



CSEFEL/TACSEI State Team Report Alaska (February 2011)

The Alaska TACSEI Pyramid Partnership is in the second year of existence, the first year being one of planning and training and the second being implementation. After eight months of “building the plane” from November 2009 through July 2010, we are now FLYING IT. Below are the highlights of our year from July 2010 – March 2011.

Leadership Team Highlights and Accomplishments

- 1) Conducted Strategic Planning and Implementation sessions with the Alaska TACSEI Leadership Team.
 - a. Face-to-face meetings were held in July 2010, November 2010, and February 2011.
 - b. Eight monthly teleconferences were held that offered opportunities to hear from our Working Groups and make data based decisions.
- 2) Organized “Working Group” teams so that Alaska TACSEI Leadership Team members and Master Cadre members are serving together on Working Groups including:
 - a. Demonstration Site
 - b. Training
 - c. Coaches
 - d. Parent / Family Engagement
 - e. PBS / Behavior Specialist
 - f. Internal Program Evaluation
 - g. Sustainability / Leadership / Master Cadre

- 3) Refined Vision and Mission Statements.
- 4) Developed a Logic Model that reflects our work toward meeting our Vision outcome.
- 5) Created four Quarterly Reports that included the work of each of the Working Groups and the Demonstration Sites implementation.
- 6) Conducted four (quarterly) Statewide Call-In teleconferences that were informal Information sessions to share “happenings” with interested programs and individuals.
- 7) Developed an Internal Program Evaluation for Alaska TACSEI including protocols, timelines, and tools to use across the programs.
- 8) Conducted numerous Alaska TACSEI presentations at significant conferences statewide.

Demonstration Sites Highlights and Accomplishments

Following the July 2010 Program Wide Implementation training and strategy sessions, the Demonstration Sites and their Leadership Teams returned home to achieve exceptional accomplishments.

- All three Demonstration Sites are up and running:
 - Anchorage - Denali Family Services – Little Steps CDC
 - Dillingham - Bristol Bay Head Start
 - Fairbanks – ACCA Infant Learning program, North Star Borough School District Pre-School and Fairbanks Native Association Early Head Start
- Demonstration Sites have organized their Leadership Teams, trained all staff on the Preschool Pyramid Modules, assigned coaches to their targeted classrooms, began implementing the curriculum, and gathered data along the way.
- Local accomplishments have been outstanding:
 - Teams are working much more streamlined and cohesively
 - Cultural sensitivity has been enhanced in the curriculum
 - Coaches are becoming an integral part of the daily work at each program
 - Reflection on the work is beginning to become a standard practice for teams
 - Individual Master Cadres are being tapped for their content area specialty
 - Children are responding positively to the new “structure” of the environment



Training Highlights and Accomplishments

The Alaska Part C state office, with support from the TACSEI Pyramid Partnership, has negotiated with the DHSS Child Care Programs Office to provide funds that support trainers through an established statewide organization called **thread** (*Child Care Resource and Referral*). An Anchorage **thread** staff member, who is also an Alaska TACSEI Master Cadre member, coordinates the Alaska TACSEI trainer and Master Cadre member pool. Currently the Alaska TACSEI Pyramid Partnership has 25 trainers, all of who have attended and completed Phase I and Phase II Pyramid Model training (February and April 2010). The Trainer cadre is connected to the Trainer Working Group for ongoing support and quarterly teleconferencing. The Master Cadres are connected to the Master Cadre Working Group for ongoing support and quarterly teleconferencing.

At this time, there are requests for Pyramid Model training from various programs within **ten** communities. **Seven to ten** Trainers and Master Cadre members have been training consistently on the Pyramid Modules in their own and other communities.

Coaching Highlights and Accomplishments

The Alaska TACSEI Pyramid Partnership has recruited a coaches cadre. We embedded the coach selection into the Demonstration Site Request for Proposals (RFP) with hopes that programs would internally identify their own capacity and skilled individual to become the coach. Our Master Cadre members have also been available for access to coaches within their community.

Since October 2010, additional coaching support and guidance has been offered to the Alaska TACSEI Coaching Coordinator from Neal Horen, Georgetown University, Ron Roybal, University of Colorado-Denver, and Mary Louise Hemmeter, Vanderbilt University. The Coaching Coordinator in turn provides coaching support and guidance to the Demonstration Site coaches on a frequent basis through teleconferencing, face-to-face and site visit observations. The Alaska TACSEI coaches are encouraged to connect with each other and have been offered opportunities to meet face-to-face twice this year.

A Coaching Strategic Plan was developed that includes coaching protocols, timelines and tools to support coaches in the field.

Parent / Family Engagement Highlights and Accomplishments

The Positive Solutions for Parents curriculum has been enhanced using the framework from Strengthening Families Alaska (SFI). Termed a “work in progress” by its creators, the Alaska TACSEI Parent/Family Engagement Working Group are nearly done with the training product. On April 20-22, 2011, the Alaska TACSEI Trainers, Master Cadres, parents and Leadership Team members will be participating in a “train the trainers” event that will focus on two days of Strengthening Families Framework/Stronger Together curriculum training and one day of Positive Solutions for Parents training. Following the training, the newly trained will connect with the Demonstration Sites and local communities that have already received Pyramid Model training.



It is the intent for sustainability that the Alaska TACSEI Parent/Family Engagement process will align with the Pyramid Model so that once a community commits to using the Pyramid Model they in turn are agreeing to use the SFI/Positive Solutions model as well.

PBS/Behavior Specialist Highlights and Accomplishments

The Alaska TACSEI Leadership has consistently had two members of the statewide PBS system as members on our team. On a monthly basis, these two individuals keep the Leadership Team abreast of the statewide movement and offer creative ways to include Alaska TACSEI as a partner in community adoption of the Pyramid Model.

Beginning in January, the focus turned to creating training for Behavior Specialists as an added incentive to increase skills in social and emotional development and early childhood mental health practices. Offered to a few who have self-selected to go through the rigorous process of becoming a Behavior Specialist, Alaska TACSEI has enlisted the help of Glenn Dunlap, University of South Florida, to assist with the formation and implementation of this course. The initial session will begin April 21-22, 2011. The plan is for the course to continue through December 2011. Master Cadres have been encouraged to expand their areas of expertise by attending and completing this course.

Internal Program Evaluation Highlights and Accomplishments

Internal program evaluation has been discussed since the origination of the Alaska TACSEI Pyramid Partnership. Over the past year, the Internal Program Evaluation Working Group have created an evaluation plan that includes internal program evaluation timelines, protocols and tools that have aligned with the University of Southern Florida evaluation protocols, timelines and tools. Our Internal Program Evaluation Working Group has been active in assisting the Alaska TACSEI Leadership Team and the Demonstration Site Leadership Teams in making data based decisions.

Sustainability / Leadership / Master Cadre Highlights and Accomplishments

The College of Education at the University of Alaska has begun to embed the Pyramid Model into their Early Childhood Education (ECE) curriculums, School of Social Work training academies, and into local university affiliated programs. Following the Pyramid Module training in February and April 2010 of more than 86 individuals statewide, the word is spreading via competently trained Pyramid Model trainers and Master Cadres.

Every day there is one more person who “understands” and embraces the Alaska TACSEI Pyramid Partnership and our work within the Pyramid Model. That is an accomplishment of ultimate proportions in our state!

Much of our sustainability work for Alaska TACSEI has been around engaging administrators, grant funders and financial support groups in awareness and understanding of the vision and mission of the Alaska TACSEI Pyramid Partnership. The sustainability plan also embeds leadership strategies and innovative leadership practices as a part of maintaining professional leadership teams necessary to sustain the efforts of Alaska TACSEI Pyramid Partnership.



One subtle but important sustainability measure taken has been that whenever leadership teams meet, trainings occur and meetings in general take place that are hosted by Alaska TACSEI, there is a tone set first by sharing the vision and mission statement of Alaska TACSEI Pyramid Partnership; thereby creating an environment for the relationship building to occur and sustain. It all begins with setting the tone and model for relationships.

Supports That Have Helped To Reach These Accomplishments

First and foremost, the support of the Part C and Section 619 programs and their coordinators has been paramount. Secondly, the support from the Demonstration Site communities and their Leadership Teams has created pathways for the Pyramid Model to be practiced and examined of “cultural fit.” Thirdly, the driving force, commitment and synergy of the Alaska TACSEI Pyramid Partnership Leadership Team have brought this project from an idea through to a “way of being.” Initially, the national TACSEI team provided guided care and tending of our processes; now 17 months later, we have the honor of inviting our national TACSEI leaders to our meetings and state events to “demonstrate our success and pride” in what we are accomplishing. We thank them for their patience and insight.

Issues and Barriers

Alaska TACSEI Pyramid Partnership issues and barriers are as varied as the communities where the Demonstration Sites are located. Geographically, we struggle with just getting on location due to weather and flight conditions. We have limited access via roads to seven of our Demonstration Site programs in the Bristol Bay area, but this doesn’t stop us; it makes us stronger and more alert to innovative ways to serve our children and families.

Training via webinars and audio-conferencing has been frustrating. When hands-on experiences are needed, we must create opportunities for program staff to learn and share their understandings via videoconferencing. Alaska TACSEI is moving toward this model of conducting training and coaching methods.

The Alaska TACSEI Pyramid Partnership Leadership Team has created a meeting protocol to inform, discuss and determine a decision for any issues brought forward. Following each meeting, the Working Groups convene their own teleconference times to continue the discussion and share in the data based decisions being made on a consistent basis. At the time of this printing, a discussion board type of mechanism is being developed to help further the conversations and discussions around issues and barriers we may be facing. Through each obstacle, our teams have found opportunities to grow and learn.



Alaska TACSEI Pyramid Partnership Vision

OUR VISION is that all Alaskan environments for young children and their families have strong social and emotional foundations enhanced and strengthened through a caring network of professionals, parents, and community members.

Alaska TACSEI Pyramid Partnership Mission

OUR MISSION for the Alaska TACSEI Pyramid Partnership is to design, implement with fidelity and sustain the Pyramid Model, a system of professional development practices for Early Learning professionals that consistently and collaboratively address the social and emotional needs of all Alaskan children birth-five and their families.

Members of the Alaska TACSEI Pyramid Partnership Leadership Team designed the pyramid pictured at right over the course of 18 months. The design reflects the gifts they bring to the team.

