

Community-Wide Implementation of the Pyramid Model

Community-wide implementation of the Pyramid Model refers to a collaborative effort by cross-agency groups to implement the model across service agencies and programs in their community. Community implementation is typically guided by a team of individuals from early childhood programs, family groups, and other service providers who are deeply invested in promoting young children's social, emotional, and behavioral development. The community team defines what is meant by "community." Community might be defined as a district, town, county, service district, or other configuration that spans multiple programs serving young children. Community teams promote the implementation of the Pyramid Model by collaborating to raise awareness, identify community needs, offer training and coaching, share resources, support families, and evaluate outcomes. In many states, community teams might also be established by or connected to a State Pyramid Model Leadership Team (SLT) that guides statewide implementation of the Pyramid Model.

Community teams can

- Promote the use of the Pyramid Model
- Provide community-wide professional development
- Coordinate and seek funding
- Provide technical assistance (e.g., coaching, consultation, behavior support) for implementation
- Provide family resources and support
- Establish implementation sites
- Evaluate implementation and outcomes

Common Components of a Community-Wide Approach

Community Leadership Team

A community leadership team (CLT) brings together community members and key partners to build a shared vision and awareness of the critical need for promoting young children's social-emotional development and the Pyramid Model. The CLT facilitates sharing information and resources among different programs and agencies. Community teams also provide guidance on policies and procedures for implementing the Pyramid Model with fidelity and ensuring that no single program is left to do the work alone. Membership of community teams consist of key community partners, including program administrators, family members, practitioners, program implementation coach, and other community partners focused on supporting young children in guiding the scale-up, sustainability, and collaborative effort to implement Pyramid Model practices (e.g., Head Start, childcare, school district, early childhood mental health, early interventionists). Community teams convene monthly and use data to inform their decisions and guide their actions.

Funding

The CLT identifies and coordinates fiscal resources to address implementation expenses and determine sustainable funding for implementation across the community. Funding costs include supporting implementation sites with training, provision of coaching, and materials for implementing social-emotional practices. The CLT identifies cost-shared, braided, layered, or coordinated funding with other community partners.

Communication and Visibility

The CLT actively spreads awareness and builds support for the Pyramid Model through presentations to recruit implementation sites. The CLT ensures that the broader community is informed about its progress and achievements through regular updates using websites, newsletters, or community events. Communication efforts also include gathering feedback from staff, coaches, and sites about the progress and outcomes of Pyramid Model implementation.

Implementation Sites

The CLT uses a structured implementation and scale-up approach to expand the reach of the Pyramid Model within the community. The CLT develops readiness criteria and the process to recruit and select new Pyramid Model implementation programs. The CLT creates agreements with sites to participate in the initiative and supports the community to highlight the work to other programs, policymakers, and invested partners.

Family Engagement

Family engagement is a critical element of community-wide implementation. Families are members of the CLT, and the CLT supports programs with resources and guidance to engage families effectively. This guidance is focused on developing partnerships with families and includes developing various procedures for gathering family input and feedback on their experience with Pyramid Model implementation.

Behavior Support

The CLT provides support to programs in developing effective child guidance policies and eliminating the use of exclusionary and harsh discipline practices. Community-wide implementation encourages using the Pyramid Model to promote social and emotional skills and prevent challenging behaviors. The CLT identifies community resources for behavior support, mental health services, and other specialized services to assist children with persistent challenging behaviors.

Professional Development

The CLT uses program implementation coaches to coordinate and deliver high-quality professional development to program leadership teams and practitioners. The CLT ensures program implementation coaches are skilled as trainers and technical assistance providers and have the competence in the Pyramid Model to effectively guide program leadership teams in program-wide implementation. The CLT provides ongoing training and supports implementation sites in delivering Practice-Based Coaching to ensure the implementation of Pyramid Model practices.

Monitoring Implementation and Outcomes

The CLT ensures that programs have the necessary resources and training to use data effectively. The CLT also establishes a process for collecting and reviewing local data from implementation sites to improve outcomes for children, families, practitioners, and the community. The CLT produces an evaluation report on the progress and impact of the Pyramid Model and celebrates accomplishments with community partners and implementation sites.

Community Team Spotlight – Madison, Wisconsin

The BE HEART (Building, Empowering, Honoring Emotions and Relationships Together) Madison Community Team was established in 2023 to support young children’s social and emotional development in Madison, Wisconsin. The community team is facilitated and coordinated in partnership with the City of Madison Community and Economic Development Child Care staff and Madison Metropolitan School District Early Learning staff, who formed a strong foundation of ten core members representing key stakeholders. The core team further developed relationships with a continuously growing group of agencies interested in focused community-wide Pyramid Model work. Together, they created a mission and a clear vision for the community team: *Our community will invest in implementing culturally sensitive and evidence-based practices that promote positive social, emotional, and behavioral outcomes of young children. We will actively nurture young children’s social and emotional competence, their families, and the adults who support them.*

The roles and responsibilities of BE HEART Madison include coordinating professional development and training opportunities within the community. The team coordinates and provides Program Implementation Coaches to support local program-wide leadership teams and provides support for practitioner coaching at local programs. The team guides child guidance policies and helps create opportunities for family engagement, including offering

Positive Solutions for Families within the city of Madison. The team uses the Community-Wide Benchmarks of Quality to develop community-wide action plans and collects and reviews data to make decisions.



Amy Alt, co-coordinator of the BE HEART community leadership team, describes how community-wide implementation aids the state to sustain and scale up the Pyramid Model throughout Wisconsin. She reports, “At the community level, we can support our programs with different funding opportunities than potentially our state has access to and develop people within our communities to do the work.” Implementation of the Pyramid Model reaches the entire community, with program-wide and classroom implementation and coaching in public preschool and 4K classrooms, childcare, and a newly launched pilot in family childcare homes. The emphasis on creating a community that invests in the practitioners, families, and children within the city of Madison sends a vibrant message that is embodied in the mission of Be Heart: *We must rally together as a community, working in deep and ongoing partnership with children, families, and community members to disrupt the barriers that stand in our children’s way of success.*

To learn more about Madison’s approach to community-wide implementation, visit the [City of Madison Community Development web page](#).

State Spotlight - Oregon

The state of Oregon approaches the implementation of the Pyramid Model with a focus on developing strong support systems in local communities. The Oregon Early Childhood Inclusion Initiative (OECI) is a collaboration among agencies across the state, led by the Oregon Department of Education (ODE) and the Department of Early Learning and Care (DELC), that supports the implementation of two quality improvement frameworks, the Pyramid Model and Indicators of High Quality Inclusion. This approach allows community leadership teams to be inclusive and representative of the community demographics, including team members from various perspectives. Communities define themselves, but are often based on county lines or a cluster of counties and aligned with Early Learning Hubs, Child Care Resource and Referral (CCR&Rs), and Education Service Districts. There are currently nine communities that encompass nineteen counties engaged in community-wide implementation.

Community teams within Oregon play a critical role in advancing Pyramid Model implementation. They use the Community Indicators and Elements of High-Quality Inclusion and the Community-Wide Benchmarks of Quality to assess current practices. This data informs their goal setting and the development of a comprehensive implementation plan, facilitating the long-term sustainability and broad adoption of the Pyramid Model across the community. Community teams convene monthly to review the plan and make necessary adjustments, ensuring responsive progress.

Implementing the Pyramid Model across communities has resulted in positive outcomes in Oregon, including stronger collaboration among partners aligned under a shared vision and mission. This community-wide approach also expands access to joint professional development opportunities, increases access to program coaching, and enhances the skills and supports available to classroom practitioners. Lastly, community-wide implementation has improved the teaming among early childhood programs and special education providers, creating a more integrated and supportive system for young learners.

To learn more about Oregon's approach to community-wide implementation, view the [2025 OECI Impact Report](#).

Who serves on community teams in Oregon?

- Early childhood programs: Child care centers, Head Start/Early Head Start, Oregon Prenatal to Kindergarten (OPK), Preschool Promise, school districts, private preschools, and in-home child care
- Early Intervention and Early Childhood Special Education (EI/ECSE)
- Early Learning Hub
- Child Care Resource and Referral (CCR&R)
- Program Implementation Coaches
- Local Tribes
- Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health Consultants
- Community representatives
- Families
- Family advocacy programs