



Promoting Social Emotional Competence in California's Young Children

CA CSEFEL TEACHING PYRAMID ENHANCEMENTS



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The TEACHING PYRAMID is the name used by CA CSEFEL (California Collaborative on the Social Emotional Foundations for Early Learning) to describe the training and technical assistance for the approach developed by the national Center on the Social Emotional Foundations for Early Learning (CSEFEL). The *Teaching Pyramid* is a systematic framework of evidence-based, user-friendly practices to help early childhood educators meet the needs of the growing number of children with challenging behaviors and mental health concerns. The *Teaching Pyramid* tiered approach incorporates practices and strategies – including early childhood Positive Behavior Support – to promote healthy social-emotional development, support children's appropriate behavior, prevent challenging behavior, and address problematic behavior. This document explains the history, development, and adaptations that make up the *CA CSEFEL Teaching Pyramid*.

History of CSEFEL in California

- △ The TEACHING PYRAMID initially came to California through the Office of Head Start and Office of Child Care, Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families. Training and information sessions were held by the regional Head Start T & TA agency.
- △ National CSEFEL and WestEd jointly trained sites in three counties (2005-2007) on the Teaching Pyramid preschool modules as part of the First 5 California Special Needs Project.
- △ WestEd continued training on the Teaching Pyramid preschool and infant/toddler modules, adding coaching between modules, convening a leadership team that met during the training period, and making modifications based on training and coaching experiences. The modifications have contributed to the California adaptations. WestEd is currently leading the statewide activities.
- △ Head Start continued to share National CSEFEL Teaching Pyramid information and ideas through training and conferences.
- △ Partnership with the National Center at the state level started in 2009 with a broad interagency leadership team convened by the Child Development Division, California Department of Education. The state leadership team continues to meet, though the national partnership ended in 2012.
- △ WestEd shared enhancements and modifications with the statewide leadership team and made additional adaptations in partnership with the California Department of Education, Early Learning and Care Division (formerly the Child Development Division).

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- △ The Center for Excellence in Child Development at UC Davis led the adaptation of CSEFEL Teaching Pyramid modules 1 and 2 for use with family child care providers. Since 2011, locally held trainings of CA CSEFEL Teaching Pyramid for Family Child Care have been offered to providers throughout the state in multiple language (Spanish, Mandarin, Cantonese, and Russian).

California Enhancements

- △ Created a **professional development process** that includes:
- One-day **trainings** for the five distinct modules **spread out over several months**.
 - **Module 1a:** Building Relationships
 - **Module 1b:** Creating Supportive Environments
 - **Module 2:** Social-Emotional Teaching Strategies
 - **Module 3a:** Intensive Individualized Intervention – Identifying the Function Behind Behavior
 - **Module 3b:** Intensive Individualized Intervention – Developing a Plan of Action
 - Created an accompanying Teaching Pyramid Training Binder with all materials color-coded to match the color of the tier of the Pyramid. Includes the PowerPoint™ slides, additional handouts, activities, and articles written by WestEd staff to support key concepts.
 - A **Leadership Team** that meets throughout the training process and beyond to work on sustainability activities including revision of policies and procedures and planning for implementation. They have six focused meetings during the initial year of training and are able to participate in county-wide leadership team meetings quarterly in subsequent implementation years with a focus on the Benchmarks of Quality (also CA adapted).
 - **External** and **internal coaching** following every module session to support implementation/practical application and help teaching staff understand the conceptual underpinnings behind many of the strategies. Coaches debrief with entire classroom teams.
 - **Community of Practice** opportunities online for programs to continue to share experiences and deepen their implementation.
 - Ongoing activities to increase sustainability including **partner implementation sites, Going Deeper** training sessions, and an **annual CA CSEFEL Symposium**.
- △ Aligned materials with **California Early Learning & Development System** and included items and references from various documents in that system such as the Foundations, Desired Results Developmental Profile, and Curriculum Frameworks.
- △ Incorporated key principles from the **Program for Infant/Toddler Care (PITC)** into the *CA CSEFEL Teaching Pyramid for Infants and Toddlers*. The PITC Six Essential Policies are specifically included in Module 1b.

- △ Increased focus, during the module training and coaching sessions, on **self-reflection** and the **teacher's emotional experience**, including cultural beliefs, values, and perceptions.
- △ Encouraged participants, based on recognizing that the *CA CSEFEL Teaching Pyramid* **promotes a change in the way of approaching behavior**, to actively examine how the information being taught may replace or compete with earlier held assumptions and beliefs throughout the training. A visual cue appears on each page of the training PowerPoint™ where this may occur to help participants recognize the new way of thinking.
- △ Intentionally included **early childhood mental health concepts**, particularly the parallel process, attuning to the emotional experience of the child, the internal working model of the self, secure attachment, and co-regulation.
- △ Replaced the strategic use of “**praise**” with that of **positive, descriptive acknowledgement (PDA)** to promote intrinsic motivation and self-understanding in children, in other words, giving the “credit” to children for their efforts, attempts, and accomplishments.
- △ Continued to expand and develop the concept of **Expectations** as the “why” (the reason behind) of classroom rules, which are examples of what to do to meet the expectations.
- △ Educated participants about **brain development** and linked research as a way of understanding the importance of the concepts and strategies.
- △ Revised and streamlined forms and materials to make them build on one another and be **more teacher-friendly** (*for example, changed the Behavior Incident report to a Behavior Observation Report, which also replaced separate behavior observation cards*).
- △ **Removed references** to Time-Out and physical restraint.
- △ Adapted several **scripted stories**: *Tucker Turtle* (adding more verbiage regarding the identification of emotions behind the strong feelings), illustrated the story (rather than using clip art), added a “female” protagonist as an alternate story (*Sonia Snail Takes Time to Tuck and Think*), revised *SuperFriend* to focus on two friendship skills—turn-taking and flexibility.
- △ Added additional strategies for managing strong emotions in **Module 2**, including **visual references** to alternative ways to manage **strong emotions**.
- △ Expanded problem-solving steps to include a specific **systematic conflict resolution** process in **Module 2**.
- △ Revised the content of **Module 3b** to focus on teacher use of the **Behavior Observation Report (BOR)** form for support planning, including practice with an adapted version of the **Routines Based Support Guide**.

- △ **Moved** the case studies and development of **behavior support plans** to a separate training session (called the **TOP OF THE PYRAMID**), which is targeted to leadership teams and professionals involved in the development of the plans.

The overall focus is on understanding the concepts behind the strategies, which will increase administrators' and teachers' **confidence and competence** in promoting social emotional development and addressing challenging behavior.

Currently, the *CA CSEFEL Teaching Pyramid* training and technical assistance professional development packages being used across California include:

- △ A **Preschool** version (for children ages 2^{1/2} years through 5 years),
- △ An **Infant/Toddler** version (for children birth to age 3 years),
- △ A **Family Coaching for Home Visitors and/or Early Interventionists** version (for home visitors such as Early Head Start serving children, including children with special needs birth to age 3 years served by early intervention programs),
- △ A **Family Child Care** version (with a focus on mixed ages) conducted by WestEd which is an expansion of the *Family Child Care at Its Best* training, and
- △ A **Kindergarten/Early Primary** version (Currently focused on Kindergarten and Transitional Kindergarten)

There are also two sets of materials to use when conducting educational support groups for family members:

- △ **TEACHING PYRAMID FOR FAMILIES** (for programs implementing CA CSEFEL TEACHING PYRAMID) and
- △ A California adaptation of the **POSITIVE SOLUTIONS FOR FAMILIES** series.

WestEd also has created an **authorization** process for trainers and/or coaches that support fidelity to this CA CSEFEL Teaching Pyramid process for the Preschool and Infant/Toddler versions. This is a two-phase apprenticeship model with observation and training of the individuals during the first phase and co-training or coaching under supervision the second phase. Individuals can be authorized as a CA CSEFEL Teaching Pyramid trainer and/or coach, which allows them – within identified parameters – to conduct CA CSEFEL Teaching Pyramid Training and Coaching within their respective communities. The authorization is for three years with the option of becoming reauthorized at the end of that period. For more information, please contact teachingpyramid@wested.org