MTSS-B and the Pyramid Model

Pyramid Model and MTSS-B: A continuum of supports

The early childhood Pyramid Model and the K-12 NH MTSS-B framework are complementary systems for supporting positive behavioral outcomes for children/students. Alignment and coordination between the two frameworks can support successful transitions to kindergarten, impacting academic achievement,[1] prosocial behaviors,[2] family engagement,[3] and readiness for school. The Pyramid Model and MTSS-B share the following core components:

✓ Infrastructure building through system-wide policy development and collaboration

✓ Process coaching to build internal capacity, support teams, and monitor progress

✓ Teaming structures to implement, monitor, and adjust strategies

✓ Data monitoring and data-informed decision making

✓ Use of evidence-based practices

✓ Universal supports for all children/students

✓ A continuum of additional prevention-focused supports for at-risk children/students

✓ Engagement of parents and caregivers in decision-making processes

What is the Pyramid Model?

The Pyramid Model for Supporting Social Emotional Competence in Infants and Young Children (Pyramid Model) is a positive behavioral intervention and support framework for young children from infancy through Pre-K. The Pyramid Model creates infrastructure to establish an effective early childhood workforce; assists early childhood educators in creating a positive, nurturing learning environment; provides children in need with targeted skill development; and connects children with persistent challenging behaviors to additional supports.[4] The Pyramid Model can be adopted and implemented across early childhood care and education (ECCE) settings including public and private center-based programs, Head Start programs, early intervention, and special education programs. Adoption of the framework may occur at the school, community, and/or state levels. In 2017, New Hampshire became the 28th Pyramid Model state, with the adoption of a State Leadership Team and implementation sites.

The need for appropriate behavioral support

The Pyramid Model shares a critical foundational concept with NH's K-12 Multi-Tiered System of Supports for Behavioral Health and Wellness (MTSS-B): promoting children's prosocial behavior decreases suspensions and expulsions and ultimately, improves academic engagement and achievement.[5] Children who experience suspension and expulsion from ECCE programs are at greater risk of later exclusionary discipline, academic failure, high school dropout, and incarceration.[6] Research has documented the Pre-K expulsion rate at 3.2 times the rate for K-12 students.[7] Public Pre-K data reveals that black children (especially black male children), male children, children with a behavioral health diagnosis,[8] English language learners, and children with at least one known adverse childhood experience[9] are involved in a disproportionate number of exclusionary discipline events.[10] The removal of children from ECCE settings prohibits their engagement in critical learning during the brain's fastest growth period, hinders their behavioral development, and decreases exposure to enriching experiences that contribute to later academic success.

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How can we integrate our MTSS-B and Pyramid Model efforts?

Districts and schools implementing MTSS-B can leverage their knowledge and experience to support Pyramid Model implementation, ensuring a thoughtful integration of the two frameworks to support children from birth to high school completion. The MTSS-B District-Community Leadership Team (DCLT) should identify ECCE partners during their **Community Resource Mapping** process. Including ECCE partners will help to proactively identify emerging community needs, align data collection and use across systems, improve the transition to kindergarten, and support sharing of resources. Consider the following ways to collaborate with ECCE:

✓ Identify ECCE partners/sites that MTSS-B planning teams can connect with to expand their knowledge of local Pyramid Model practice

✓ Consider shared membership between Pyramid Model Leadership Teams (PMLTs) and the DCLT

✓ Create an intentional feedback loop for sharing of data and learning between existing PMLTs and the DCLT

✓ Explore ways to include ECCE partners in MTSS-B strategic/action planning efforts

✓ Explore and brainstorm shared issues/concerns revealed through disciplinary data

✓ Generate shared opportunities for authentic family engagement

Additional resources

The Pyramid Model Consortium promotes dissemination, sustainability, scale-up and high-fidelity use of the Pyramid Model, offering training, implementation support, fidelity and other data tools: https://www.pyramidmodel.org/

The National Center for Pyramid Model Innovations assists states and programs with Pyramid Model implementation, with numerous online resources: https://challengingbehavior.org/

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