are naturally embedded at the foundation of the Pyramid (Fox & Hemmeter, 2009; Hemmeter, Fox, Jack & Broyles, 2007).

It is a relationship-based model that requires the development of positive relationships at all levels (Fox & Hemmeter, 2014).

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Implicit Bias

- Implicit racial bias resides in our “unconscious mind,” the part of the brain that many researchers believe is beyond our direct control.

- Unconscious attitudes are less egalitarian than what we explicitly think about race.

- Our refusal to talk about and confront issues of race reinforces implicit racial bias.

Tom Rudd, Kirwan Institute for the Study of Race and Ethnicity

Kirwan Institute Research

- Implicit racial bias is one of the critical factors that promote racial and ethnic inequality in American society.

- It is important to understand the causes of implicit racial bias and intentionally work to bring it to the conscious level in order to mitigate the negative consequences.

Tom Rudd, Kirwan Institute for the Study of Race and Ethnicity
Why Don’t We Want to Talk About Race?

“We have become so politically correct that we don’t know what to say and when to say it. We don’t know what to say to anyone anymore.”

Lee Jones, Florida State University.

- Racial Etiquette: Not polite to discuss that which makes us uncomfortable (Omi and Winant, 2002).

- Saying “We’re all the same”, or “I don’t see color” fails to acknowledge difference others experience (Harries, 2014).
• We cannot develop authentic relationships with children, families, and communities of color unless we are willing to talk about race!
• Talking about race opens the doors to effectively implementing culturally responsive and culturally sustaining practices.

Elements Of Culture At School

1. The Culture that Already Exists
2. The Culture That is Being Created
3. The Culture that Already Exists

We must be aware of our own cultural framework and context

The Cultural Background We Bring With Us:

- Cultural Practices
- Beliefs and perceptions
- Personal Identities

Kozleski, Elizabeth (2010). Culturally Responsive Teaching Matters! Equity Alliance

Iceberg Theory of Culture

Beyond Culture, Edward T. Hall, 1976
The Iceberg

Beyond Culture, Edward T. Hall, 1976

**The Surface: What we see:**
- Dress
- Music
- Food

**At the Line: Hidden Rules Sometimes Discussed:**
- concepts of time,
- personal space,
- rules of conduct,
- facial expressions,
- nonverbal communication

**Under the Surface: Unseen and rarely discussed:**
- Habits & assumptions,
- understandings, values, judgments
- nature of friendships,
- tone of voice,
- attitude toward elders,
- concept of cleanliness,
- patterns of group decision-making,
- preference for competition or cooperation,
- problem-solving

Culturally responsive practices places the child at the center of all teaching and learning

(Gay, 2002; Ladson-Billings, 1994)
Culturally responsive practices affirm and sustain the cultural capital the child brings into the classroom environment.

Culturally responsive practitioners use the culture of the child as the foundation for teaching and learning.

Children’s cultural identity is developed, fostered and embraced in culturally responsive classrooms.

(Gay, 2002; Ladson-Billings, 1994)

Cultural congruence between the child’s home and school is the cornerstone of culturally responsive practices (Joseph & Strain, 2010; Monroe, 2010).

Developing a child-centered, culturally relevant, affirming and supportive environment decreases the incidents of challenging behaviors in early childhood settings (Bal, Thorius & Kozleski, 2012; Fox & Hemmeter, 2009; James, 2011; Powell, Dunlap & Fox, 2006).
Seven Principles of Cultural Responsive Practice

- Students are honored in their cultural connections
- Teachers are personally culturally inviting
- Classroom is physically and culturally inviting
- Children’s development and efforts are reinforced
- Strategies to meet the needs of unique cultural styles of the children
- Classroom management is caring and consistent
- Instruction is individual as well collective

Principle One

“Kids get it, that we get them”

Principle One:

Students are honored in their cultural connections

- The children are represented in:
  - Content
  - Stories
  - People
  - Examples
  - Inclusion
  - Kids feel honored recognized and seen
**Principle Two**

“Kids get it, that we like them”

**Principle 2**

Teachers are personally culturally inviting

- Kids understand that we enjoy them and enjoy being with them
- There are personal connections to each student
- Teachers develop personal, meaningful, and positive relationships with each child

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**Principle Three**

“School looks like me”

**Principle 3**

- Classroom is physically and culturally inviting
  - Children see themselves in the classroom
  - Pictures, books, games, reflect the culture of the children
  - The classroom is attractively displayed with learning materials that promote development in all domains, including the child’s racial identity.
Principle Four
“Catch kids being good”

Principle Four

Children’s development and efforts are reinforced

– Teachers see children from a strength-based lens
– Teachers look for and acknowledge the positive behaviors of children
– Children are perceived as smart and capable learners

Principle Five
“Singing in harmony with the kids song”

Principle 5

Adjusting instructional strategies to meet the needs of unique learning and cultural styles of the children

- Accommodating who the kids are, where they are, acknowledging the cultural capital they bring with them.
**Principle Six**
“Respect begins with the teacher”

**Principle 6**
Classroom management is caring and consistent

– Children are intentionally taught culturally appropriate prosocial skills
– Children are taught classroom expectations
– Rules are clear, implemented consistently, and reinforced regularly
– Guidance is instructive, not punitive

**Principle Seven**
“Student-Centered Learning”

**Principle Seven:**
Instruction is individual as well collective

- Cooperation skills are promoted
- Individual development is supported
- Peer-to-peer teaching and learning takes place
Culturally Responsive Teaching is...

The **FILTER** through which teachers **LISTEN** to how children express their needs and desires.

The **LENS** through which teachers **SEE** children and their learning.

The **WAY** in which teachers **INTERACT** with children using curricular materials, and making educational decisions.

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Effective implementation of culturally responsive practices requires professional development activities that include knowledge of:

- implicit bias and its impact on decision making,
- culturally responsive practices and how to implement the practices in the classroom,
- the role of critical reflection in challenging assumptions, as well as interpreting, understanding and reframing experiences.

(Brookfield, 1995; Delpit, 2012; Gay, 2002; Mezirow, 2003)
The Pyramid Model coupled with culturally responsive approaches reflects best practices for reducing racial disparities in preventing and addressing challenging behaviors and reducing preschool suspension.

Alignment of Culturally Responsive Practices and the Pyramid Model

**Level 1**

**Pyramid Model:** Building relationships with families is a prerequisite for promoting social emotional competence in children. (Joseph & Strain, 2010)

*Culturally responsive practices are meaningful, positive, culturally affirming relationships between families, staff members and children. Issues of power, privilege and difference are acknowledged and addressed.* (Whis, et al., 2009; Edwards & Reden, 2002; Gay, 2000)

**Level 2**

**Pyramid Model:** Teaching children problem solving skills, appropriate expression of emotions and specific praise for engaging in desired behaviors (Hammer & Fox, 2000).

*Culturally responsive practices include intentional teaching of culturally relevant social skills, raising student expectations and acknowledging the positive behaviors of children in the context of their culture.* (Justen-Billings, 1994)

**Level 3**

**Pyramid Model:** Collaborative approach in developing an FBA and the use of data to determine the effectiveness of the intervention (Brown, Odom, & McConnell)

*Culturally responsive practices ensures collaborations with families and community members and a system for reviewing data points that drive discussions about race and equity* (Eber, et al., 2010)
Statement & Context of the Problem in DPS

- The Denver Plan 2020
  - Goal 1: Great Schools in Every Neighborhood
  - **Goal 2: A Foundation for Success in Schools**
  - Goal 3: Ready for College & Career
  - **Goal 4: Support for the Whole Child**
  - Goal 5: Close the Opportunity Gap

- Current state & implications for young children and social-emotional competence
- Increasing awareness of the problem
- Exposure of weak policies and inadequate systems to address problem
What does Preschool and Kindergarten Suspension and Expulsion Data in DPS tell us?

New Policy Guidance on ECE Discipline in DPS

Early Childhood students (ages 3-5 years old) and Kindergarten students are beginning to gain self-understanding and self-regulation of their emotions in an expanded social context. It is essential that positive social and emotional behaviors are explicitly taught in the classroom and students are given scaffolded support to understand, practice and develop these skills. These aspects of development must be given the same level of focused attention and planning as is given to the development of children’s literacy skills and understanding of mathematical concepts.

The overarching principle of the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) states, “Above all we shall not harm children. We shall not participate in practices that are emotionally damaging.”
New Policy Highlights

- Prior to any out of school suspension involving an ECE/KG student, the principal is required to consult the appropriate Instructional Superintendent.
- School-initiated removals from the ECE/KG classroom to the home constitute a suspension and are to be done only through the school's disciplinary process.
- Teachers in ECE/KG classrooms should not call parents to ask them to pick up their ECE/KG students due to behavior concerns, as this constitutes an out-of-school suspension.
- All suspensions, whether in- or out-of-school, of an ECE/KG student are to be documented by the school leader responsible, in the same fashion as suspensions for elementary school students.
- Teachers in ECE/KG classrooms do not have the authority to initiate or authorize consideration of an expulsion from an ECE/KG classroom.
How are we Investing in Early Childhood Education?

Network Programming and Initiatives

- Guided Reading Plus
- Children’s Literacy Initiative (CLI)
- Kindergarten Readiness focused on Social-Emotional Competence & Inclusion (Pyramid Plus Pilot)
- Personal Success Factors Pilot
- Personalized Learning Pilot (Imaginarium)
- Network-wide re-envisioning of Center Based Special Education Programs - (Culture of Inclusion)

Pyramid Plus Approach in the Transformative Network

Forest Elementary

Partnership between the Colorado Center for Social Emotional Competence and Inclusion and Denver Public Schools
Bal Swan Children’s Center

Founded in 1963, the Center was the first of its type in Colorado and twice chosen by the Colorado Department of Education for pilot projects to study educational programs for children with disabilities.

The Center set the benchmark by which all other fully inclusive preschools are measured throughout the state.

Bal Swan Children’s Center – 3 Cornerstones

Inclusion

Interdisciplinary teaming

Individualized education, and
Child Behavior Problems at Home

Parent Criticism & Discipline Difficulties

Behavior Problems at Home

Behavior Problems at School

Ineffective Teaching Practices

Parent Isolation & Depression

Negative Reputation Of Child within Community of Parents

Peer Rejection

Antisocial Behavior & Academic Failure

Child Depression

Poor Home-School Connections

Deviant Peer Group

School Expulsion

Poor Reputations

Negative Reputations at School/less positive feedback

Ripple Effects

(C. Webster-Stratton, 1997)
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