

# WISCONSIN PYRAMID MODEL

2022 IMPACT REPORT



Wisconsin Pyramid  
Model is a project of  
the Wisconsin  
Alliance for Infant  
Mental Health



WISCONSIN ALLIANCE FOR  
INFANT MENTAL HEALTH

— Early Relationships Matter —

# DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE

Since 2009, the Wisconsin Alliance for Infant Mental Health has led a collaborative state team to build training, coaching, resources, and materials for programs to use the Pyramid Model framework to ensure the social and emotional well-being of Wisconsin's youngest children. As we work to understand the cumulative and collective stress of the pandemic on every one of us, this effort seems especially vital. Our babies, toddlers, and young children have missed important social experiences and their language, social, emotional, and motor functioning are showing a developmental dip. Emergency room visits for pediatric mental health rose by 24% in 2020. Early care and education providers are reporting a 60+% increase in problematic behavior, leading many to leave the field. This turnover means young children must work harder to build relationships that may, or may not, last long enough to guide their development.

High quality care for infants, toddlers, and young children is life altering in ways that influence the future of our society. But the unvoiced opposite is also true. Low quality care, coupled with the current developmental risk, is a costly fiscal and societal risk. The Pyramid Model framework is a collection of practices and strategies that science proves can enhance development. The framework includes tools that help ensure that programs have the support they need to actually apply what works with enough intention to realize impact. This report highlights the impact of implementation of the Pyramid Model framework on the quality of experience for babies, toddlers, young children, and the adults who love them. We present program-wide implementation of the Pyramid Model as an important opportunity for Wisconsin to create the nurturing, responsive, engaging and restorative experiences our youngest must experience to ensure we all benefit - now more than ever.



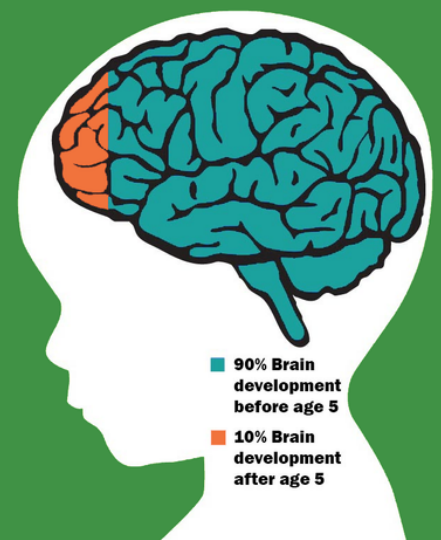
**JULIE BETCHKAL**

Pyramid Model Director



**90%**  
of a child's brain  
development  
happens  
before age 5

Source: Harvard Center for the Developing Child



The framework includes tools that help ensure that programs have the support they need to actually apply what works with enough intention to realize impact.



# IMPACT FIDELITY & CONSISTENCY

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Coaching and shared leadership are key elements of supporting teachers in using best practices with consistency and fidelity over time. The greater the consistency and intentional use of practices, the stronger the correlation to positive outcomes.

The Pyramid Model framework has built-in supports for consistency and fidelity including:

- monthly shared leadership team meetings
- internal observations and coaching support
- external coaching to support the internal coach and leadership team.

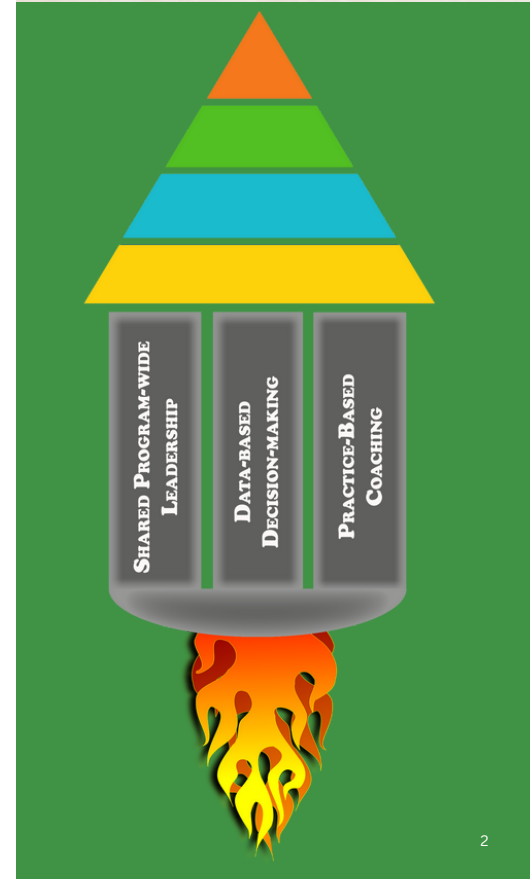
The Pyramid Model provides an array of tools to measure and evaluate program practices to ensure that decisions are being made based upon real-time program data. As teams drill down into their program data, they may see patterns emerge that help them understand how to shift and adjust classroom practices and program policies.

In 2022, six programs launched program-wide implementation, joining the sixty programs currently using the Pyramid Model framework. Those teams attended a two-day Pyramid Model Team Launch Academy, during which they learned:

- the philosophy of the Pyramid Model framework
- how each level of the Pyramid supports teaching and learning
- best practices for teaching social and emotional life skills
- guidelines for working together as a shared leadership team
- how to collect, analyze and share data
- how to prioritize meeting each and every child's needs
- how to create action plans to guide the work

Additionally, internal coaches attended one of two 2-day trainings to learn one of the coaching observation tools and best practices for coaching success.

External coaching occurs monthly during the first two years of implementation to ensure sustainability.



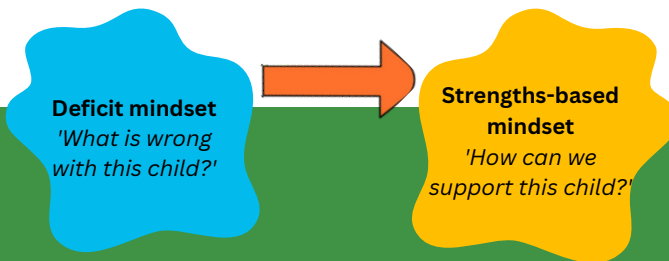
# IMPACT: TRAINING & COACHING

A key element of ensuring the best social and emotional outcomes for children is by supporting their teachers. Just as athletes benefit from having a coach to provide them with observations and feedback, our early care and education providers and their leadership teams deserve coaching support too.

Wisconsin Pyramid Model coaches must meet quality standards to use either the Teaching Pyramid Infant and Toddler Observation Scale (TPITOS) or Teaching Pyramid Observation Tool (TPOT) to focus their observation and craft descriptive and personalized feedback for teachers. Teacher support is grounded in these coaching observations, after which teachers and coaches collaboratively plan what practices and tools are needed to guide the development of children in their care.

Leadership teams benefit from coaching to ensure program policies and practices are aligned so staff members have what they need so each and every child receives the consistency of teaching they need to be successful.

The pandemic response required reducing or suspending coaching observations, but our programs are getting back on track despite staffing shortages and time constraints. They know that increasing the use of strategies that work for children and adults is essential right now. But successful implementation is not just about strategies. It's also about positive shifts in minds and hearts, and celebrating the good work happening every day.

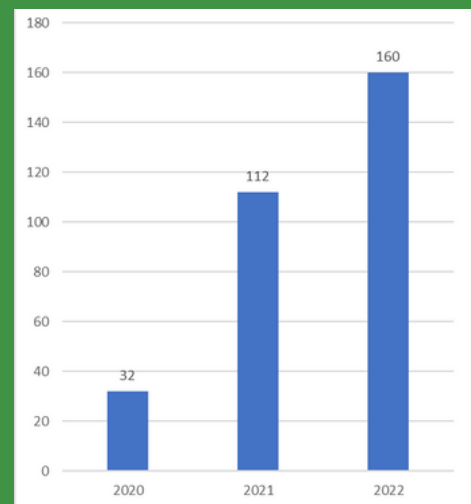


My team finds their PBC's (practice-based coaching sessions) to be useful and well worth their time per a recent feedback survey. I think that the more consistent we are with the whole process, the momentum for the Pyramid Model builds among the children, the team, and on to families. And coaching is the key to keep it moving.

Renee Konter internal coach,  
Young Child Development Center,  
started PM implementation in 2018



Number of TPITOS and TPOT observations (combined) reported by Wisconsin Pyramid Model programs





# IMPACT: TEACHING & LEARNING

Pyramid Model provides training and coaching grounded in what research tells us is necessary for optimal development in the first 6 years. Pyramid Model's focus is on the importance of partnering with families to teach our babies, toddlers, and young children social and emotional life skills to prepare them for Kindergarten and beyond. Pyramid Model programs help families to advise our work through an annual survey and connect with community partners to provide Positive Solutions for Families learning opportunities.

**280**

Family members participated in 2022 Pyramid Model training.

Parents said this when asked, "What would you tell other parents about Positive Solutions for Families?"

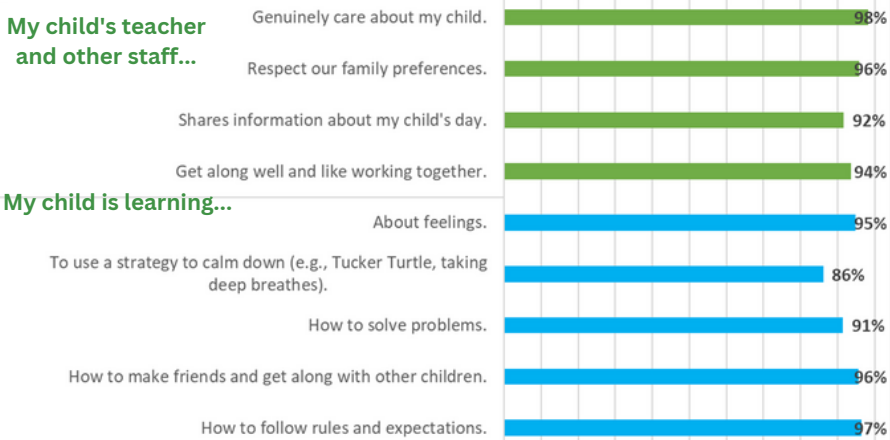
"A great opportunity to learn ways to parent better, smarter and more efficiently."

"It is packed with insight into child behavior and tactics to positively impact their behavior"

"It helps build a more positive relationship with your child and can help change their behaviors."

## Wisconsin Pyramid Model Family Survey 2022

Percentage of respondents (1105) who agreed with statements



**756**

Early care and education professionals participated in 2022 Pyramid Model training.

Pyramid Model practitioner training is offered throughout Wisconsin. We strive to provide high quality and up-to-date training. In 2022, both the Infant Toddler and 8 Part Series were updated and translated into Spanish.



## Group Early Care and Education Content

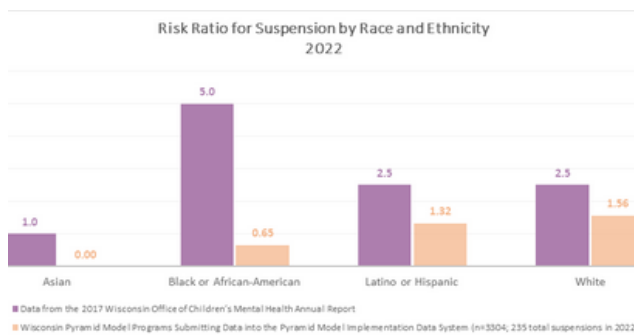
- Guiding Children's Behavior
- Pyramid Model 8-Part Series English/Spanish
- Promoting Mental Health in Young Children
- Infant-Toddler Series English/Spanish
- e-Modules with Reflective Coaching Birth -5 English/Spanish
- e-Modules with Reflective Coaching Preschool English/Spanish

# IMPACT: PRESCHOOL EXPULSION

National research has shown that preschool children are expelled at a rate three times higher than K-12 students combined. A 2017 Wisconsin study indicated expulsion rates of 6.5 per 1000 young children enrolled. Research is clear that for African-American boys, the risk of being expelled is 2.2 times higher than that of other children. Addressing disparities in a child's earliest education can help to close the achievement opportunity gap.

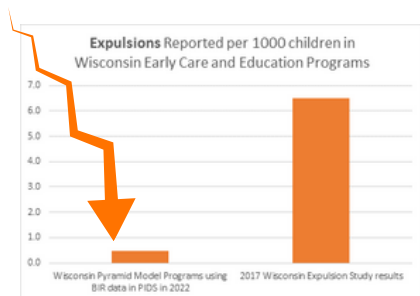
Some early care and education programs use suspension (a child going or remaining home due to challenging behavior) as a discipline response. Wisconsin data shows that boys and black children are much more likely to be suspended from Early Care and Education programs. 2022 data from Wisconsin Pyramid Model programs using the Pyramid Model Implementation Data System (PIDS)

shows a **reduced risk for suspension for all racial and ethnic groups, and a much lower risk of suspension for black children.**



A 2017 Wisconsin study indicated expulsion rates of 6.5 per 1000 young children enrolled, matching national rates.

**Wisconsin Pyramid Model program expulsion rates are 13X lower than Wisconsin program expulsion estimates.**



Wisconsin is working to join 29 other states that have created state level expulsion and suspension policy guidance for early care and education settings serving children under age six.\* Pyramid Model is an important proven solution in creating equitable practices and policies that reduce suspension and expulsion.

\*<https://www.nccp.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/States-Growing-Commitment-to-Preventing-Young-Childrens-Expulsion-from-ECE-Programs.pdf>



National data shows that:

## 10 X

Children who are suspended or expelled from preschool are as much as ten times more likely to drop out of high school.

Meek and Gilliam, 2016.



## 4 X

Children who had been suspended were more than four times more likely to be arrested.



APA, 2019. Mowen and Brent, 2016.



# IMPACT: CONNECTING & COLLABORATING

The Wisconsin Pyramid Model relies on the wisdom, guidance, and commitment of many people who touch the lives of babies, toddlers, and young children. Our Wisconsin State Core Team meets quarterly and the full State Advisory Team meets twice a year to review progress, discuss challenges, and offer feedback for continuous improvement.

The Wisconsin Pyramid Model is part of our statewide collaborative efforts to build high quality programs that serve our babies, toddlers, young children, and their families. The Pyramid Model framework was designed by early childhood researchers for early care and education programs.

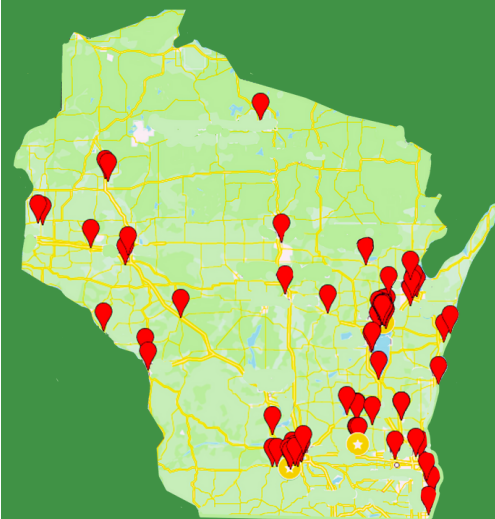
In addition to the many implementing sites around the state, Wisconsin Pyramid Model connects and collaborates with:

- Appleton Area Community 4K
- City of Madison Community Development Division
- City of Milwaukee's Office of Early Childhood Initiatives
- Head Start Collaboration Office
- Supporting Families Together Association
- Verona Area First Five Years
- Wisconsin School Boards Association
- Wisconsin Child Abuse and Neglect Prevention Board
- Wisconsin Department of Children and Families, Bureau of Young Star
- Wisconsin Department of Children and Families, Bureau of Early Childhood Regulation
- Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction, Early Childhood-4K
- Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction, Special Education
- Wisconsin Education Childhood Association
- Wisconsin Head Start Association
- Wisconsin Registry
- Wisconsin RTI Center
- Watertown Area Community Health Foundation

We are indebted to our Wisconsin Pyramid Model program administrators, coaches, teachers and families for their leadership, creativity and effort. We look forward, with great excitement, to showcasing more programs during our monthly Pyramid Model Institutes: <https://wiaimh.org/pm-institute>



There are currently 66  
implementing programs across  
173 individual sites/locations.



# IMPACT LOOKING AHEAD

We will continue to expand community-wide implementation efforts to support early care and education programs in partnership with mental health, public health, public schools, and business leaders. We will educate communities about the importance of providing funding for training, coaching, and program-wide implementation, as well as resources for families to help them understand and guide their children's social and emotional development.

WI-AIMH has partnered with family child care providers and technical assistance providers to outline a plan to pilot coaching for implementation of the Pyramid Model framework in family child care programs.


As WI-AIMH works to build an Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation cadre, we look forward to adding consultation support for teachers in Pyramid Model programs.

WI-AIMH will continue to showcase the impact of program-wide implementation as an important solution to address the need for statewide suspension and expulsion policy. We will continue to work collaboratively to support Wisconsin programs to create robust teaching and guidance policy by supporting technical assistance guided by the Teaching and Guidance Policy Essentials Checklist (TAGPEC).

The knowledge, poise and skill necessary to guide the social and emotional well-being of young children is greatly underacknowledged. WI-AIMH will continue to streamline the process of gaining Infant and/or Early Childhood Mental Health Endorsement® for early care and education providers utilizing the Pyramid Model framework. This credential will help to communicate the importance of an effective workforce.

To sustain the impact of high quality and responsive care aimed at the best social and emotional outcomes possible, WI-AIMH will continue to connect the Pyramid Model content and resources to social and emotional/trauma informed care trainings for School Age Child Care in partnership with the Wisconsin Afterschool Network.

 [www.wiaimh.org/pyramid-model](http://www.wiaimh.org/pyramid-model)

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Middleton, WI 54562



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