



Vermont Early MTSS PYRAMID MODEL

Promoting Social Emotional Competence
in Vermont's Young Children

Vermont's Early MTSS/Pyramid Model

IMPACT REPORT 2024-2025



SUMMARY

Vermont's Early Multi-Tiered System of Supports (Early MTSS) is innovation neutral, and promotes the proactive use of universal, targeted, and individualized best practices that are equitable, inclusive, high-quality, and evidence-based, while addressing system building for sustainability.

The Early MTSS framework's prevention approach supports competency and skill development in the areas of social and emotional development, academics, health and mental health for both children and adults.

It integrates trauma-informed and mental health practices, which combined with evidence based best practices, helps to reduce the likelihood of challenging behaviors in young children. Early MTSS aligns with state and federal recommendations, the Council for Exceptional Children Division of Early Childhood (DEC) and National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) Recommend Practices, Vermont's Guiding Principles, the Vermont Early Learning Standards (VELS), and the VTmtss Framework.



STATE LEADERSHIP TEAM

Vermont's Early MTSS State Leadership Team (Early MTSS SLT) is the driving force behind the implementation science of scale-up and sustainability of Early MTSS and The Pyramid Model frameworks, and implementation of practices statewide. The Early MTSS SLT is comprised of five dedicated workgroups—**Professional Development, Implementation & Demonstration Sites, Leadership, Data & Evaluation, and 0-3 System Supports**. The SLT meets regularly to align efforts, share expertise, and ensure that every layer of Vermont's early childhood system is supported, connected, and built to last.

VERMONT'S MISSION AND VISION

The Early MTSS State Leadership Team works to build statewide capacity to implement and scale up Early MTSS with fidelity, to ultimate sustainability. The SLT will integrate family engagement and empowerment throughout scale up.

Each and every child and their family in Vermont will have access to equitable and inclusive early childhood environments statewide. Vermont's early childhood environments must be free of exclusionary practices (suspension, expulsion, restraint, and seclusion) and any other forms of harsh discipline, to ensure successful outcomes for each and every child.

For definitions of key terms, see our Glossary of this report by clicking [here](#).

IMPACTS SNAPSHOT

PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION

With 45 implementation sites now established across Vermont, Early MTSS/Pyramid Model is creating meaningful, system-wide impact across the state's mixed delivery early childhood system. This includes public and private Universal PreK programs, child care centers, family child care homes (FCCH), and Early Intervention (EI): Children's Integrated Services (CIS) Regions. The widespread adoption reflects a growing commitment to building inclusive, nurturing environments that support the social-emotional development of each and every child (**Figure 1**).

EARLY CHILDHOOD STAFF TRAINED

More than 2,200 early childhood educators and staff have accessed eCourses and over 520 individuals have participated in live trainings

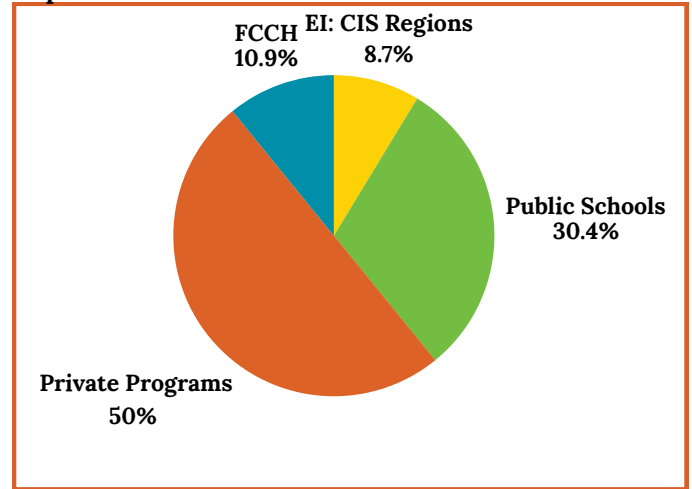
focused on Early MTSS/Pyramid Model.¹

Additionally, over 500 programs and/or classrooms have joined these efforts. These courses and trainings equipped participants with practical strategies to manage behaviors effectively. As a result, they have strengthened relationships and created inclusive, emotionally responsive environments that meet the urgent social-emotional needs of every child and family.

COACHING HOURS

High-impact coaching is driving Vermont's Pyramid Model success. In just nine months, **each educator receiving practice-based coaching received an average of 37 hours of targeted coaching in addition to their training, funded only through federal grants**—empowering them to create inclusive, emotionally supportive classrooms.³ This level of support has proven transformative, underscoring the urgent need for continued state investment to sustain and scale Early MTSS. Coaching hours decreased in September due to the start of the school year, and again in April and May because of spring break and end-of-year wrap-ups (**Figure 2**).

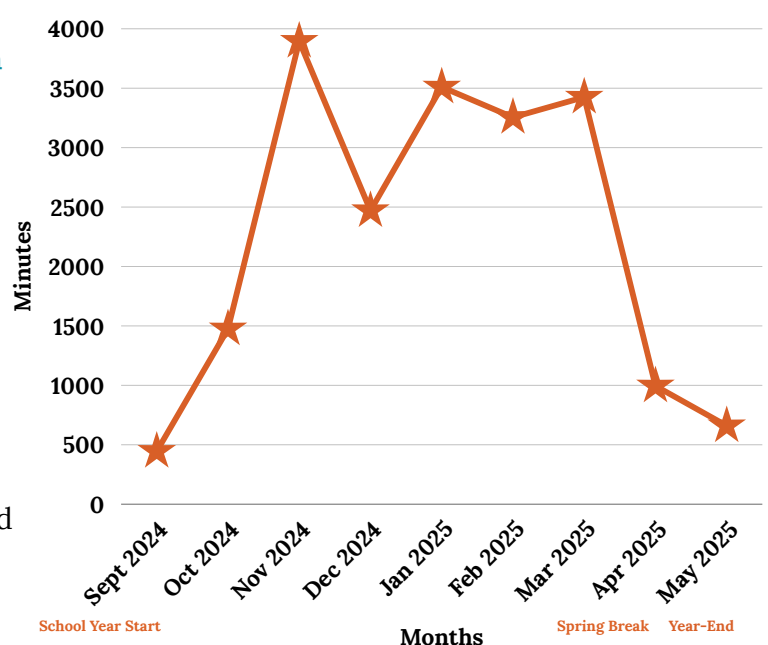
Figure 1: Early MTSS/ Pyramid Model Implementation Sites



TEACHING FIDELITY SCORES

An impressive 74% of classroom teachers, receiving practice-based coaching, reached fidelity with the TPOT or TPITOS measurement tool within just 9 months or less, an undeniable testament to the Pyramid Model's transformative impact in Vermont.² This significant achievement highlights the dedication of educators to implementing high-quality, evidence-based social-emotional practices that not only foster inclusive and nurturing classrooms, but also build a strong foundation for lifelong learning and well-being.

Figure 2: Coaching Log Hours



CHILD IMPACTS

EARLY MTSS DRIVES DRAMATIC DISCIPLINE IMPROVEMENTS IN UNIVERSAL PREKINDERGARTEN (UPK) PROGRAMS

Between **Fall 2024** and **Spring 2025**, UPK Early MTSS/Pyramid Model implementation sites saw **93% lower suspension and expulsion rates** compared to non-implementation UPK program sites.³

EDUCATORS SEE MAJOR DROP IN CHALLENGING BEHAVIORS WITH PYRAMID MODEL

In the **2025 Vermont Participant Survey** **Educators and staff reported that children are showing fewer challenging behaviors in the classroom—82% noting this improvement.**³ This positive change is a direct result of implementing the Pyramid Model, which has helped create calmer, more supportive learning environments where each and every child can thrive.

REDUCTION IN EXCLUSIONARY RESPONSES TO CHALLENGING BEHAVIOR

In the **2025 Vermont Participant Survey** **69% of educators and staff** shared that the rate of sending children to another class/location or home for the day, due to challenging behavior, **has decreased.**³

Between **Fall 2024** and **Spring 2025**

93%

lower

SUSPENSION AND
EXPULSION RATES

occurred in UPK implementation sites utilizing the Pyramid Model, versus those UPK programs who are not implementation sites.

Research indicates that when educators and families collaborate using Pyramid Model strategies, there is a decrease in challenging behavior in both school and home settings.

KEY RESEARCH FINDINGS

1. Partnering with families leads to fewer challenging behaviors
2. Family involvement in planning results in rapid reductions in problem behaviors
3. Plans co-developed with families are more effective



HOW THE PYRAMID MODEL HELPS

1. Universal Promotion: Family engagement provides consistent emotional support and expectations
2. Targeted Social-Emotional Supports: Parent training leads to consistent behavior plans across school and home
3. Intensive Individualized Intervention: Collaborative behavior support plans result in more effective, customized interventions



WHY THIS APPROACH WORKS

Consistency: Same strategies and expectations across school and home

FAMILY IMPACTS

The results of the **2025 Vermont Family Engagement Survey** demonstrated that, **60% of families observed meaningful improvements in their children's social-emotional development after Pyramid Model implementation in their child's classroom**—including stronger emotional expression, increased help-seeking, and more positive peer interactions.

Additionally, family partnership is a cornerstone of the Pyramid Model—and Vermont's educators are putting it into practice. Survey results demonstrate that **85% of families said their child's teacher makes a personal effort to connect with them, learn about their values, and understand their culture—strengthening trust, communication, and support for each and every child's social-emotional development.**³

VOICES OF FAMILIES: THE IMPACT OF THE PYRAMID MODEL IN THEIR OWN WORDS



Directly from the programs themselves—these quotes show the real impact of the Pyramid Model on teachers, classrooms, and children's growth.³

“I feel my child's teachers (and supporting teachers in other classrooms) all work collaboratively and have a great understanding of culture to support a healthy and happy learning environment. A 4 year old boy has big highs and big lows and I feel our teachers have supported him in all swings of emotions. I particularly appreciate how well they communicate with us and encourage shared skills for consistency. My child is so happy at his school and loves his teachers, he even says he misses them on the weekends! I wish I found this program, and particularly our teachers sooner for our son! I can't wait for our daughter to be apart of their classrooms when she is old enough! I appreciate the intelligent and amazing women at ABC Academy immensely and thank them for playing such a positive and impactful role in our child's life!”

“My daughter can have some challenging behaviors (not doing what is asked of her, pushing other children, etc). I had some appointments with a pediatric psychologist and we have a behavioral plan. Ms. Smith has implemented and think the MTSS program has aligned extremely well with the goals of the plan for my daughter. My daughter now routinely talks about the importance of being respectful, responsible, kind, and safe.”

“My child had not very may words or knew how to express his feeling and they have worked very hard with him he talks full sentences and he tell his teacher how he is feeling.. he has come such a long way!”

“My child had a rough start in the beginning, specifically with emotions, and over the last 9 months, the school and Ms. Smith has really helped her learn how to deal with those emotions.”

“Jessica plays well with others and continues to progress with her communication. I see her taking deep breaths when frustrated. Overall, she's doing really well.”

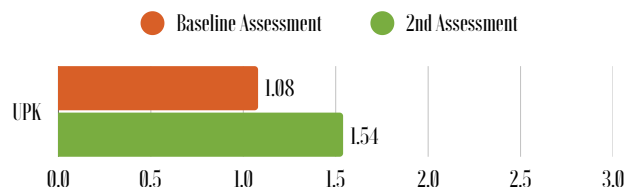
***NOTE: NAMES OF TEACHERS AND CHILDREN HAVE BEEN CHANGED TO MAINTAIN THEIR PRIVACY.**

PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION HIGHLIGHTS

The graphs below tell a powerful story of growth, dedication, and transformation within Vermont's mixed delivery system (**Figures 3,4,5**). Within just 9 months to 3 years of implementation, all Universal PreK public and private programs, Child Care, and FCCH programs have shown clear, measurable growth in high-quality, inclusive evidence-based practices—demonstrating steady progress and strong commitment, as reflected in their system assessments.

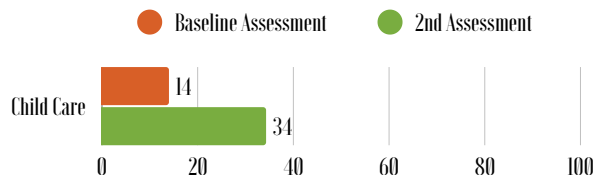
UPK (public and private) programs use the **System Inventory**, with a scale of 0-3, to assess resources and ensure compliance, driving continuous improvement and building sustainable, data-informed support systems.³

Figure 3: UPK System Inventory



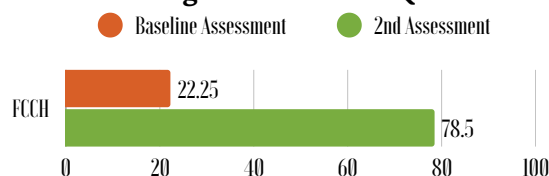
The Child Care **Benchmarks of Quality (BoQ)** provide a clear, evidence-based roadmap for creating inclusive, emotionally supportive environments that foster young children's social-emotional development with a scale of 0-100%. By guiding reflection, goal-setting, and progress tracking, the BoQ helps ensure every child receives the support they need to thrive.³

Figure 4: Childcare BoQ



The **Family ChildCare Home Benchmarks of Quality (BoQ)** has a scale of 0-100% that helps providers create nurturing, inclusive environments that support children's social-emotional growth, reduce challenging behaviors, and strengthen relationships—using the evidence-based Pyramid Model framework.³

Figure 5: FCCH BoQ



These numbers reflect real change—more nurturing classrooms, more confident educators, and steady progress toward full fidelity of practice and system building. In less than a year, Vermont's early educators are proving what's possible with the right support!

EDUCATOR VOICES: TRANSFORMING CLASSROOMS WITH THE PYRAMID MODEL



Educators across Vermont are seeing real change. In their own words, they share how Early MTSS implementation has transformed their classrooms, strengthened their practices, and supported each and every child's growth.³

“

“While it has been a bit overwhelming at times learning all the things, its been a really great program to bring us to the next level of care and possible trainings for our staff to continue to increase the quality of care we can provide. I also enjoy that it is making us think more about bringing our schools together as one and increasing communication with staff and admin.”

“

“If Vermont wants to continue to foster and continuously improve his mixed-delivery system of preKindergarten, it is essential for our communities to begin working towards community wide implementation of pyramid model practices. Districts and private programs are unable to do this innovative and critical work without funding.”

“

“Thank you letting the Springfield School District continue to be part of this valuable work. Being able to bring this to the K-2 age level has been a game changer in how teachers engage, materials they prioritize in their classrooms and their teaching approaches!”

“

“This program is designed for child care centers/programs with staff that requires common training. An established school based program with masters level teachers is uplifted by this training. My position is that this funding needs to support child care centers.”

“

“The teachers are recognizing that the children are just trying to get their needs met and they want to help them figure out appropriate ways to do that. The culture has been more positive overall since the expectations have been put into place.”

“

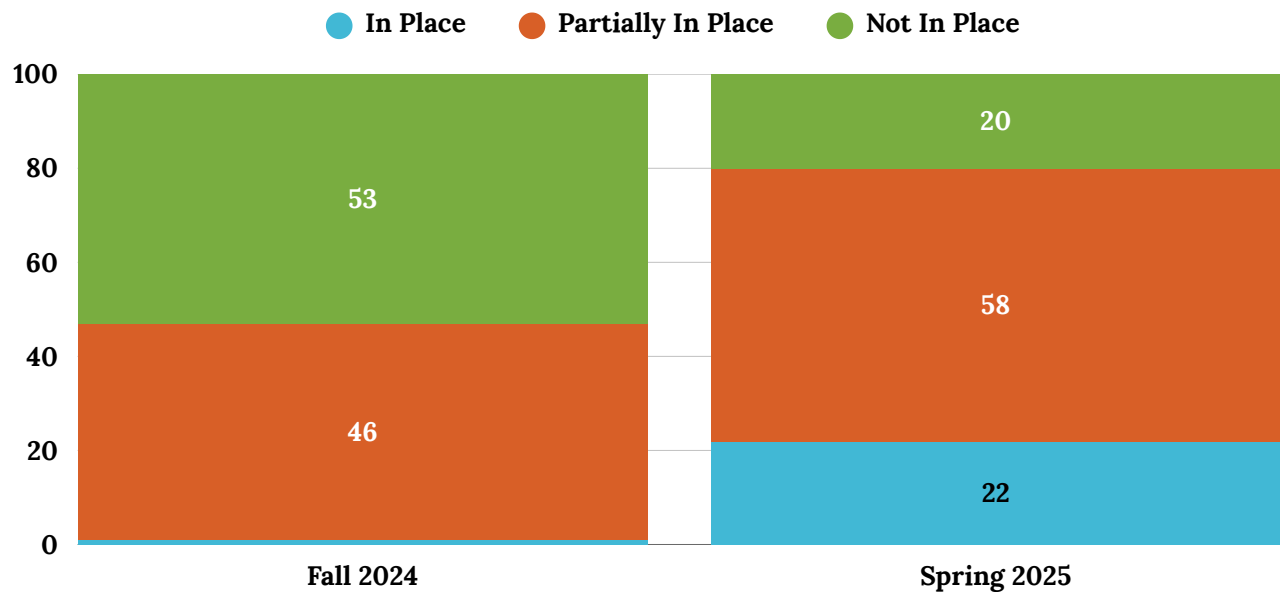
“It has been a lot of work, but the results have been wonderful!”

***NOTE: NAMES OF TEACHERS AND CHILDREN HAVE BEEN CHANGED TO MAINTAIN THEIR PRIVACY.**

EARLY INTERVENTION/ CHILDREN INTEGRATED SERVICES HIGHLIGHTS

The Pyramid Model delivers transformative, system-level benefits to Vermont's Early Intervention (EI) and Children's Integrated Services (CIS) regions by embedding proactive, trauma-informed, inclusive best practices that nurture each and every child's social-emotional development. In these early, critical years—when timely identification and intervention can change lifelong outcomes—the Early MTSS framework equips providers with practical, evidence-based tools to reduce challenging behaviors, foster emotional regulation, and build strong, responsive relationships with both children and families. By offering a tiered framework of individualized support, the Pyramid Model ensures that services are not only developmentally appropriate but also inclusive, culturally responsive, and sustainable. The result is a more connected, equitable system that strengthens school readiness and lays a foundation for lifelong learning, resilience, and well-being. **This work lays the groundwork for even broader, more integrated early childhood system in Vermont, where each and every child, no matter where they begin, has access to the supports they need to thrive.**³

Figure 6: EI BoQ



In just 7 months, the three newly participating EI regions have demonstrated measurable progress in their use of high-quality, evidence-based practices. The Part C Benchmarks of Quality (BoQ) graph on the bottom illustrates this growth, reflecting both the dedication of regional teams and the power of aligned coaching, leadership, and family-centered practices (Figure 6).

WHAT ARE REGIONS SAYING?

“...Our team is excited to learn more about Early MTSS, share that with their team/colleagues and take the next steps in supporting the social emotional development of the children and families we serve.”

EARLY INTERVENTION



PYRAMID MODEL

PROGRAM IMPACTS

PROGRAMS IMPLEMENTING STATEWIDE



59

PROGRAMS WITH INTERNAL COACHES



19

CLASSROOMS



107



CHILDREN



506



 = ACTIVE ON PIDS!

Vermont's vision for a sustainable, high-quality early childhood system is becoming a reality. Today, **45 programs and an additional 14 school districts have committed leadership teams** actively implementing the Early MTSS/Pyramid Model. Over **200 educators and staff across 107 classrooms** have used the Pyramid Implementation Data System (PIDS), reaching **an estimated 1,500 children with consistent, data-driven support.**³

To build lasting change, **19 programs have stated they have internal practice-based coaches**, which is a major milestone in sustainability. These coaches are embedding expertise within programs, measuring classroom practices, reducing reliance on external support and strengthening long-term capacity. Together, these efforts are transforming classroom culture, boosting educator confidence, and delivering stronger, more equitable outcomes for Vermont's children and families.

EDUCATOR IMPACTS

The **2025 Vermont Participant Survey** shows that educators using the Pyramid Model have stronger teaching, better classroom climate, and improved children's emotional well-being. The survey results below provide further details.³

INCREASED
EDUCATOR
CONFIDENCE &
COMPETENCE

EQUIPPED TO
SUPPORT EVERY
CHILD

EQUITY &
INCLUSION

PROFESSIONAL
SATISFACTION &
RETENTION

IMPROVED
TEACHING
PRACTICES

100% of teachers and staff feel **more equipped** to support children's social and emotional needs.

94% of program staff gained strategies to **effectively support children with challenging behaviors.**

97% of educators learned to **create culturally responsive learning environments.**

91% of staff reported that understanding the benefits of Early MTSS **reduced turnover** within their program.

100% of teachers and staff **gained skills** to support all children's social-emotional and behavioral development.

74% of lead teachers reached fidelity in TPOT observations, **signaling consistent high-quality practice.**

Sustaining Early MTSS is essential because it works. **Educators feel more equipped**, use effective strategies, and create inclusive environments. With **reduced turnover, stronger fidelity, and measurable gains in practice**, this model builds lasting impact for children, families, and programs across Vermont.

SUCCESS STORY ①

ABC Academy

"We have noticed significant changes throughout our program, but mostly with the staff being coached. The teachers have lessened any negative culture by stating expectations, using visuals and reinforcing the behavior that they WANT to see. The kids are utilizing solution kits and are learning how to advocate and solve problems for themselves. The process takes time, and some days are better than others, but the overall trajectory is going up. It would be great if funding could continue so that more teachers could get the proper coaching. We are doing our best to train other staff in EMTSS, but the challenges of the job can make that very difficult. We are determined and committed to reaching fidelity, but it would be a great support for there to be more grant funding to assist with that. Sometimes working in Early Education can feel isolating and frustrating, especially when there are little supports for teachers dealing with increased undesirable behaviors that effect the whole classroom and lead to teacher burnout. I am afraid that less people are coming into this field as it is and the turnover is getting a bit ridiculous. More expectations of teachers and far less qualified staff out there. We are so thankful for the difference this EMTSS coaching has had across our programs."

- Amy Luke

SUCCESS STORY ②

Children's Center

"MTSS has completely changed the dynamic of my classroom for the better. It has helped me become more in-tune with my kids and has helped me to better guide them through their big feelings. The classroom is much smoother, transitions are much quicker, and the kids are able to immerse themselves into our activities knowing that they have the support they need every step of the way. It has dramatically built their confidence as learners and it has built my confidence as an educator."

-April Sloan

SUCCESS STORY ③

Sheila Quenneville, FCCH

"We got into the kit and already had to write out super friend award certificate! They loved them! John said "I can't believe I have a reward." They have been doing rewards at home and he's been wanting here, now he's making his happy list!"

-Sheila Quenneville

LOOKING AHEAD 2025-2026

As we look to the future, our vision for Early MTSS/ Pyramid Model in Vermont is both ambitious and deeply rooted in equity, data, and partnership. The progress made thus far, through the dedication of educators, families, and community partners, has laid a strong foundation. Now, we must build on that momentum to ensure long-term sustainability and deeper impact statewide.

BUILDING ON MOMENTUM: EXPANSION WITH PURPOSE

Vermont is working to deepen and expand Early MTSS/Pyramid Model implementation across existing programs and into new classrooms, age groups, and across school districts. This internal growth is strategically aligned with broader laws and initiatives such as Title 16, Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), and VTmtss ensuring coherence, consistency and inclusion across Vermont's early childhood system. Our expansion is not only about scaling up and sustaining, it's about high quality and depth. **Programs are supported to implement with fidelity, using data to guide practice, refine strategies, and better meet the needs of each and every child.** This includes strengthening inclusive practices, supporting staff well-being, and addressing the root causes of behavioral concerns before they escalate.

SUSTAINING THE SYSTEM: LASTING RESOURCES BEYOND THE GRANT



With **Preschool Development Grant (PDG)** funding, Vermont launched synchronous Coaching Groups and self-paced eCourses, giving educators and staff lasting access to high-quality professional development.

Through strong cross agency collaboration, **700 Pyramid Model Kits** for Preschool FCCH, and Infant/Toddler classrooms are being distributed statewide. To support broad, accessible implementation, we also launched a flexible training roadmap with self-paced courses, live sessions, and presentation-based modules. Through 2026, the **State Personnel Development Grant (SPDG)** will continue to fund **free coaching and training for CIS/EI regions**—building lasting capacity by embedding Pyramid Model practices into leadership teams, aligning with state systems, and empowering local champions to sustain the work beyond the grant.

As PDG funding ends in December 2025, we remain committed to finding lasting support to sustain and expand this work for Vermont's children, families, and educators.



EXPANDING IMPACT: BRINGING THE PYRAMID MODEL TO VERMONT'S EARLY INTERVENTION SYSTEM

This year marked a significant milestone in Vermont's efforts to build a more inclusive and equitable early childhood system.

Vermont successfully expanded implementation of the Pyramid Model to three new EI: CIS Regions, deepening our reach into Part C services and strengthening the foundation for lifelong learning and well-being among Vermont's youngest children and their families.

We are committed to expanding Pyramid Model implementation across additional CIS Regions, ensuring that more infants, toddlers, and their families across Vermont benefit from consistent, high-quality, and equitable early intervention supports.

This expansion was made possible in part by the SPDG awarded to Vermont in 2022 by the Office of Special Education Programs at the U.S. Department of Education. The SPDG was designed to improve Part B student outcomes while introducing Early MTSS into Part C services—a first for our state!

EQUIPPING PROGRAMS FOR SUCCESS: WHAT WE'VE BUILT AND WHAT'S AHEAD

To support consistent, high-quality implementation, Vermont created **Leadership Team Phases of Implementation** and a **Early MTSS Training Roadmap** that guides programs and individuals through the Early MTSS/Pyramid Model journey.

These foundational tools are building statewide alignment and readiness. Looking ahead, Vermont will finalize its own **Early MTSS Implementation Manual** and launch a **Phased Roadmap** to support programs exploring this research-based framework. These resources will all be available on the [Vermont PMC Affiliate webpage](#).



ROOTED IN COLLABORATION, GROWING IN IMPACT



HONORING OUR PARTNERS IN BUILDING AN INCLUSIVE EARLY CHILDHOOD SYSTEM

The **Agency of Education** would like to extend our deepest gratitude to our dedicated partners—the **Child Development Division**, **Department of Mental Health**, **Department of Health**, **State of Vermont Office of Racial Equity**, and the **Pyramid Model Consortium**. Your leadership, collaboration, and commitment have been instrumental in shaping a stronger, more inclusive early childhood system.



To the educators, families, and community collaborators across Vermont: thank you for your tireless efforts, insights, and passion. It is your daily dedication that brings Early MTSS and Pyramid Model practices to life in classrooms, programs, and homes; which is creating safe, nurturing, and equitable environments.

Together, we are building a strong and lasting foundation that empowers each and every child to thrive—not only in their early years but throughout their lives. Your unwavering support and partnership continue to drive our shared vision forward: to scale, sustain, and deepen the impact of evidence-based practices that promote social-emotional development, inclusive environments, and meaningful outcomes for each and every child and their family. Through collaboration, we are creating a more equitable and supportive early childhood system for generations to come.

STAY CONNECTED WITH VERMONT'S EARLY MTSS PYRAMID MODEL WORK

Looking for tools to support Early MTSS and Pyramid Model implementation? Our [Pyramid Model Affiliate](#) webpage is your central hub! You'll find reports, statewide resources, and free professional development opportunities, along with access to our **FREE** Community of Practice, trainings, and more. **Stay informed, connected, and inspired as we work together to help every and every child thrive.**

SCAN HERE TO ACCESS
OUR PMC AFFILIATE PAGE



THE PYRAMID MODEL CONSORTIUM
Supporting Early Childhood PBIS

This report was developed by the **Vermont Agency of Education** to highlight the progress and impact of Early MTSS/Pyramid Model implementation. For more information or to explore how your program can get involved, please contact: Thalia Garcia, Early MTSS Coordinator, (thalia.garcia@vermont.gov).



ENDNOTES AND RESOURCES

Endnotes:

¹ Professional Development

Information used in this report was retrieved from the following resources:

- **eCourses on the Pyramid Model**

Vermont eCourses on the Pyramid Model. Retrieved from

https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSceHPVKeIYMphiQkgLebYoweNR0vNhf_TOfpyf7T2hNDB8O7g/viewform

- **Coaching Groups on the Pyramid Model**

Vermont Coaching Groups on the Pyramid Model. Retrieved from

<https://www.pyramidmodel.org/affiliate/vermont/>

² Fidelity of Implementation

Fidelity refers to the extent to which educators implement the Pyramid Model's evidence-based practices as designed. Fidelity of implementation in classrooms is measured using the Teaching Pyramid Observation Tool (TPOT) and the Teaching Pyramid Infant and Toddler Observation Scale (TPITOS). Developers recommend 80% fidelity.

- **TPOT:** Developed by highly respected creators of the Pyramid Model for classrooms enrolling children 2–5 years of age, the TPOT™ is an in-depth tool that provides information on how well teachers are implementing practices related to universal, targeted, and individualized supports.
- **TPITOS:** TPITOS measures how well your program's staff is fostering responsive, nurturing relationships with children and promoting strong social-emotional development in their earliest years.

³ Data Sources

Information used in this report was retrieved from the following resources:

- **Pyramid Implementation Data System**
- **Coaching Logs**
- **Agency of Education Accountability and Continuous Improvement Monitoring Tracking Tool**
- **Vermont 2025 Participant Survey** (developed in collaboration with the Agency of Education, Agency of Health and Human Services Child Development Division, Department of Mental Health, and the State of Vermont Office of Racial Equity; distributed by the [American Institute for Research \(AIR\)](#))
- **Vermont 2025 Family Engagement Survey** (same collaborators as above)
- **Early MTSS System Inventory**
- **Early Childhood Program-Wide PBS Benchmarks of Quality**
- **Family Child Care Home (FCCH) Program-Wide PBS Benchmarks of Quality**
- **Pyramid Model Early Intervention (Part C) Benchmarks of Quality**

ENDNOTES AND RESOURCES

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Center on the Social and Emotional Foundations for Early Learning (CSEFEL). (2010). Family engagement and the Pyramid Model. Vanderbilt University. Retrieved from <http://csefel.vanderbilt.edu>

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