

Wisconsin Pyramid Model

2021
Annual Report



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



“No significant learning occurs without a significant relationship.”

~Dr. James Comer

What is the Pyramid Model?

Pyramid Model is a relationship-based framework that supports professionals in making teaching, learning, and policy decisions that lead to positive outcomes for ALL children, staff, families, and communities.

The Pyramid Model is NOT a curriculum package, but a collection of evidence-based practices carefully chosen by Early Childhood researchers to support optimal development and prevent challenging behaviors. Pyramid

Model training focuses on practices that address relationships, environments, intentional teaching and individualized interventions.

The Pyramid Model provides a nationally recognized framework, data system, and guide for programs to build an equitable multi-leveled system of support designed to enhance development of social and emotional competence in infants, toddlers, and young children.

Program-wide implementation of the Pyramid Model is also called Early Childhood Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS). Program-wide implementation of the Pyramid Model supports educators and administrators, through a systemic approach of coaching and training to

use evidence-based practices with fidelity (intentionally using practices as they were designed to be used).

Culturally responsive practices reduce racial disparities in early care and education programs. Naturally embedded in the

Wisconsin Pyramid Model, culturally responsive practices are emphasized and reinforced throughout training, coaching, and implementation.

What is Social and Emotional Well-being?

The first five years of life is a time of incredible potential and great vulnerability. Children are born wired for connection, which occurs with the development of strong social and emotional development, setting the critical foundation for lifelong development and learning.

Social and emotional skill development during the first five years of life is critical to children's success in K-12 settings and beyond. A person's ability to get along with others, use impulse control, identify emotions in themselves and others, follow directions, and solve problems begins at birth and continues to form throughout the early childhood years, when rapid brain development is occurring.

The way adults interact with babies and young children plays a key role in how their brains develop, impacting not only emotional and social development, but language, literacy, motor, and cognitive development. Through interactions with important adults in their lives, children learn about their own possibilities and what they can expect from the world.

Developing healthy emotional and social competencies requires adults to be sensitive to and respectful of all emotions, helping children to experience, understand, and accept all of their own feelings and those of others. With intentional efforts and strategies, adults can help children learn how to manage their strong feelings – by providing comfort when they are scared, joining them emotionally when they are happy and joyful, and using regulation strategies when they are angry or frustrated.

The work of an early care and education provider who is intentionally supporting young children to manage their emotions is emotionally wearing, challenging and requires a system of support for the caregiver themselves. Busy, smart caregivers need reflection and support to be as relational as young children need them to be.



THE POWER
OF CONNECTION
building bright futures

The Wisconsin Pyramid Model is an evidence-based prevention/intervention framework that reduces challenging behaviors and promotes healthy social and emotional development by:

- supporting positive relationships,
- creating engaging environments,
- providing concrete teaching strategies, and,
- if/when needed, creating individualized interventions for children.

The tiered framework includes increasing the knowledge and skills of adults around building positive and supportive relationships with children, families, and colleagues, creating meaningful and responsive environments, intentionally teaching social skills, identifying and managing emotions, and designing intensive interventions for children displaying challenging behaviors.

We Wisconsin parents, educators, and caregivers want our children to be able to make friends, get along with others, express strong feelings appropriately and build a strong foundation for learning. In addition, Wisconsin business leaders understand the importance of these skills as a foundation for a strong and well prepared work force.

Implementation of the Pyramid Model in early care and education has and will continue to reap positive benefits for Wisconsin children, families, caregivers, educators, business leaders and our communities!

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.



Tricia Peterson

“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?”

In 2017, Tricia was invited to be part of the newly formed *Every Child Thrives* planning group as a child care representative for the Greater Watertown Community Health Foundation (GWCHF). GWCHF had heard about the Pyramid Model and was intrigued by the framework’s positive outcomes. Tricia’s child care center, Future All-Starts Academy, became one of the first GWCHF sites to implement the Pyramid Model program-wide.

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

In her 20 years as a director, Tricia believed her center was providing high quality child care, but as soon as she was introduced to Pyramid Model, her perspective shifted and her definition of ‘quality’ began to change. Over the past five years Tricia has witnessed PM practices positively shape the experiences of children and families. She has

watched children who might have been at risk of expulsion learn, grow, and thrive. The staff at Future All Star Academy have grown in confidence, compassion and skills. One of the experiences Tricia has encountered is the way that parents and families respond with interest and gratitude to the data shared with them.

Tricia knows that the external coaching her center received early on played a key role in successful implementation and fidelity. The

external coach continues to provide support for growth and improvement.

Quality comes with a price. To allow time for Tricia to coach in classrooms, Future All Star Academy needed to shift roles and responsibilities which created additional program costs. With funding support from GWCHF, the program was able to make this happen.

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. 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.



Defining the Work for Wisconsin

After 12 years of building infrastructure in Wisconsin, 2021 was the time to renew our vision and mission. Our previous vision emphasized the creation of professional development. The new vision and mission tell a story of what we've learned through providing that professional development – we need to hold the well-being of infants and young children at the heart of the work while striving, together, for all adults to understand the vital role they have in ensuring the success of Wisconsin's youngest.

Wisconsin Pyramid Model 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.

Wisconsin Pyramid Model 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.

Updated by the Core Leadership Team and adopted by the Advisory Team, July 2021

Addressing Wisconsin's Needs and Priorities

As Wisconsin Early Care and Education professionals and advocates work to build robust and comprehensive policy designed to enhance outcomes for infants, toddlers and young children, the Wisconsin Pyramid Model remains an essential solution to addressing Wisconsin's needs and priorities.

Need

Building a Comprehensive State Policy Strategy to Prevent Expulsion from Early Learning Settings

Critical Elements

- State Leadership Team
- Family Engagement
- Implementation and Demonstration Programs/Sites
- Professional Development
- Evaluation/Data-Based Decision Making

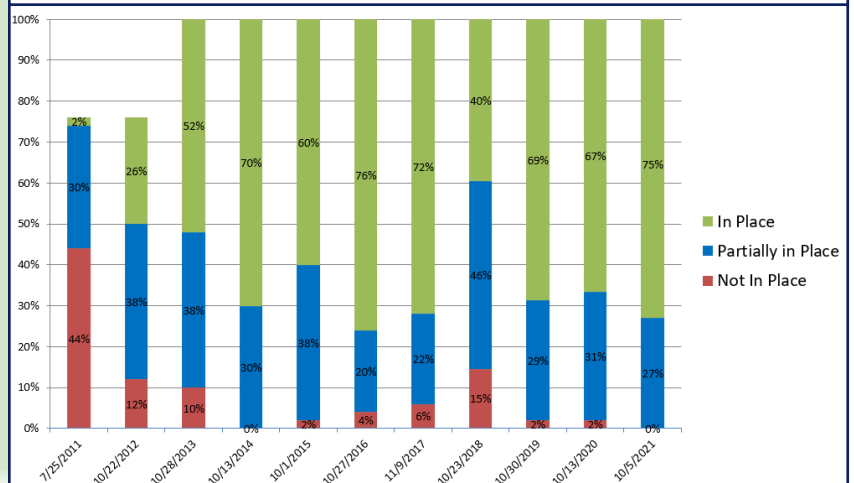
Actions to address this need

Wisconsin Pyramid Model's growing statewide infrastructure is facilitated by WI-AIMH in collaboration with our Core and Advisory Teams. Each October since 2011, a cross-sector team uses evidence to rate Wisconsin's infrastructure to support and sustain implementation of the Pyramid Model framework in the critical infrastructure elements (displayed to the right).

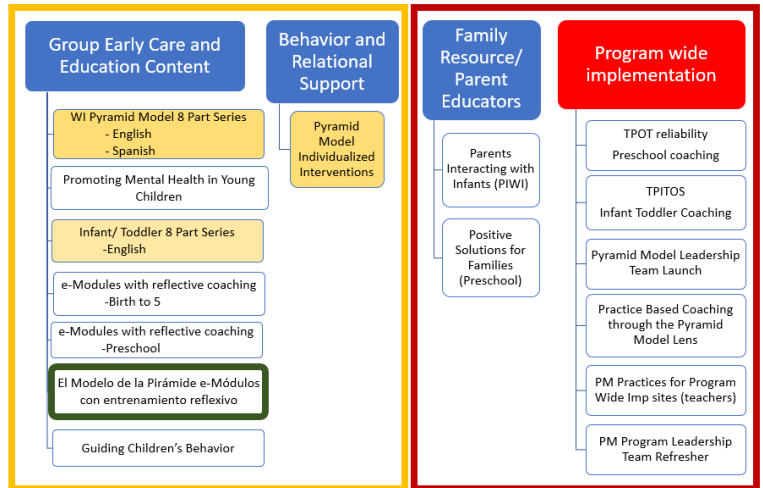
A collection of 49 indicators addressing these critical elements is referred to as the "State Leadership Team Benchmarks of Quality: Implementing the Pyramid Model Statewide." The growth shown in the Fall 2021 Benchmarks of Quality ratings shows the impact of Wisconsin's long-term commitment, with all indicators either in place or partially in place.

This is a moment to celebrate, while moving forward with an unwavering commitment and intent to support optimal development of our infants and young children.

October 2021 WI Pyramid Model State Leadership Team Rates of Implementation



As the needs of children and adults continue to magnify and shift in response to the impact of COVID, we continue to enhance our training offerings in evidence-based, trauma informed practices to address challenging behaviors. Our trainings provide a space for professionals to reflect on children’s individual needs and the adult’s role in supporting these needs. We are pleased to offer a Spanish e-Modules course that addresses the needs of children from Birth to 5 (highlighted in green). We are updating the courses highlighted in gold and look forward to training others to use them.

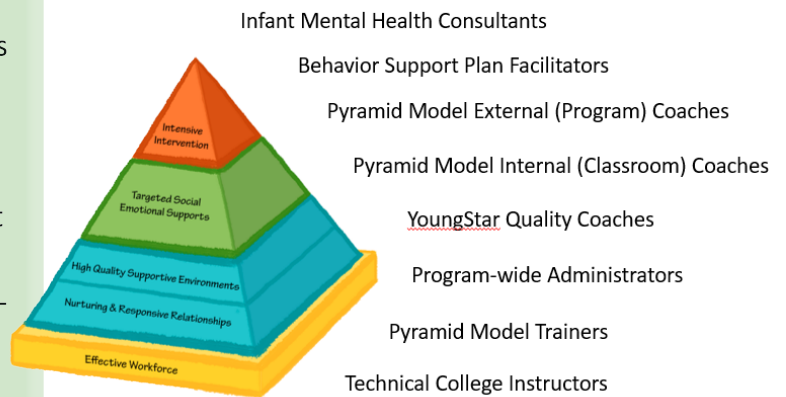


Practitioner Trainings

PM Academy Offerings

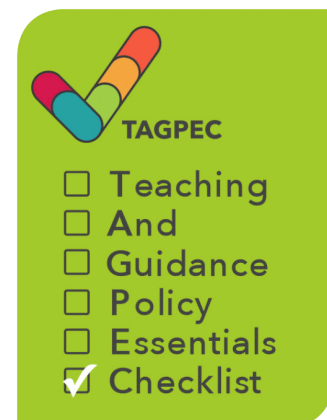
Addressing the immense needs of Wisconsin’s children and families will require a community approach. Our efforts to support communities continues with our Pyramid Model Regional Leads using the PM framework to guide members of Communities of Practice where trusted relationships create an environment of shared learning and discussion around what it will take to prevent suspension and expulsion and increase inclusive opportunities for **all** children. Families and providers benefit from this consistent and collaborative support of Pyramid Model implementation, as each member brings newly gained knowledge and skills back to their unique community.

Communities of Practice



Improving outcomes for infants, toddlers, and young children relies on strong policy guidance. WI-AIMH convened and led two advisory projects exploring use of the Teaching and Guidance Policy Essentials Checklist to:

1. sample existing program policy language and guidance
2. create high quality policy language starters for programs working to build proactive discipline policies that enhance outcomes and reduce the need for suspension and expulsion of infants, toddlers and young children.



Need

Inclusion of Children with Disabilities in Early Childhood Programs

Actions to address this need

Wisconsin continues to be a national leader in the use of the Pyramid Model Implementation Data System to support programs. Teams use the system data to make decisions about how to best guide teachers to use practices and adjust instruction so that the needs of ALL children can be met, including children with disabilities and those who have experienced trauma.

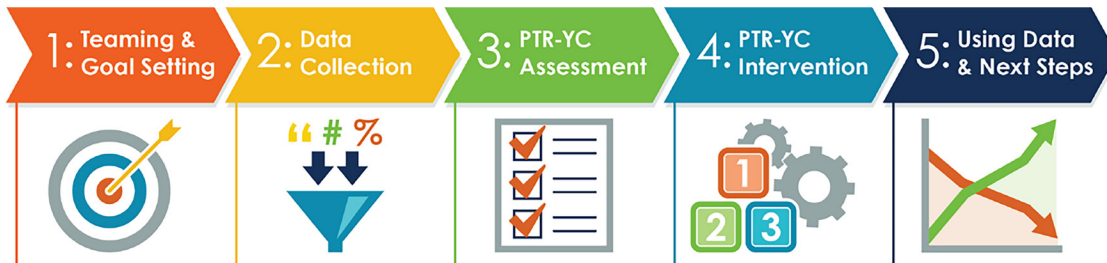
Welcome to the Pyramid Model Data System!



Wisconsin Pyramid Model

Teach. Coach. Change.

Some young children and adults need more individualized supports. We are working to build a cadre of co-training teams, with one trainer in each team having Early Care and Education expertise and the other having Mental Health clinical expertise. These co-training teams will provide the updated Pyramid Model Individualized Interventions training for the professionals who help teachers create effective interventions when behavior feels challenging.



Need

Equitable Access and Outcomes

Actions to address this need

Three experienced Spanish speaking Pyramid Model trainers piloted the National Pyramid Model Consortium's (NCPMI) Nacimiento e-Modules as a Spanish language option of Wisconsin's e-Modules with Reflective Coaching course. The pilot was a unanimous success and a new course will be created in early 2022 that will promote the many resources that have been translated into Spanish during the past 2 years. We are committed to increasing access to linguistically diverse training and implementation resources.

Si tengo un problema, primero tengo que pensar...
¿Cual es mi problema?



Paso 1

Y tengo que pensar en una forma de mejorarlo...
Piensa, piensa, piensa en algunas soluciones.



Paso 2

¿Qué pasaría si intento una solución?...
¿Estaría seguro?
¿Cómo se sentirían los demás?



Paso 3

Entonces...
¡Intentalo!
Si la solución no funciona, entonces tendré que pensar, pensar, pensar en otra solución.



Paso 4

Regional Pyramid Model Communities of Practice accessed and studied the Culturally Responsive Practices e-Modules developed by the National Pyramid Model Consortium. The e-modules address implicit bias and the need for adults to consider the lens through which they make meaning of children’s behavior while considering the real-life experiences of individual children in our care. Community of Practice participants endorsed the need to bring the e-Modules, paired with reflective opportunities, to Wisconsin’s Early Care and Education workforce.



Expelling Expulsion: Using the Pyramid Model to Prevent Suspensions, Expulsions, and Disciplinary Inequities in Early Childhood Programs

Need

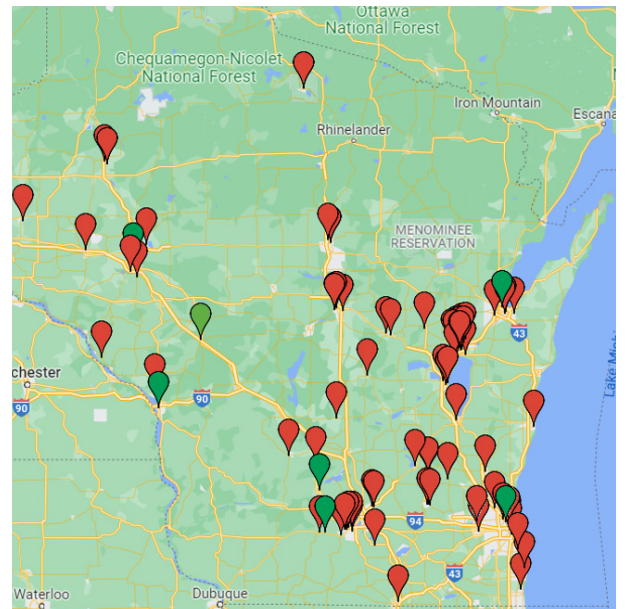
Defining and Acknowledging Quality Care and Education

Actions to address this need

We welcomed seven new Wisconsin Pyramid Model program-wide implementing sites in 2021! Program-wide implementation focuses on intense work embedding Pyramid Model practices with fidelity. Program-wide implementation sites:

- establish a shared leadership team that meets monthly to enhance policies, procedures and practices that promote collaboration, climate and consistency
- provide practice-based coaching to classroom staff so they can use evidence-based practices with intentionality
- collect, analyze and use data to celebrate accomplishments and make plans to address identified need.



Map: Pyramid Model Program-wide Implementing Sites (green pins indicate new 2021 sites)



Working to implement prevention, promotion and intervention at the program level is big, necessary work. In partnership the Department of Children and Families, WI-AIMH convened and chaired the Social and Emotional Badge/Acknowledgment Advisory group to develop two pathways to acknowledge child care programs intentionally supporting the social and emotional competencies of young children. The PM pathway will acknowledge program-wide implementing sites with evidence in the PM data system (PIDS). An “alternative” pathway will allow programs to demonstrate how they support social and emotional competencies through the use of evidence-based practices measured by the Climate of Healthy Interactions for Learning and Development (C.H.I.L.D.)

Actions *continued from previous page*

Using “crosswalks” between Pyramid Model training and Infant Mental Health Competencies, WI-AIMH created an Infant Mental Health Endorsement® Toolkit to streamline the endorsement process for attendees of Wisconsin Pyramid Model training. IMH Endorsement® acknowledges and professionalizes the field of infant/toddler caregivers.

 Infant Mental Health Endorsement® & Wisconsin Pyramid Model Toolkit	
WELCOME WISCONSIN PYRAMID MODEL PROFESSIONALS!	
Toolkit Contents WELCOME WISCONSIN PYRAMID MODEL PROFESSIONALS!1	Did you know? Professionals trained in the Wisconsin Pyramid Model may earn Endorsement® and join the largest and most recognized Infant Mental Health (IMH) credentialing system in the USA! Use this toolkit to learn more about IMH Endorsement®, the benefits it provides to Wisconsin's Pyramid Model Professionals, and how to apply to obtain this internationally recognized credential.

Supporting infants, toddlers and young children means nurturing their families. Wisconsin Pyramid Model held a Positive Solutions for Families (PSF) and Parents Interacting with Infants (PIWI) facilitator training in Spring 2021. In the fall we surveyed previous participants and identified focus group members who advised on adjustments to training and implementation support. We are collaborating with Dr. Tweety Yates, developer of the Pyramid Model family content and commit to new training with coaching support in 2022.

Holding the Holders Who Continue the Work in the Midst of Pandemic

Early Care and Education professionals met the challenges of 2021 with grace and an ongoing commitment to the critical work of providing safe and nurturing environments and using practices to support the social and emotional well-being of babies, toddlers, and preschoolers. We hold tremendous respect and admiration for the folks who are implementing the Pyramid Model. Now, more than ever intentional, strategic and responsive support is necessary!

Our efforts to support our program-wide implementation sites included:

Practice-based coaching with reflective support training

Presented by Wisconsin internal and external coaches, the trainings included real life examples of and resources for the key elements of the practice-based coaching cycle.

External coaching cadre expansion

We expanded our cadre of external coaches, providing them with training and mentoring as they supported implementation sites.

Appreciation boxes

Each and every implementation site received a box filled with PM materials, tasty treats, and fun items to share as a small gesture of gratitude for their hard work in a difficult time.

Resources and materials for using Pyramid Model strategies

We updated and expanded our website resources and shared information and materials on social media.

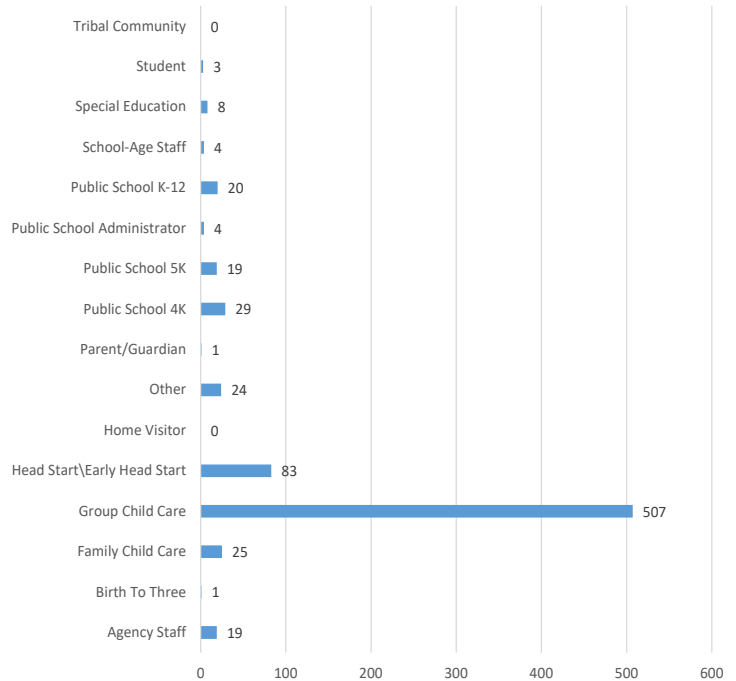


We Know the Pyramid Model is Working in Wisconsin

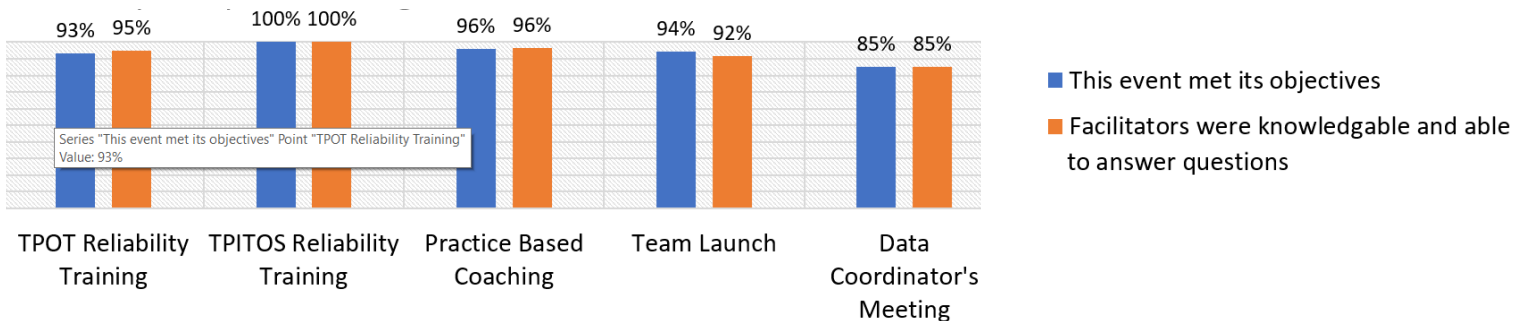
What do we mean by Wisconsin Pyramid Model coordination? How is Pyramid Model professional development impacting the services professionals provide for children and families? Consider our data.

Coordinated Professional Development:

Wisconsin Pyramid Model supports trainers from Training and Technical Assistance Agencies from around the state. Shown at right: 2021 training data from our talented statewide partners who completed 80 trainings for 747 professionals.



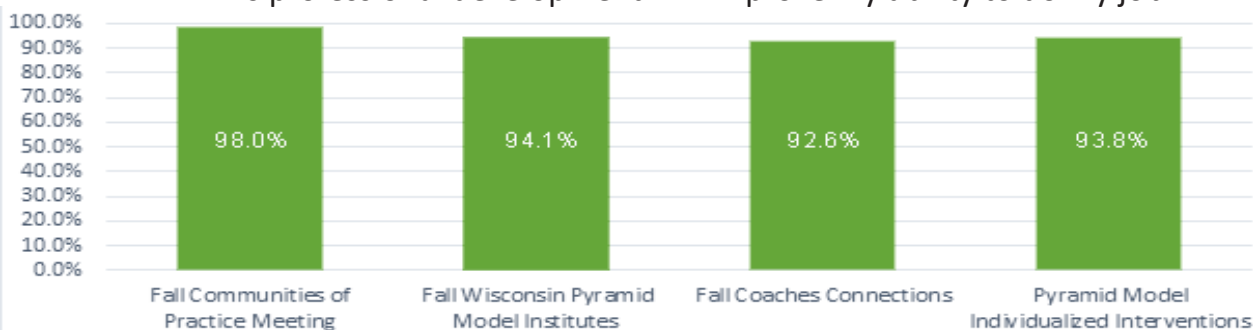
In 2021, the Wisconsin Pyramid Model provided training to **186** individuals who serve on program leadership teams. This includes professional development for administrators, coaches and data coordinators. Below is a graph showing Wisconsin Pyramid Model Implementation Academy participants who agreed with the statements shown on the chart:



In 2021, we balanced the needs of professional development with the safety and staffing needs, continuing to offer trainings both virtually, and in 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.

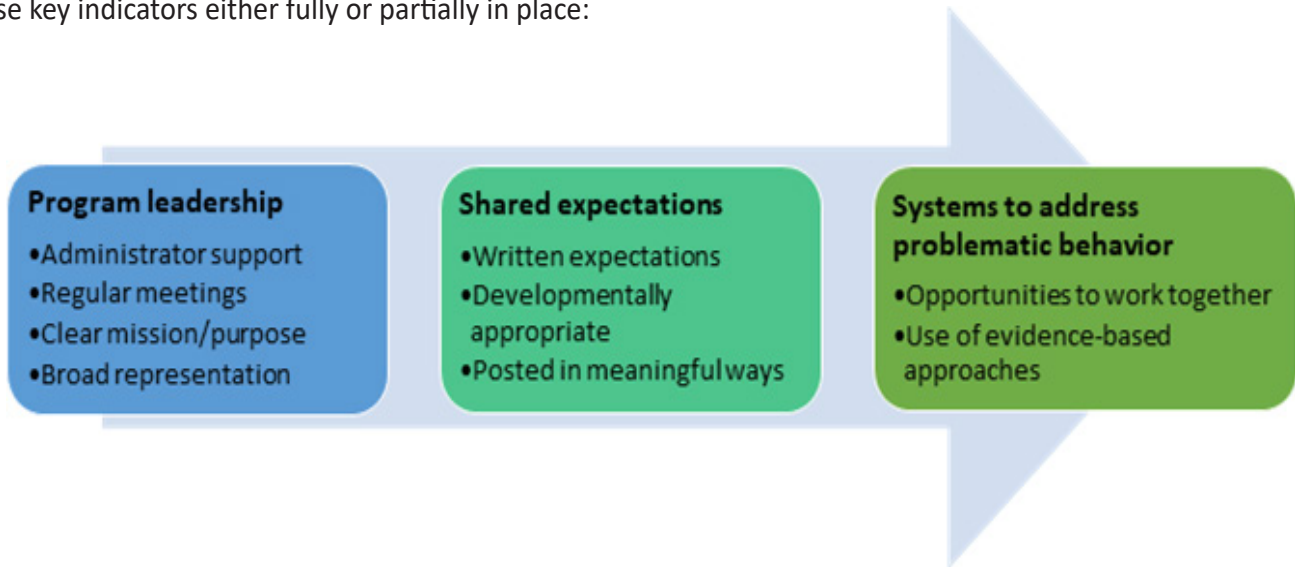
Wisconsin Pyramid Model Implementation Academy participants who agreed with the statement:

This professional development will improve my ability to do my job



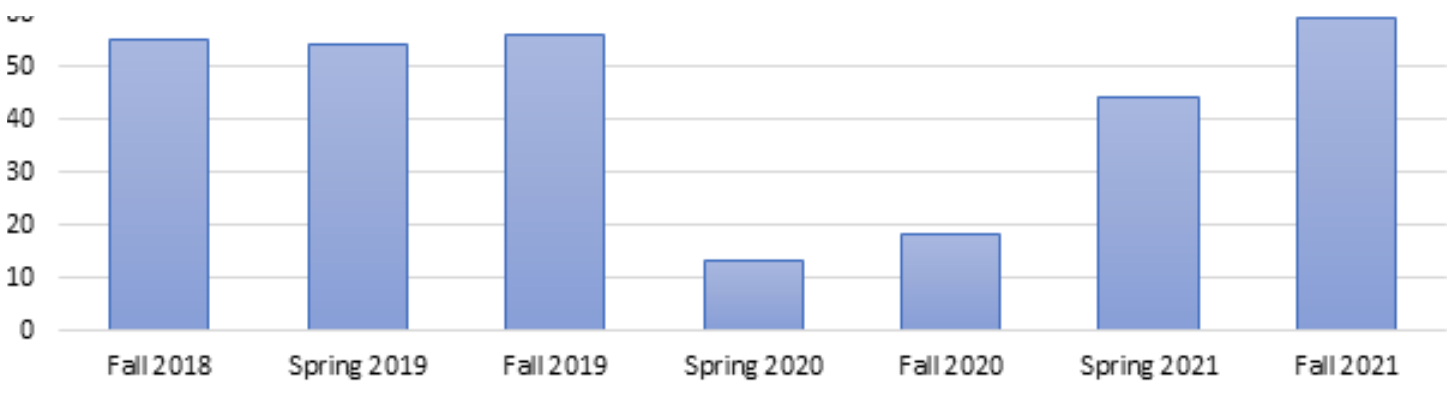
Support for program-wide implementation of the Pyramid Model framework:

2021 remained a difficult year to operate an early care and education program. Rolling classroom closures and enrollment due to COVID-19 and the uncertainty of staff availability forced program leaders and teachers to be flexible and creative. Despite these obstacles, program leadership teams continued meeting and working to create the context for teachers to use practices to help children and families thrive, guided by the program rating on the Benchmarks of Quality. 100% of programs that rated their work using the Benchmarks of Quality in 2021 reported they had these key indicators either fully or partially in place:



Program-wide implementation includes completing classroom observation and providing follow-up practice-based coaching. The COVID pandemic and staffing shortages made observations nearly impossible and remained difficult in 2021. Because of their importance, programs found ways to reestablish coaching observations.

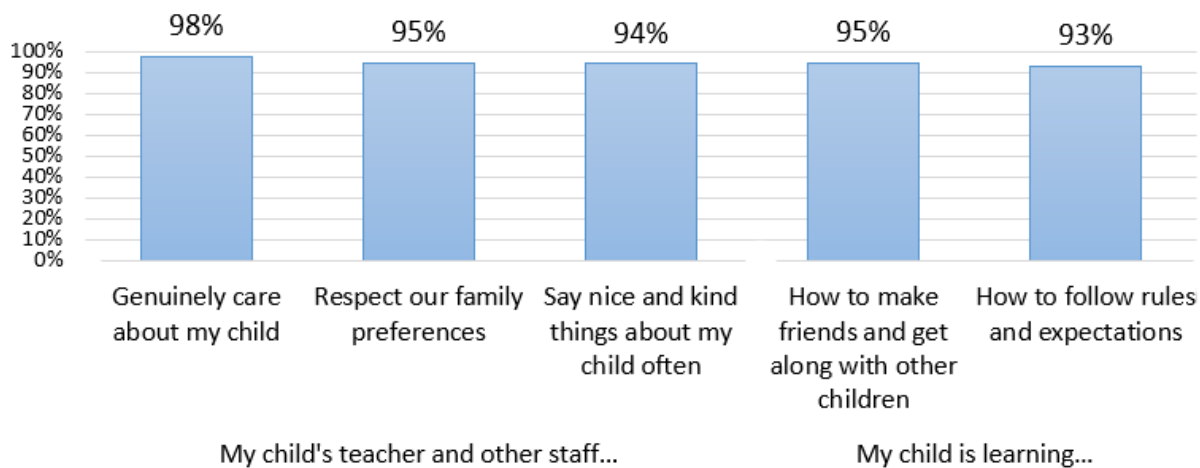
Number of TPOT and TPITOS Observations Completed



Impacting outcomes for children and families

In 2021, twenty-one Pyramid Model programs piloted the use of an updated Wisconsin Pyramid Model Family Survey with over 500 families responding. The survey measures family perceptions about the use of evidence-based practices promoted by the Pyramid Model within their child's program and classroom.

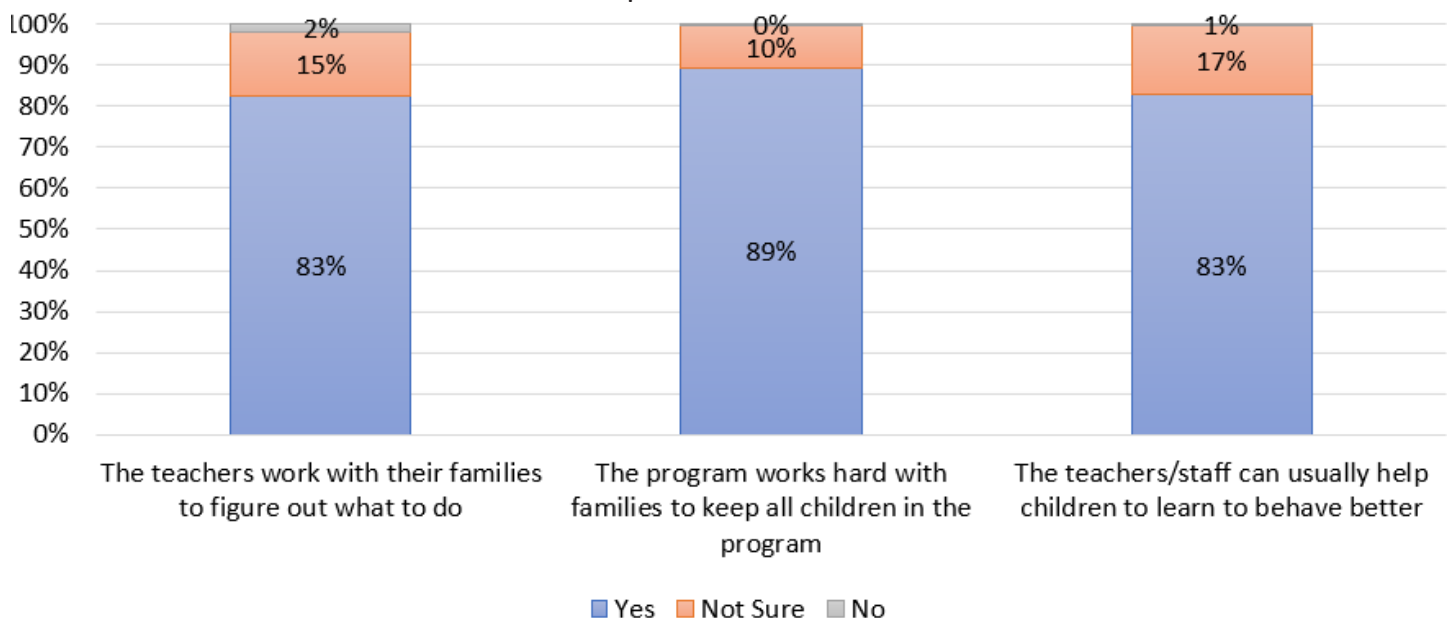
Wisconsin Pyramid Model Family Survey Responses indicating agreement



A key goal of program-wide implementation is reducing suspension and expulsion of young children by developing and using strategies that support each child's learning. Family survey results indicate the overwhelming majority of families feel that Pyramid Model programs are collaborating with families to better build children's social and emotional development and learning when problem behavior occurs.

2021 Family Survey Responses

When children have problem behavior in the classroom



State Leadership

Core Team

The Core Team consists of leaders most connected to the Benchmarks of Quality action items. The Core Team prioritizes actions, informs procedures and connects work related to implementing the Pyramid Model framework with other initiatives in Wisconsin.

Amy Alt– City of Madison Accreditation
Julie Betchka– WI-AIMH
Abbe Braun– Supporting Families Together Association
Jillian Clemens– DCF, Head Start State Collaboration
Connie Dunlap– Supporting Families Together Association
Jenny Durand– WI-AIMH
Erin Gernetzke– DCF, YoungStar
Marisa Kahler –WI-AIMH Pyramid Model Data Coordinator
Sherry Kimball– DPI, Teaching and Learning/ Early Learning
Yuliana Manriquez– Wisconsin RtI Center
Christine Moldenhauer– Wisconsin Registry
Lana Nenide– WI-AIMH
Jess Nichols– DPI-Early Childhood
Jeanette Paulson– Wisconsin Early Childhood Association
Jason Rahn– DCF, YoungStar
Eva Shaw– DPI, Special Education
Tiffany Swain– WI Early Childhood Collaborating Partners

Advisory Team

The Advisory Team is comprised of individuals who lead work connected to statewide implementation of the framework. This Advisory team meets in Fall and again in Spring to build awareness, advise on actions and celebrate accomplishments.

Emilie Amundson– Secretary- Department of Children and Families (DCF)
John Ashley– Wisconsin School Board Association
Erin Arango-Escalante– DCF, Division of Early Care and Education
Jen Bailey– Reach Dane
Becky Buck– WI-AIMH
Tina Crave– Greater Watertown Community Health Foundation
Beth Herman– DPI, Student Services Prevention and Wellness
Delechia Johnson– WI-AIMH
Joanna Lickel– WI Early Childhood Collaborating Partners
Tarasa Lown– Greater Watertown Community Health Foundation
Jennie Mauer– Wisconsin Head Start Association
Kath McGurk– DCF Child Care Licensing and Certification
Rebecca Murray– Wisconsin Child Abuse and Neglect Prevention
Randy Neve– Marshfield Clinic
Suzette Preston– Appleton Community 4K
Katie Roberts– WI Technical College System
Tina Ruckdashel– WI-AIMH
Courtney Salzar– Wisconsin Family Assistance Center for Education, Training & Support
Jennifer Skibba– Verona Area First Five Years
Staci Sontoski– Wisconsin Child Welfare Professional Development System
Loretta Swanson– UW- Oshkosh Head Start
Angela Todd– Waukesha County Technical College Child Development Center
Dea Wright– City of Milwaukee’s Office of Early Childhood Initiatives

Funding



Wisconsin Department of
Children and Families

The Wisconsin PM is primarily funded by the Department of Children and Families (DCF).

Additional funding is provided by the Greater Watertown Community Health Foundation and the Roots and Wings Foundation.

Roots & Wings
FOUNDATION

Greater Watertown Community
Health Foundation

Wisconsin Pyramid Model is also supported by funds from communities that provide resources for local implementation and through in-kind support from agencies employing members of the Core and Advisory Teams.



back row: Julie Betchka, Jenny Durand, Lana Nenide, Marisa Kahler
front row: Tina Ruckdashel, Delechia Johnson, Becky Buck