

**LESSONS LEARNED WHILE IMPLEMENTING THE
TEACHING PYRAMID IN SELECTED FIRST 5 LOS
ANGELES SCHOOL READINESS PROGRAMS:
Pomona, Lawndale, Vaughn, Lennox,
Paramount, and Azusa**

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Executive Summary

This report contains case studies of six School Readiness sites in Los Angeles County that were funded by First 5 LA to participate in training and coaching on the Teaching Pyramid Approach, a systematic framework that incorporates positive behavior support through promoting social-emotional development, providing support for children's appropriate behavior, preventing challenging behavior, and addressing problematic behavior. The Center on the Social and Emotional Foundations for Early Learning (CSEFEL) designed the Teaching Pyramid Approach to help meet the needs of the growing number of children with challenging behaviors and the overall mental health challenges in child care.

To solicit participation from programs, First 5 LA invited 11 district-affiliated, early-childhood programs receiving school readiness funding to attend an information session regarding the Teaching Pyramid approach. Following that session, sites that were interested applied to be part of the program, indicating what timeline would work for them within the timeframe available. Six sites applied. One of the sites later had to withdraw due to internal reasons before starting the project, and another site that could work within the timeline available was recruited. Sites received monetary support for release time.

The case studies included data from pre- and post-training surveys assessing teachers' and administrators' knowledge and effectiveness in promoting healthy social-emotional development and addressing children's challenging behavior, focus groups with teachers, and phone interviews with key informants. At the time of data collection sites were in the very early stages of implementation. Three sites had completed the training between eight and ten months earlier and three sites had completed the training the month prior to data collection.

Cross site-analysis indicated that the implementation of the Teaching Pyramid had an impact on teachers, children, and administrators:

- Teachers were more confident, more knowledgeable, less stressed, and less frustrated by children's challenging behaviors
- Teachers and aides who trained together had improved working relationships
- Teachers reported that children learned behavior expectations, were better able to identify, express, and manage emotions, and required less teacher intervention to solve conflicts
- Administrators reported that referrals for behavior problems decreased and, when made, were more appropriate
- Administrators felt better able to support teachers around children's challenging behaviors

Executive Summary

Sites shared a number of challenges, largely related to time and money:

- Teachers had little planning time for meeting with other teachers or aides to plan implementation of the Teaching Pyramid
- Teachers had difficulty finding sufficient time to meet with the WestEd coach for debriefing following classroom observations
- Internal coaches were unable to spend much time in classrooms, due to other responsibilities
- Funding cuts and staff attrition meant that sites lost some trained teachers and were faced with getting new hires oriented to the Teaching Pyramid approach

In spite of these challenges, sites developed plans to continue implementation once the First 5 funding ended. Leadership Teams planned to:

- Continue meeting to support implementation and trouble-shoot site- or classroom-specific problems
- Create cadre of peer coaches
- Seek funds from other sources to receive additional WestEd coaching
- Provide consolidated training for teachers or aides who were not able to attend the four days of Teaching Pyramid training
- Include Teaching Pyramid strategies in staff manuals, handbooks on policies and procedures for addressing challenging behaviors, and on teacher evaluation forms
- Work with their K-12 system to disseminate the approach to higher grades

Even though the Teaching Pyramid is only in its earliest stages of implementation, the training and coaching have led to changes in the classrooms in all six sites. For many teachers and administrators, the Teaching Pyramid training and technical assistance produced a paradigm shift as they came to understand that healthy social-emotional development is as crucial to academic success as are pre-literacy skills, and that social-emotional skills can be taught in the classroom. Importantly, the impact of the Teaching Pyramid approach has the potential to go well beyond the classroom, as policies and procedures related to addressing children's challenging behaviors are articulated and applied across programs, as general and special education establish a partnership for promoting healthy social-emotional development, and as some districts elect to introduce the Pyramid approach up through high school, from "cradle to college."

I. Literature Review

Over the past decade, educators and psychologists have brought increasing attention to the prevalence of challenging behaviors in young children. Much of the impetus for this attention derived from findings of the 2005 National Prekindergarten Study (NPS), a comprehensive data collection effort across each of the nation's 52 state-funded prekindergarten programs. Data collected from almost 4,000 randomly selected teachers indicated that 10.4% of prekindergarten teachers reported at least one expulsion in their classes in the past 12 months. Further, preschool children were 3.2 times more likely to be expelled from public school programs than students in K-12 programs (Gilliam, 2005).

Other prevalence studies confirm the significance of the problem. According to Campbell (1995), 10%-15% of young children have mild to moderate behavior problems and higher rates are expected in children who live in poverty (Qi & Kaiser, 2003). Webster-Stratton (2000) reported that between 7% and 25% of preschool-age children met the criteria for oppositional defiant disorder and 22% girls and 39% boys enrolled in Head Start scored in the clinical range for both internalizing and externalizing problem behaviors (Kaiser, Cai, Hancock & Foster, 2002). It is not surprising, then, that Alkon (2003) found that preschool teachers identified children's challenging behaviors as their biggest concern. A recent survey of over 500 early childhood educators found that their highest-rated training need was addressing challenging behavior (Hemmeter, Corso & Cheatham, 2006).

There is ample evidence that challenging behaviors are stable over time and have long-term consequences. Several researchers have demonstrated that children with significant behavior problems in early childhood are more likely to be rejected by their peers, abuse drugs, be clinically depressed, become juvenile delinquents, drop out of school, and be diagnosed with an emotional/behavioral disorder during adolescence (Campbell, 1994; Forness, Ramey et al, 1998; Walker, Colvin and Ramsey, 1995). According to Webster-Stratton (2000), the developmental pathway toward serious conduct disorder or antisocial behavior is established in the preschool period. Indeed, early appearing behavior problems in preschool children are the single best predictor of delinquency in adolescence, gang membership, and adult incarceration (Dishion, French, & Patterson, 1995).

Given the prevalence of challenging behaviors in young children, and the long-term impact of these behaviors including lower academic achievement and later conduct disorders, there is a clear need for the development of comprehensive, research-based intervention efforts to manage young children's challenging behaviors and to prevent the emergence of problem behaviors (Gilliam & Shabar,

Literature Review

2006; Joseph & Strain, 2003; Raver, 2002.) One such effort is PBS, or Positive Behavior Support, a system-wide approach for reducing challenging behaviors.

The PBS approach includes three levels of promotion, prevention, and intervention to meet the needs of all children within a school or program setting (Carr et al., 2002; Horne, Sugai, Todd, & Lewis-Palmer, 2005). At the first level of promotion, all children are provided with a safe and predictable environment with a focus on building positive relationships and introducing clearly defined behavioral expectations. (Fox, Dunlap, Hemmeter, Joseph & Strain, 2003). The secondary level of prevention involves small-group targeted interventions for children who exhibit some deficits in social skills and/or challenging behaviors. (Hawken & Horner, 2003). The third level of support includes individualized interventions for children who continue to exhibit severe and/or ongoing challenging behavior despite systematic use of evidence-based promotion and prevention strategies. These interventions are based on the analysis of the function of behavior.

Until recently, PBS was used primarily to prevent and address challenging behaviors in K-12 (Fox, Jack, & Broyles, 2005). Evaluation of these efforts has yielded impressive results: decreases in incidents of problem behavior (Sadler, 2000); reduction in office referrals for problem behavior (Nelson, Martella and Martella, 2002; Turnbull et al, 2000); reduction of school suspensions (Turnbull et al, 2002), and expulsions (Sadler, 2000). However, studies involving preschool children are scarce (Duda, Dunlap, Fox, Lentini, & Clarke, 2004).

One such study was conducted by researchers at the New Hampshire Center for Effective Behavioral Interventions and Support, which published a case study of a private, corporate-sponsored, early-childhood program serving 211 children in 12 classrooms (Muscott & Pomerleau, 2009). Program staff implemented the program-wide Positive Behavior Support as part of a statewide initiative. Similar to the Teaching Pyramid, the approach included a Leadership Team containing administrators, teachers, and support personnel, and a coaching component including internal coaches. The training focused on defining and teaching behavioral expectations, encouraging expected behaviors, and discouraging challenging behaviors. At the end of three years of implementation, the number of children with zero or one incident of challenging behavior increased from 63% in Year 1 to 92% in year 3. At the same time, there were significant reductions in the three most prevalent types of challenging behaviors: fighting/physical aggression, defiance/disrespect, and abusive language.

In 2003, the Office of Head Start and the Child Care Bureau funded the **Center on the Social and Emotional Foundations for Early Learning (CSEFEL)** to promote the social emotional development and school readiness of

young children age birth to five and to disseminate research and evidence-based practices to early childhood programs across the country. The *Teaching Pyramid* approach is a systematic framework developed by CSEFEL that incorporates Early Childhood Positive Behavior Support (EC-PBS) through promoting social-emotional development, providing support for children's appropriate behavior, preventing challenging behavior, and addressing problematic behavior (Fox, Carta et al, 2009; Fox, Dunlap et al, 2003; Hemmeter, Fox, Jacks & Broyles, 2007). The elements of the Teaching Pyramid are described in more detail at the Technical Assistance Center on Social Emotional Intervention (TACSEI) www.challengingbehavior.org web site, a partner project funded by the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education Programs.

Literature Review

II. Description of the Teaching Pyramid Approach

The Teaching Pyramid approach was built on the PBS model with the incorporation of early childhood practices. WestEd Center for Child & Family Studies has further adapted the approach to incorporate the “facilitative administrative practices” as described in Mincic, Smith, & Strain (2009). There are four recommended components offered by WestEd staff. The training and technical assistance (leadership team/coaching) occurs over the course of six to nine months before the first training and again after each training. The power of the Teaching Pyramid is most clearly seen when it is implemented across an entire site, district, or agency – program-wide. Training is only one small part of the approach. It takes planning by a group of leaders, training in a systematic way, and coaching/ technical assistance to support understanding of the conceptual framework and implementation of the strategies with fidelity. The Teaching Pyramid also is compatible with the California Department of Education’s Preschool Learning and Development Foundations, Social-Emotional Foundation, and the companion Preschool Curriculum Framework, Social-Emotional chapter.

The Teaching Pyramid Approach was funded by First 5 LA to be implemented in six school readiness sites in Los Angeles County. While the same four core components were implemented in all sites, implementation was tailored to meet the needs of each of the individual sites. This section contains a description of the four core components: Leadership, Training, Technical Assistance, and Coaching, and Parent Module Training of Facilitators. Section IV, Case Studies, contains a description of the implementation of the approach in each of the six sites.

LEADERSHIP TEAMS

Members of the Leadership Team included an administrator (site-level, as well as a district-level administrator if multiple sites from a single district were participating), teachers, and partners from mental health, school psychologists, and/or special education. The role of the team was to act as the steering committee for the Teaching Pyramid approach, to monitor technical assistance and additional training needs, and to problem-solve as needed for classroom or site-specific issues. The Leadership Team met one full day prior to the training, one half day after Modules 1, 2, and 3a, and one full day after the final 3b module.

During the first Leadership Team meeting, a brief overview of the Teaching Pyramid was presented, along with a discussion of the critical role this shared-decision making team has in supporting program-wide implementation. Following that were discussions of the way the approach/framework

Description of the Teaching Pyramid Approach

complements existing curricula and the development of program-wide expectations.

Members of the Leadership Team were asked to reflect on how clear current policies/procedures are regarding steps that staff needs to take when concerns about a child's behavior begin to arise. Do all staff know and understand these procedures? How do current policies or procedures address a crisis or emergency in terms of challenging behavior?

With Leadership Team input, the trainers developed an action plan that included an overview of how the technical assistance/coaching was to be used, a sharing of the coaching agreements, and identification of an internal coach.

During the second Leadership Team meeting, the sites had a chance to share one or two things that had happened related to the last training, including implementation stories, what seemed to be 'sticking' with the staff, what had worked about the technical assistance so far, and any burning questions that had arisen.

At the third meeting, sites shared more implementation success stories as well as barriers to implementation, working together to problem solve these difficulties. At this meeting, the Behavior Observation Report form was introduced and participants were given the opportunity to begin looking at elements contributing to challenging behavior.

The fourth meeting focused on implementation and steps to applying the Teaching Pyramid. This included ways to maximize technical assistance/coaching, ideas for keeping up the enthusiasm, and discussions on how positive descriptive acknowledgement could be practiced.

The fifth and final facilitated meeting of the Leadership Team reviewed steps to applying the Teaching Pyramid and finalized procedures for ensuring that the Leadership Teams would continue to meet and monitor implementation and sustainability on their own. A tool called the "Benchmarks of Quality" is provided to guide their journey for sustainability.

TRAINING

Each site received four full days of training, with the length of time between trainings varying among the sites. Staff participating in the training included all members of the Leadership Team, including the administrator; direct teaching staff (teachers, teaching assistants, teacher aides), and support staff, including

Description of the Teaching Pyramid Approach

but not limited to speech and language pathologists, behavior specialists, school psychologists, curriculum specialists, and family advocates.

In Module 1, training focused on relationships, the environment, expectations, and strategies for promoting social and emotional skills, as well as preventing challenging behavior for all children.

Topics included in this module:

- Building positive relationships with children, families, and colleagues
- Designing physical environments, schedules, and routines
- Establishing expectations
- Providing activities that promote child engagement
- Modifying and adapting materials and activities to meet the individual needs of all children, including those with disabilities
- Providing encouragement and positive feedback to children

Module 2 focused on the adoption of teaching strategies that have been proved effective in providing children the skills for problem solving, conflict resolution, building friendship skills, and identifying, expressing and managing emotions effectively.

Topics included in this module:

- Identifying teachable moments
- Friendship Skills
- Emotional Literacy (experiencing, identifying, and expressing emotions)
- Emotion Regulation: Managing Strong Emotions
- Problem Solving/ Conflict Resolution

Examples of strategies covered in this module include the use of the *Turtle Technique* and the *Solution Kit*. In the *Turtle Technique*, children are taught to 1) recognize that something happened; 2) stop and recognize that they are having a strong emotion; 3) “go into their shell,” take three deep breaths and think calming thoughts; 4) come out of their “shell” and think of a solution. The *Solution Kit* contains pictures of different possible solutions for a situation involving conflict with peers (e.g., wait and take turns, get a teacher/other adult; use a timer). The pictures were usually mounted on laminated cards held together on a key ring or made into a book, and placed throughout the classroom as well as on the playground.

These first two modules, which form the bottom three levels of the Teaching Pyramid, are used with all children, not just those with challenging behaviors. While implementation of the strategies from both Module 1 and Module 2 have

Description of the Teaching Pyramid Approach

been shown to prevent many challenging behaviors, the need for more targeted intervention of ongoing challenging behavior is addressed in Modules 3a and 3b. In Module 3a, the focus was on effective strategies for observing children to identify the function of challenging behavior and skills that could be targeted for instruction.

Topics included in this module:

- Identifying the function of challenging behavior as the key to teaching replacement behavior
- Identifying behaviors and social skills to target for intervention

In Module 3b, all the components were put together to develop a behavior support plan that decreased the likelihood that the child will need to use challenging behavior, supported the child's use of the new skills, and focused on teacher responses to behavior.

Topics included in this module:

- Triggers, replacement skills, and responses to behavior as components of behavior intervention
- Strategies for teaching new skills, including building positive relationships and designing the environment to support appropriate behaviors and prevent challenging behavior
- Building teams (professionals and family members) to effectively support the child's development of these skills across settings
- How the policies and procedures support the integration of the Teaching Pyramid topics included in this module:
 - Developing a plan for integrating social-emotional development and preventing challenging behavior into the existing curriculum
 - Using a team approach to address social-emotional needs and challenging behavior

TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE AND COACHING

In order to support classroom teachers in implementing Teaching Pyramid strategies with fidelity, technical assistance was provided to classrooms identified by members of the Leadership Team in each district. Technical assistance included observations by the coach, followed by conversations with teachers, internal coaches, and administrators. Each site received 14 days of technical assistance and coaching.

Following classroom observations, the coach provided an opportunity for teachers to reflect upon the conceptual framework of each module and discuss implementation of the strategies with fidelity in their classrooms. Individualized

Description of the Teaching Pyramid Approach

guidance was provided using a strengths-based approach targeting areas for support that teachers identified on the Action Plan completed during the training. Further strategies for implementing the Teaching Pyramid approach were developed by mutual agreement among the coach, teachers, and internal coach and progress toward goals, successes, and challenges was discussed with the coach during each technical assistance visit. Each district was asked to identify at least one individual to serve as an internal coach in order to build capacity of the programs to provide ongoing support for implementation of the Teaching Pyramid approach.

FAMILY MODULES TRAINING OF FACILITATORS

Upon completion of the four modules, the Leadership Team in each district selected participants for the Positive Solutions for Families Training of Facilitators, an evidence-based, user-friendly parent training series of six sessions to help professionals working with family members to promote positive and effective parenting practices, designed to promote children's social and emotional development and address challenging behavior of children. Positive Solutions for Families Training of Facilitators participants received a resource binder and DVD containing materials in English and Spanish, including a recommended agenda, objectives, materials list, facilitator script, PowerPoint™ slides, activities, and video vignettes for each session.

Description of the Teaching Pyramid Approach

III. Background and Methodology

BACKGROUND

In 2009, First 5 Los Angeles (First 5 LA) funded WestEd Center for Child & Family Studies, San Marcos Office (WestEd) to provide training and technical assistance on the Teaching Pyramid approach to six school readiness sites in Los Angeles County. To solicit participation from programs, First 5 LA invited 11 district-affiliated, early-childhood programs receiving School Readiness funding to attend an information session regarding the Teaching Pyramid approach on October 8, 2009. Following that session, sites that were interested applied to be part of the program, indicating what timeline would work for them within the timeframe available. Six sites applied by the November 13 deadline. One of the sites had to withdraw due to internal reasons before starting the project, and Azusa, who could work within the five-month timeline available, was recruited. Sites received monetary support for release time.

In 2010, First 5 LA added an evaluation component to the WestEd contract. The purpose of this evaluation was to document the successes and challenges that associated with promoting social-emotional development, providing support for children's appropriate behavior, preventing challenging behavior, and addressing problematic behavior.

In addition to documenting the successes and challenges, research questions included the following:

1. What program strategies are being employed for supporting parent engagement?
2. In what ways does this effort facilitate the establishment and maintenance of school-community partnerships?
3. How will this effort maintain itself with little or no funding after the project ends?
4. What are the implications of this effort for future school readiness efforts?
5. How do the evaluation results of this approach compare to other California efforts and other states where similar projects have been implemented?

Given the diversity among the six sites, a case study approach was used to address the first three research questions. A summary section includes the lessons learned from cross-site analysis, a comparison of findings with other efforts, and the implications of the Teaching Pyramid training and its impact for future school readiness efforts.

METHODOLOGY

The case studies utilized multiple data sources: retrospective pre- and post-training surveys, focus groups with teachers, telephone interviews with key informants, observation of Leadership Team meetings and module trainings, and conversations with the WestEd trainers and coach.

Retrospective pre and post-survey. These instruments were developed by WestEd prior to this grant, and the data are included as part of this evaluation report. The survey was administered on the last day of the training. Questions addressed teachers' perceptions of their knowledge and effectiveness in addressing children's challenging behaviors, and the level of stress they experienced dealing with these behaviors (Appendix A). In addition, they compared the behavior of the children in their classroom before and after the Teaching Pyramid training. Administrators and support personnel completed a comparable survey in which the questions were modified to ask about the classrooms with which they worked (Appendix B). Paired two-sample t-tests were used to test for significant differences between the means of the retrospective pre and post-ratings.

Focus groups. Questions for the focus group were developed by the evaluator, and modified to include input from the School Readiness Evaluation Advisory group (Appendix C). Site administrators/coordinators provided the names of 6-8 teachers who had completed the training and who had received coaching visits. They arranged a time when teachers would be available, and scheduled the meeting place. The evaluator moderated the groups, and a research associate kept backup notes. The conversations were audio taped with the permission of the participants and later transcribed. Participants were asked questions about the perceived impact of the training on their relationships with children and other adults, including parents; on changes in individual children; factors which made it easy and/or challenging to implement the Teaching Pyramid; and, about strategies for introducing Teaching Pyramid strategies to parents. The groups ranged from 45 minutes to one hour in length. Following the focus groups, the evaluator and the research associate debriefed, and identified the main points that emerged from the conversations. The evaluator examined the transcripts for content related to the research questions.

Key informant interviews. Questions for the key informants were developed by the evaluator and modified to include input from the School Readiness Evaluation Advisory group (Appendix D). Key informants were selected from the Leadership Team by the evaluator, with input from the site director/coordinator. In all six cases, the School Readiness Coordinator/Director was interviewed. The semi-structured phone interviews were conducted by the evaluator and the

research associate, were recorded with the informant's permission, and transcribed. They ranged from 30 minutes to one hour in length. Questions focused on the impact of the Teaching Pyramid training on children, teachers, and administrators; on the parent responses to the Teaching Pyramid strategies; on the impact of the Teaching Pyramid training on community partnerships, on challenges around implementation, and on future plans for maintaining implementation. Upon completion of the interviews, the evaluator identified the main themes that emerged related to the research questions. Direct quotes captured the perspectives of the different roles represented by members of the Leadership Team.

Observation of Leadership Team meetings and trainings. The evaluator attended at least two, and in some cases, three Leadership Team meetings and at least two of the four training modules in each site. Observations, where relevant, were included in writing up the case studies and the summary across sites.

Conversations with WestEd trainers and coach. Conversations with the WestEd trainers and coach took place after the training sessions and Leadership Team meetings, and were also included in the write-up of the case studies and summary across sites.

Background and Methodology

IV. Six Case Studies

The case studies are written in order of when they started the training and technical assistance cycle.

Training Events	POMONA	LAWNDALE	VAUGHN	LENNOX	PARAMOUNT	AZUZA
Module 1	1/28/10	2/05/10	5/01/10	8/13/10 & 10/09/10	8/19/10	1/28/11
Module 2	3/18/10	3/19/10	6/05/10	1/07/11	10/21/10	2/25/11
Module 3a	5/25/10	4/30/10	8/21/10	4/9/11	2/16/11	3/4/11
Module 3b	8/26/10	6/04/10	9/18/10	5/21/11	4/28/11	5/06/11
Positive Solutions	11/30/10	9/01/10	3/18/11	6/13/11	6/01/11	6/03/11

A. POMONA UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

Introduction

The city of Pomona has approximately 163,000 residents, predominantly Hispanic (70%). Other groups include 14% white, 7% African American and 7% Asian.¹ Of these, 37% of the residents speak English in the home.² Over 21% live below the poverty line, and the unemployment rate in 2009 was over 14%.³

The Pomona Unified School District serves 29,000 students from families in the city of Pomona, surrounding unincorporated areas, and portions of Diamond Bar. District wide, 42% of the students are English learners and almost 81% qualify for free lunch/compensatory meals.⁴

Over 2,000 children between birth and 5 are served in the district's Child Development Program. The classrooms are spread throughout the district. Programs include Head Start (N=55), LAUP (N=14), State Preschool (N=37), Early Head Start (N=15), and School Readiness Initiative (N=5). The classrooms are organized into three administrative groups, or clusters, each with its own administrator.

Programs for the 3-5-year olds use the Houghton Mifflin Pre-K curriculum.

Description of Teaching Pyramid Approach at Pomona

Leadership Team. The Leadership Team included 14 members: three coordinators and one program assistant representing the clusters, two teachers, two compliance monitors, the program administrator from Child Development and assistant administrator, Early Head Start administrator, two mental health specialists, and the disabilities coordinator. The first meeting was held on January 19, 2010 and the final one on October 5, 2010. The Leadership Team made materials or provided supplies to the classrooms to make the Teaching Pyramid materials. Cluster leaders incorporated the Teaching Pyramid concepts in their cluster meetings, taking the commitment from Leadership Team meetings to the teachers in their clusters. The Leadership Team supported implementation by providing opportunities for teachers to create materials, as well as providing a "Solution Kit" for each classroom.

¹ <http://www.pomonahope.org/why-pomona/statistics/>

² <http://www.city-data.com/city/Pomona-California.html>

³ <http://www.pomonahope.org/why-pomona/statistics/>

⁴ www.ed-dta.k.12.ca.us

Pomona Case Study

Training. Training took place between January 28, 2010 and August 26, 2010. First 5 LA funded Teaching Pyramid training slots for 60 participants. PUSD was committed to training a larger group, and used their professional development funds to support additional staff. The total number trained was approximately 200, including teachers, aides, and support staff. The first three modules took place approximately two months apart. The fourth module, 3b, took place three months after Module 3a, following the summer break.

Technical assistance/coaching. Coaching started in February 2010 and was completed by April 2011. Cluster leaders identified classrooms for coaching, which were initially based on teachers who needed support. After conversations with the Leadership Team and cluster supervisors, additional classrooms were selected for coaching based on the teachers' interest in and commitment to implementation of Teaching Pyramid approach. A total of 18 classrooms received technical assistance. Coaching focused on providing positive descriptive acknowledgement to children and guidance in the use of Teaching Pyramid visual supports. Observations were conducted by the coach and followed by coaching conversations with the teacher(s), and when possible, instructional aides, assigned to the classroom. Periodic updates were provided to the Leadership Team.

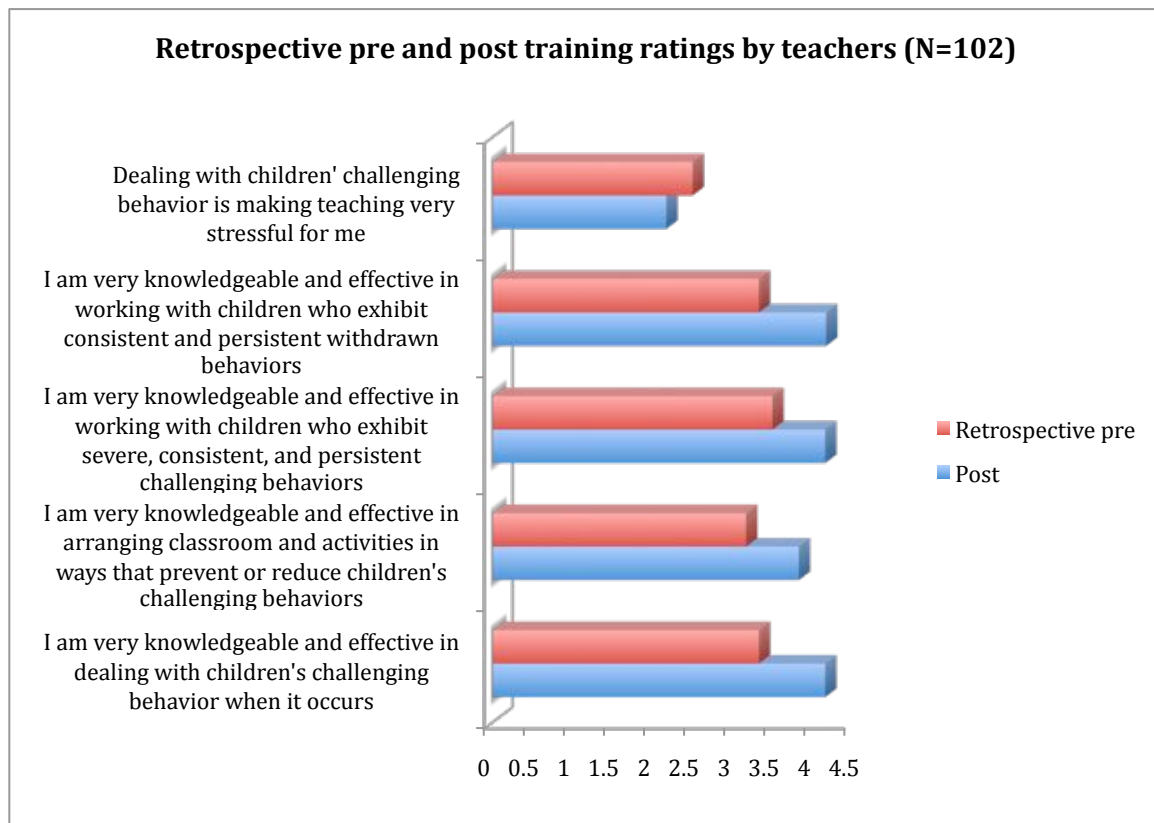
Family Modules Training of Facilitators. The Positive Solutions for Families Training of Facilitators was conducted on November 30, 2010, six weeks following the final Leadership Team meeting. Participants included 12 members of the Leadership Team.

Data Collection

- Retrospective pre-and post surveys were distributed and returned at the final training session in August 2010.
- The focus group took place in May 2011 and included 5 teachers. Years of experience teaching preschool ranged between 1 and 35, with a mean of 8 years.
- Key informant interviews were conducted between May and June 2011. Respondents included the Program Assistants for School Readiness and Child Development, Resource Specialist, Disabilities Coordinator, School Psychologist, and the three cluster coordinators.

Successes

Surveys. One hundred and two teachers and assistant teachers completed retrospective pre and post-training surveys at the end of the fourth and final module of the Teaching Pyramid training. These respondents reported statistically significant differences ($p < .001$) on mean ratings of their knowledge and effectiveness in dealing with children with challenging behavior. Mean ratings for stress levels resulting from dealing with children's challenging behavior were significantly lower on the post training ratings compared to the ratings on the retrospective pre surveys.



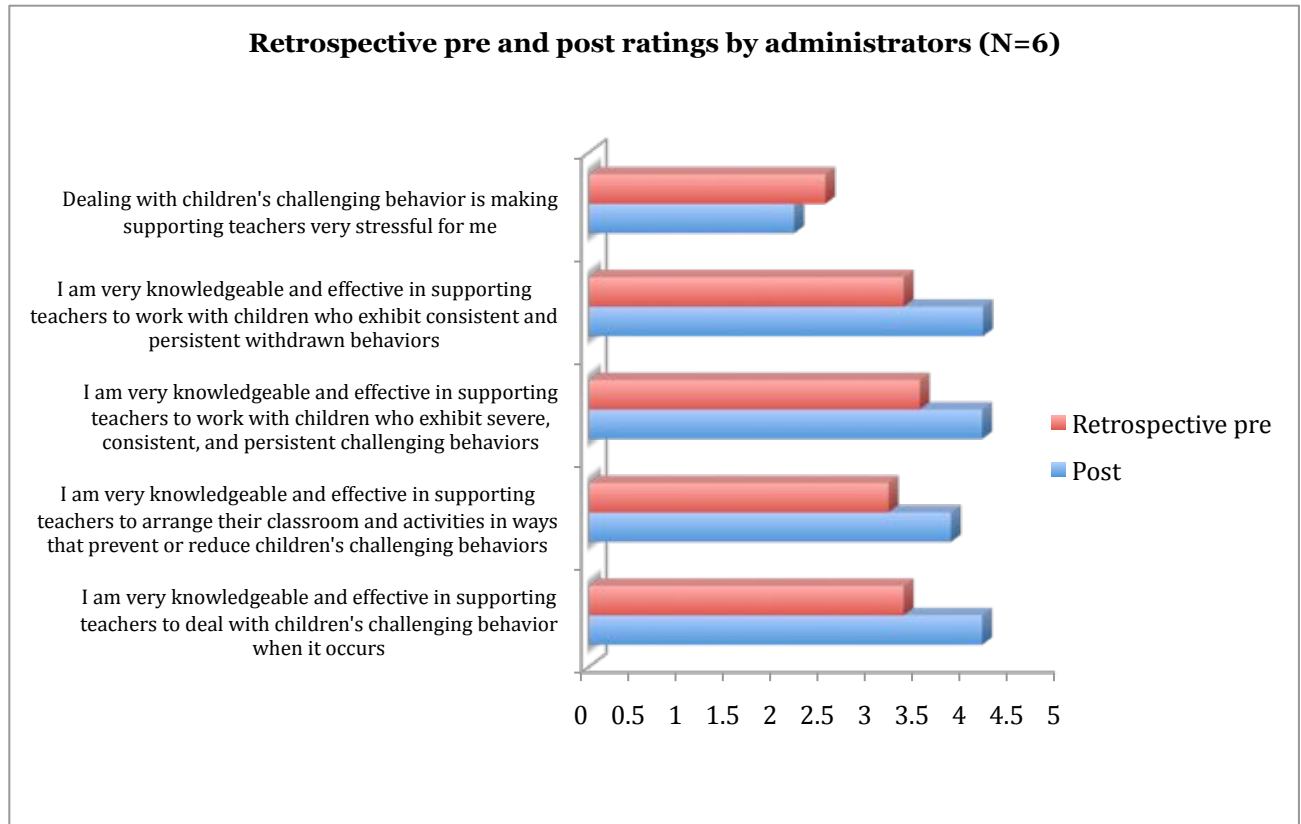
1 = I never feel this way; 5 = I feel this way all the time

On the post ratings, teachers compared the behavior of the children in their classroom during the final month of school to their behavior the month before the Teaching Pyramid training started. On a 5-point scale, with 1 = *Gotten much worse* to 5 = *Improved drastically*, the mean rating was a 4.3.

Six administrators responded to the post and retrospective pre-surveys. The mean ratings indicated greater knowledge and effectiveness on the post-training surveys compared with ratings on the retrospective pre training surveys.

Pomona Case Study

On the post ratings, they compared the behavior of the children during the final month of school to their behavior the month before the Teaching Pyramid training started. On a 5-point scale, with 1 = *Gotten much worse* to 5 = *Improved drastically*, the mean rating was 4.3.



1 = I never feel this way; 5 = I always feel this way

Focus group and key informant interviews. Key informants and focus group participants described the impact of the Teaching Pyramid training on their teaching, on the children, on their relationships with colleagues, on parents, and on administrators.

While acknowledging that there was a range in levels of implementation, one of the cluster coordinators commented,

Even at a minimal level it has made the classroom a better place – in terms of giving the teachers more skills and more tools in their toolbox.

Teachers in the focus group noted that they were changing their language to focus more on the positive, and appreciated having specific evidence-based strategies. “Prior to that, it was just go with your gut,” one teacher remarked. Another teacher noted that she had to intervene less when there were conflicts in the

classroom. “It allows me more free time to move around the classroom and do other stuff with other students.”

The disabilities coordinator commented on the impact of changes in the classrooms on the children:

For the most part they seem happier in school. We have fewer children with externalizing behavior such as crying and running away behaviors. I believe we're having less concerns with children with internalizing behaviors such as withdrawn and shy because teachers are really recognizing both of those. I see the children benefitting from this program quite a bit.

In addition two of the cluster coordinators commented that they had observed children using the language of the expectations, “Be respectful;” “Be caring;” “Be safe.” Many of the children were able to identify behaviors illustrating the expectations. As a result, the children were able to solve problems without relying on teacher intervention.

During the focus group, teachers talked about the positive effect of the Teaching Pyramid training on their relationship with their aides. The fact that they experienced the training together gave them a shared understanding and a common language, so they were a more cohesive team when dealing with children's challenging behaviors. Teachers commented that they appreciated their aides more, and were more likely to give them increased responsibility in their classrooms.

In terms of the impact on parents, teachers in the focus group commented that they were getting reports from parents that the children were coming home and using the expectation vocabulary with their siblings, e.g., “You're not being respectful.”

Parents are coming in and saying ‘oh, that's where it's coming from oh, that's why’ – it's transferring into the home. It's not just in the academic environment.

Teacher also talked about their increased confidence in counseling parents around children's challenging behaviors.

I have a lot more tools under my belt with Teaching Pyramid training. If a parent comes to me –especially as a first year teacher - I can use whatever I implement in the classroom and explain to parents how to use it in the home environment.

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Administrators credited the Teaching Pyramid training with a decrease in referrals for behavior problems, and an increase in appropriate referrals to assessment for Special Education. One of the administrators talked about a shift in her colleagues' thinking about the importance of social emotional skills:

There are a couple of administrators that are data driven. They come from the K-12 system, and sometimes it's hard for them to see if you can't reach the child socially and emotionally you're not going to get there. But, I've seen the walls come down.

Focus group participants and key informants alike identified several factors that supported implementation of the Teaching Pyramid in PUSD. Administrators and teachers cited the compatibility between the Teaching Pyramid approach and the Response to Intervention, used in Pomona to maximize student achievement and reduce behavior problems.

I think it goes hand in hand with the RTI model the district has in place that we also have to follow. What our teachers are hearing from the district is exactly what's being trained in Teaching Pyramid and it was exactly what the RTI interns were bringing into the classroom. It was coming from all different directions, so it made more sense (administrator).

Other factors included supportive administrators, the joint trainings for teachers and their aides, and the coaching. According to one cluster coordinator

It helped enormously – and I think the teachers really embraced it because it was somebody besides the supervisors. They really embraced the coaching advice, support and suggestions that they were given.

Challenges

The main challenges to implementation in PUSD were related to the size of the district and the number of participants in the training. The size of the district was a challenge in terms of allocating coaching resources and the 18 classrooms that received coaching represented less than 10% of all the classrooms in the district. One of the cluster coordinators commented that it was difficult to stay on top of implementation with so many classrooms to support.

I would say 70 to 80 percent of the teachers picked it up and went with it above and beyond – they valued the training and did it. There are some teachers who still need a lot of individual coaching and ongoing follow up and that involved a lot of time on somebody's part whether it's support staff like administration or myself.

Arranging for over 200 teachers, aides and support personnel to come together at one time for the training posed a significant logistical challenge. The administration committed all the professional development days for the Teaching Pyramid and was faced with finding enough substitutes to cover the classrooms. In many cases the substitutes indicated they would show up and at the last minute they did not, in which case the teacher was unable to attend the training.

The size of the group was a challenge for the trainers as well, in that they had to modify several of the small group activities and large group share backs to make them meaningful for the participants. The WestEd trainer/coach commented that the size of the group provided little opportunity for her to build relationships with participants during the training. Consequently, when she went into the classrooms to coach she did not feel as ‘connected’ as she had in other sites.

Time was another challenge. Pomona teachers worked for eight hours in back to back programs, and time for planning, and for sitting down with other teachers and sharing strategies, was scant.

Time is really short. We have to condense a lot of our training. Typically we have one staff meeting a month – and we don’t have much training time incorporated into that. Staff development days are typically for academic trainings so we get maybe an hour at the beginning of the year. Time is always a factor.

Lastly, the issue of staff turnover was a problem. At the beginning of the new school year, there were new staff that had not been through the training. While the support staff attempted to “fill them in,” there was no opportunity to offer them the complete package.

Program strategies for supporting parent engagement

In February and March 2011 following the Family Modules Training of Facilitators, the Leadership Team decided to offer the parent modules on a limited basis as a pilot “in order to work out the kinks before going program wide.” They invited all the parents from one of the largest sites. The two mental health specialists conducted the parent trainings, one in English and the other in Spanish. Twelve parents attended the Spanish-language training and nine parents attended the English-language training. Training was conducted in 2-hour sessions, once a week for six weeks. According to one of the mental health specialists, attendance was consistent in both groups and parents responded enthusiastically to the program. They appreciated learning about the new strategies, and the specific materials and parent notebooks that came with the training. She added,

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Most parents thought it really helped them; it changed their way of thinking. They started implementing more positive relationships with their children. Instead of just telling the children when they needed to do something or correct them, they started enjoying their children's company, spending more time with their children.

Other strategies for supporting parent engagement included articles on the Teaching Pyramid approach in the monthly newsletter, and in Head Start classrooms, familiarizing the parent volunteers with Teaching Pyramid materials posted in the classroom (e.g., the school-wide expectations, the visual schedules).

One teacher made a copy of the Pyramid and had her mother-in-law translate it into Spanish and sent it home to the parents.

During a parent meeting I explained it to them to the best of my knowledge and then I asked them a month later if they had implemented it at home. I pretty much take a survey as to what's going on and whether they are implementing the pyramid.

School-community partnerships

The disabilities coordinator referred families to parenting classes or parenting support classes in the community, which she described as the “least intrusive, least restrictive intervention.” She noted that she made fewer referrals in the past year because

...those typically are the types of referrals that have been turned around because the teacher is working with parents and they are changing how they are addressing the needs of the children.

She attributed the decrease in referrals to the implementation of the Teaching Pyramid.

Maintenance efforts

Members of the Leadership Team were responsible for ensuring that the concepts of the Teaching Pyramid approach were understood and the strategies were implemented. The three cluster coordinators scheduled regular classroom visits to observe and provide the teachers with feedback. They encouraged teachers who were having difficulty with implementation to observe in classrooms in which the strategies were used consistently and with success. One of the cluster coordinators embedded Teaching Pyramid strategies into the lesson plan book that was distributed to teachers:

I took some of the ideas from the Teaching Pyramid and embedded them in there so on a day-to-day basis the teachers would have some kind of highlight for the day.

The school psychologist supported implementation as well. She explained,

I go to the classrooms at least twice per year and make sure there are Teaching Pyramid materials or evidence of materials and strategies in the classroom. I remind teachers if they not there to make sure they are accessible to the children and they are using the language, the books, and the puppets. I go online and get additional information and lessons and share with them as needed for particular cases.

In addition, the Leadership Team made it a mandate that the teachers have the expectations posters and visual schedules posted in their classrooms. They added the expectations and visual schedule to the monitoring tool. The disabilities coordinator incorporated Teaching Pyramid strategies into lists of Tier 1 strategies and ideas from the RTI approach and required teachers to document any interventions they tried prior to making a referral. At the final Leadership Team meeting, a subgroup was assigned to integrate the Teaching Pyramid strategies into the staff handbook.

As a result of budget cuts in 2011, many teachers received pink slips and some contracts were shortened from 12 to 10 months. Quite a few teachers planned to retire. The impact of the cuts had implications for sustainability. There was considerable turnover of participants for the Module 3b training, which was presented at the beginning of a new school year. Several teams of teachers and aides that had gone through the first three modules no longer existed.

In March of 2011, one of the program administrators reported that Pomona was going to “displace” about 50% of the workforce, or 60 teachers, from the preschool. Displacements were based on seniority, and she worried that they would be losing some of their best teachers. She was not sure how to plan for the continuing implementation of the Pyramid, as she was not sure which teachers would be available to serve as internal coaches. “At this point the administrative staff will be the ones to continue to monitor and support teachers.” She was also not sure how much of the Leadership Team would be left, noting, “We might have to create a new Leadership Team – Leadership Team Phase 2.”

In spite of these challenges, there was a strong commitment to continue to support implementation, and to work towards a “trickle up” of the Teaching Pyramid to kindergarten and the elementary grades:

We don't want this to be something our teachers were just taught. We want this to continue, we want to become systemic in our department. We've also talked with the district and elementary and said this is the language you're going to hear when the children come out of our preschools so we're doing a training this summer and sharing with them about the Teaching Pyramid (assistant administrator).

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Towards the end of the year, the district had some its cuts rescinded and was able to call back some teachers, and hire others. The program assistant for the district planned to seek funds to offer refresher courses for any new teachers as well as teachers who had not been able to participate in all four modules of the training. She was considering including the request in the Head Start refunding application.

B. LAWNDAL ELEM E N T A R Y S C H O O L D I S T R I C T

Introduction

The community of Lawndale, with approximately 32,000 residents, has a diverse population. It is predominantly Hispanic (60%) with smaller numbers of white (20%), African-American (8%), and Asian (9%).⁵ Of these, 58% speak a language other than English in the home. Persons with incomes below the poverty level account for 14% of the population, and children under 5 make up 9% of the population.⁶

The Lawndale Elementary School District consists of nine school sites, providing a public school education to approximately 6,000 students. The District also serves approximately 500 preschool students residing in the community in center-based programs.⁷ Almost 43% of the children are English-language learners district wide and 89% are eligible for the free or reduced-price school meals.⁸

The Lawndale School Readiness Program serves children ages 0-5 in both center-based preschool programs for 3 and 4 year olds (N=500) and a home-visitation program for 0-5 year olds (N=300). The center-based program uses the High Scope approach. The curricula for the home-visitation program are Parents as Teachers for 0-3 year olds and the Home Instruction for Parents of Preschool Youngsters (HIPPY) for 4-5 year olds.

In the application to First 5 LA, the director of the School Readiness Program described the district's challenges in providing services to children with challenging behaviors:

The challenge in providing services to children with challenging behaviors is time or there is no additional staff to shadow a child due to budgetary constraints. Preschool staff do not always have the time it takes to attend to only a child with challenging behaviors while meeting all the mandates of a center-based preschool program including working with up to 24 children in a classroom in double sessions, taking daily observations for the required DRDP assessment tool, teaching, facilitating child development, using appropriate child development practices, meeting licensing standards, and conducting the daily routine, all of which are required.

⁵ <http://www.city.data.com/city/Lawndale-California.html>

⁶ <http://quickfacts.census.gov/qfd/states/06/0640886.html>

⁷ www.ed-dta.k12.ca.us

⁸ <http://www.lawndale.k12.ca.us/about.jsp>

Description of Teaching Pyramid Approach at Lawndale

Leadership Team. The first Leadership Team meeting was held in January 2010 and the final one in June 2010. The Leadership Team was comprised of a teacher representative from each of six sites, the administrator, assistant administrator, and a resource teacher. Personnel shortages had an impact on the makeup of the team: the special education coordinator had recently left, and the school psychologist was in the process of leaving.

Training. Training took place between February and June 2010, with approximately one month between modules. Participants included 48 preschool teachers, assistant teachers, administrators and special education teachers. The program manager and program specialist for the 0-3 home-visitation programs participated as well.

Technical assistance/coaching. At the outset, the director indicated she wanted all classrooms to benefit from coaching, so the WestEd coach visited each of the 13 classrooms at least once, with several classrooms receiving two visits. Each visit was a half-day, which included observation and post-observation meetings with the teachers after the children had gone home. These meetings were either one-on-one, or, in the case of sites where the coach spent a full day visiting two or three classrooms, she met with teachers from the classrooms as a group. These group meetings were often held in one of the classrooms, providing an opportunity for teachers to visit one of their colleagues' classrooms and observe the arrangement of the environment, the use of visual schedules and the posted expectations. The internal coach accompanied the WestEd coach on several of these visits.

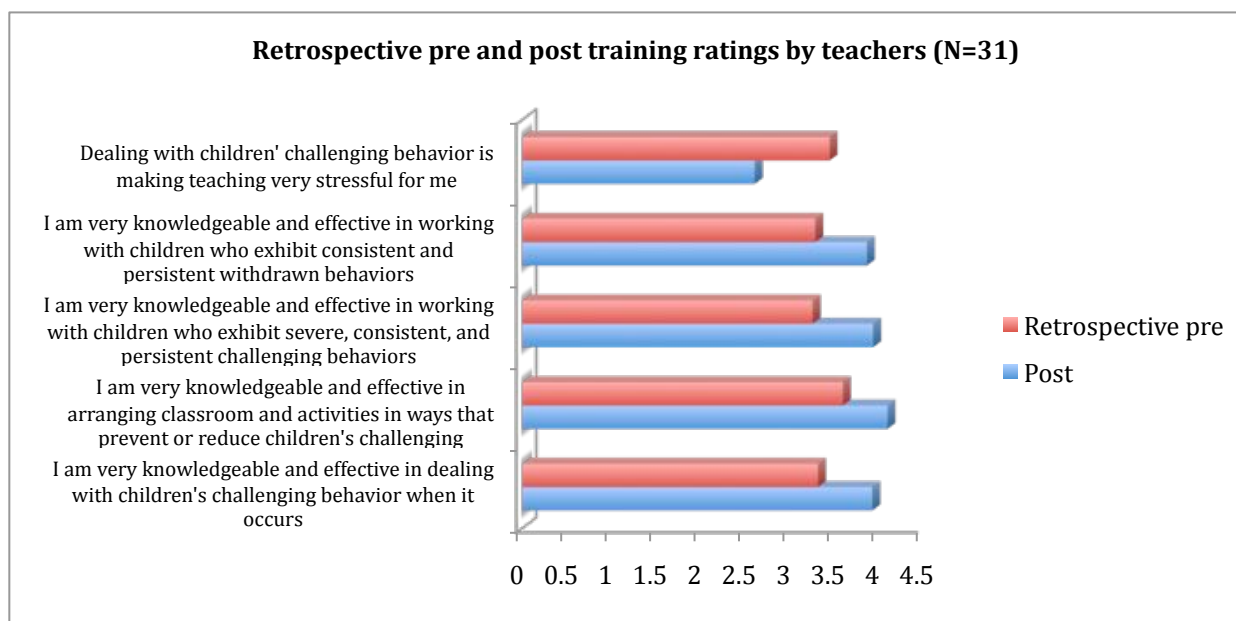
Family Modules Training of Facilitators. The Training of Facilitators Module took place in September 2010, at the beginning of the school year following the final training and Leadership Team meeting. The 12 participants included members of the Leadership Team plus a few additional teachers.

Data Collection

- Retrospective pre-and post surveys were distributed and returned at the final training session in June 2010.
- The focus group took place in April 2011 and included six teachers and one Resource Specialist. Years of experience teaching preschool ranged between 8 and 19, with a mean of 13 years.
- Key informant interviews were conducted between March and June 2011. Respondents included five teachers from the Leadership Team and the site director.

Successes

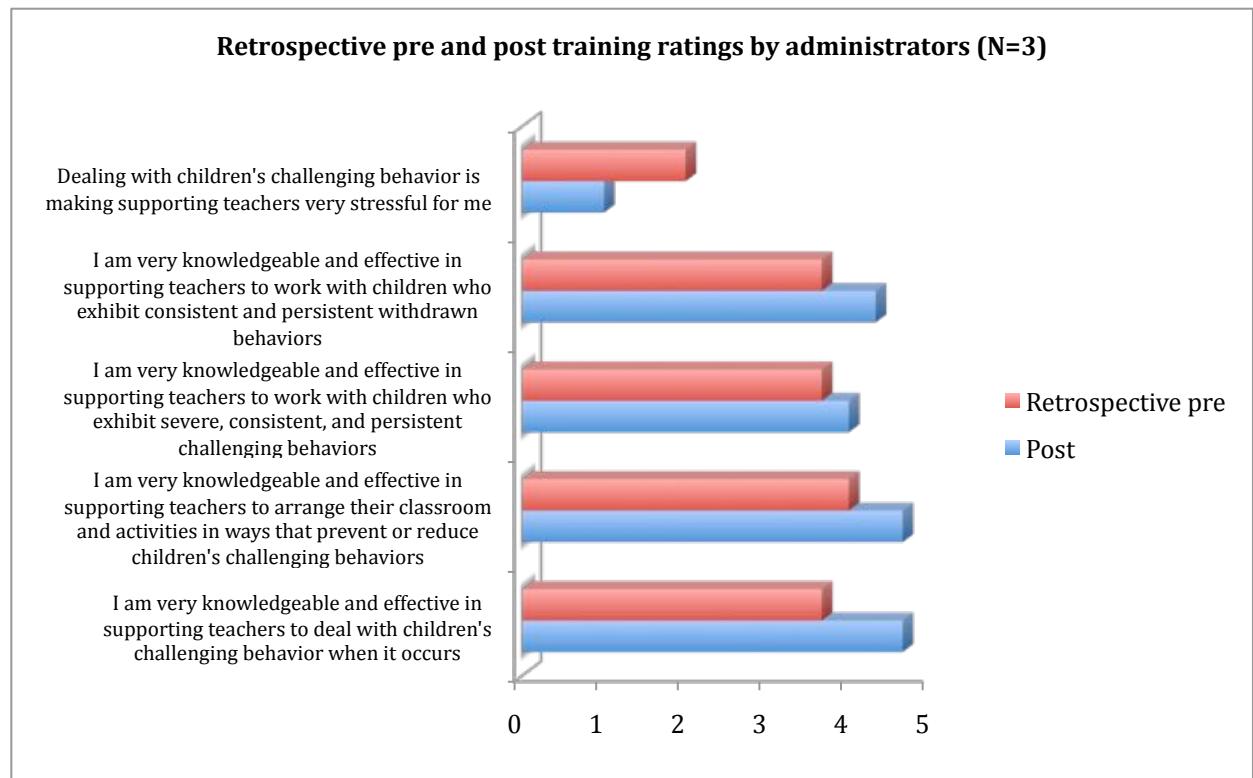
Surveys. Thirty-one teachers and instructional aides completed retrospective and post-training surveys at the end of the fourth and final module of the Teaching Pyramid training. These respondents reported statistically significant differences ($p < .05$) on ratings of their knowledge and effectiveness in dealing with children with challenging behavior. They also reported that dealing with challenging behaviors was less stressful for them after they had completed the Teaching Pyramid Training.



1= I never feel this way; 5= I feel this way all the time

Teachers also rated the behavior of the children in their classrooms in the month before the Teaching Pyramid training (January 2010) and the month preceding the final module (May 2011). On a 5-point scale, with 1= *Behavior has gotten much worse* to 5= *Behavior has improved drastically*, the mean values were 4.1 on the post and 3.4 on the retrospective pre-training ratings. This difference was significant ($p < .0001$).

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1= I never feel this way; 5= I feel this way all the time

There were only three administrators who responded to the post and retrospective pre-surveys. Items on these surveys were reworded to reflect the administrators' roles in supporting classroom teachers (e.g., Dealing with children's challenging behavior is making *supporting teachers* very stressful for me; I am very knowledgeable and effective in *supporting teachers* to deal with children's challenging behaviors when they occur). The N of 3 was too small for conducting statistical analysis; however, the means indicated greater knowledge and effectiveness on the post-training ratings compared with ratings on the retrospective pre.

During the focus group and interviews, which took place eight months after completion of the training and coaching, respondents reflected on the implementation of the Teaching Pyramid and the impact of the training and coaching on their teaching, and on their relationship with colleagues. Teachers described themselves as "more open to communicate and to grow;" "more understanding and a more positive person." As one participant commented, "it really helped me see their behavior not really as challenging, but what is it the child is trying to tell me?" Two teachers provided examples of positive child change as a result of implementing the Teaching Pyramid strategies. They found the Tucker Turtle technique, the solution kit, and the emotion cards particularly helpful.

As part of the training, teachers learned to recognize and acknowledge their individual “hot buttons:” child behaviors they found particularly challenging. Several teachers commented that this activity had a positive impact on their relationships with their colleagues:

After learning what my partner didn't like doing, or what pushed her buttons, I stepped in faster to help out. If the kids do something she doesn't like I take over because I know what gets to her.

Teachers credited the coaching with contributing to successful implementation of the Teaching Pyramid. They especially appreciated the strength-based approach of the coach.

The feedback we get at the end of the day is crucial and supports the trainings. Nobody gets everything by attending a class, you have to implement what you're learning, but then you need someone who is an expert to come in with a new set of eyes. You need an objective opinion from someone else.

Both the teachers and the School Readiness director commented on the compatibility between the Teaching Pyramid approach and the High Scope curriculum as contributing to successful implementation. Both trainings include observation and immediate feedback, so that approach was familiar to the teachers when they received Teaching Pyramid coaching. Both approaches stress routines, carefully arranged classroom environments, and the development of responsibility and confidence. In addition, both approaches help teachers become more intentional about what they are doing with children. One teacher commented, “The children work better together but it is hard to say if that is High Scope or Teaching Pyramid.

Teachers also reported that the joint trainings with their teaching assistants facilitated successful implementation; it helped that everyone was on the same page and had a shared when working to prevent or address challenging behaviors. According to the WestEd coach, the relationship between teachers and assistants in Lawndale was less hierarchical than in some of the other districts, and it was not always easy to tell teachers and assistants apart during classroom visits.

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Challenges

A main challenge in Lawndale concerned the absence of special education and a school psychologist on the Leadership Team. Having the Leadership Team composed primarily of teachers had both benefits and drawbacks. The benefit was that teachers were invested in the process from the beginning and, when the Leadership Team discussions revolved around the impact of the training in the classroom, teachers could provide first hand examples of successful strategies. Discussions were more practical and more solution-oriented than the discussions in other Leadership Teams comprised primarily of administrators and support personnel, who may or may not have had ongoing involvement in the classrooms. The drawback was that it was easy for conversations to get sidetracked to focus on individual teacher problems in dealing with a particular child's challenging behaviors. In addition, there was less opportunity to engage in conversations around meaningful systems change, as the team did not have the "big picture" of implementation across programs.

In Lawndale, the teachers were responsible for reproducing their own Teaching Pyramid materials (e.g., Tucker Turtle, solution kit cards) for use in their classrooms. During the third Leadership Team meeting, several teachers commented that they had not had time to make the materials, and wondered if they could wait until August to make the materials and have them in their classrooms by September. The director was very clear that her expectation was that the strategies be implemented immediately. She reminded staff that she had freed up time from their staff meetings so they could make materials, and she offered to provide them with substitute support if necessary.

Funding cuts and staff attrition created challenges as well. The director was faced with the potential loss of School Readiness funding, which would mean the loss of six teachers or three classrooms. While she was a dynamic and committed leader who made her high expectations for implementation very clear to the teachers, understandably much of her energy was focused on seeking alternate sources of funding. While the assistant director attended all four modules of the training, she was not a member of the Leadership Team and her position was eliminated at the end of the school year. This meant that the director and the resource teacher absorbed her job responsibilities.

In the year following the completion of the training and coaching, the resource teacher continued to serve as internal coach. She had less time to be available, as a result of taking on some of the responsibilities of the assistant director. In addition, there was one classroom that required a disproportionate amount of her attention, and she was unable to spend as much time in the other classrooms as she had the previous year.

Program strategies for supporting parent engagement

Members of the Leadership Team participated in the Family Modules Training of Facilitators at the beginning of the school year following the Teaching Pyramid Training. During that year, there were no parent workshops/trainings devoted to the Teaching Pyramid, although several teachers introduced the program-wide expectations (Be Safe, Be Kind, Be Respectful) at parent orientation and parent advisory meetings. In addition, First 5 funded the preschool program to deliver High Scope training for parents, and the resource teacher who was in charge of these trainings planned to weave the Teaching Pyramid expectations into the sessions.

Several teachers reported introducing Teaching Pyramid strategies during parent-teacher conferences to parents who were having problems with their child at home. “They see the relationship you have with their kids and they’re wondering how can the teacher get them to follow a routine, and I can’t.”

Several parents were surprised when they heard their children use the language of the expectations at home. One teacher explained:

One of the moms came in, and she stayed for a little bit, and she heard how we were talking to them. “That’s where it’s coming from.” She started telling me she’s hearing her child talk about being safe, but she wasn’t sure of how or why until she heard it in the classroom and it clicked with her.

Two teachers commented that after hearing about the Teaching Pyramid, and observing the teachers implementing the strategies, parents were more comfortable coming to the teachers and asking for advice when they had a problem with their child.

Maintenance efforts

The director designated the resource teacher as the internal coach. In this capacity, she worked with the teachers to reinforce the High Scope approach. The director and the resource teacher planned to capitalize on the compatibility between the High Scope and the Teaching Pyramid as they continued to work towards full implementation of the Teaching Pyramid, spending time during the High Scope meetings to review different aspects of the Teaching Pyramid as well. By coincidence, the High Scope trainer working with the teachers was also a CSEFEL trainer, and when she visited the classrooms she made it a point to acknowledge visual schedules and posted expectations. In addition, the director

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expanded the Leadership Team to include all 13 teachers, as High Scope was training every teacher.

One of the tasks for the Leadership Teams was to infuse the Teaching Pyramid into policies and procedures regarding steps for staff to take when concerned about a child's challenging behaviors. In Lawndale, this process was hampered by the absence of a special education administrator or school psychologist on the Leadership Team. During the training the teachers used a form developed by the last school psychologist when the referral was obviously appropriate for special education, and relied on the Teaching Pyramid Behavior Observation report when the referral had a strong behavioral component. The director felt it was unlikely that there would be a consensus around a district policy in the near future, but she planned to add Teaching Pyramid strategies to the staff manual handed out at the beginning of each school year.

The Leadership Team only met once since in 2010-2011, although the director reported that she planned to schedule more regular meetings in 2011-2012. And teachers in the focus group reported that every team sits down after school to talk about what they are doing, and what the children are doing in terms of the Pyramid. "There is a lot more clear and concise dialog taking place in the rooms," one teacher explained. She wished there was a chance for review at the beginning of each school year:

It's going to be the responsibility of our program to keep it up, but once they implement the parent component that will reinforce it for all of us, because now that are we preaching it to the parents, we've got to be implementing it ourselves.

C. VAUGHN NEXT CENTURY LEARNING CENTER

Introduction

Vaughn Next Century Learning Center is a large urban public school that converted to a public charter in 1993. The school serves 1,917 neighborhood students including 96.9% eligible for free meals, 2.8% eligible for reduced meals, and 72% English learners.⁹ It is located in San Fernando, a city of approximately 24,000. Residents include 91% Hispanic and 8% white only, with African-Americans and Asians comprising less than 1% of the population. In 2009, almost 18% of the residents lived below the poverty level and in March 2011 the unemployment rate was 12%.¹⁰ Twenty-one percent speak English in the home.¹¹

The School Readiness program, Pandaland, provides services to 200 children between three and five. Preschool teachers use the Houghton Mifflin curriculum which includes early literacy and numeracy programs, language development, intensive English learning activities, as well as school- and home-based socialization learning activities aligned to the DRDP-assessment tools. Preschool teachers also implement the Creative Curriculum for structuring the classroom and for planning and implementing developmentally appropriate activities. An additional 220 children are served in kindergarten with a curriculum that continues to develop school readiness, early literacy, early content area instruction, and socialization skills.

In the application to First 5 LA, the School Readiness coordinator wrote:

We are applying because we would like to engage in a professional opportunity that will support the social and emotional development of children from three to five at our site. We would further like to create sustainability in developing evidence-based practices that will enhance student-learning opportunities while addressing challenging behaviors. By participating in the Teaching Pyramid, we feel it will help solidify the foundation that we have in place and give our staff the resources to impact student social emotional development.

⁹ <http://www.vaughncharter.com/index.php/about-vnclc>

¹⁰ <http://www.city-data.com/city/San-Fernando-California.html>

¹¹ <http://www.city-data.com/housing/houses-San-Fernando-California.html>

Description of Teaching Pyramid Approach at Vaughn

Leadership Team. The Leadership Team included two teachers (one from preschool and one from kindergarten); two administrators (School Readiness and Head Start); two psychologists; a School Readiness educational specialist, a case manager and a child development supervisor. The initial Leadership Team meeting was held on April 8, 2010 and the final Leadership Team meeting was held October 1, 2010. The Leadership Team provided Teaching Pyramid materials for each classroom.

Training. Training took place between May 2010 and September 2010. The first two modules were held at the end of the school year and the last two were held following the summer break. Participants included 43 teachers, psychologists, case managers, administrators, and special education support staff. At the first Leadership Team meeting, the School Readiness coordinator reported it had been difficult to get buy-in from the teaching assistants; only three indicated interest in attending. She felt this was due in part to the fact that many of the teaching assistants were young single parents going to school themselves. She decided to fill the training slots funded by First 5 with all pre-K and kindergarten teachers, plus the support staff.

Technical assistance/coaching. Coaching started in April 2010 and was completed by February 2011. Two teachers, one kindergarten and one preschool, were designated as internal coaches. The School Readiness coordinator requested that all 21 pre-K and kindergarten teachers receive coaching and she selected 10 teachers to receive additional coaching. The WestEd coach conducted classroom observations, followed by 1:1 conversations with each teacher. She met periodically with teachers between observation visits to check on progress and offer support and met with the Head Start and School Readiness coordinators regularly to share updates and recommendations. Coaching focused on building positive relationships with children, teaching expectations for behavior, using visual supports for schedules and routines, and strategies for successful transitions.

Family Modules Training of Facilitators. The Training of Facilitators Module took place in March 2011. Participants included the Leadership Team plus two family advocates.

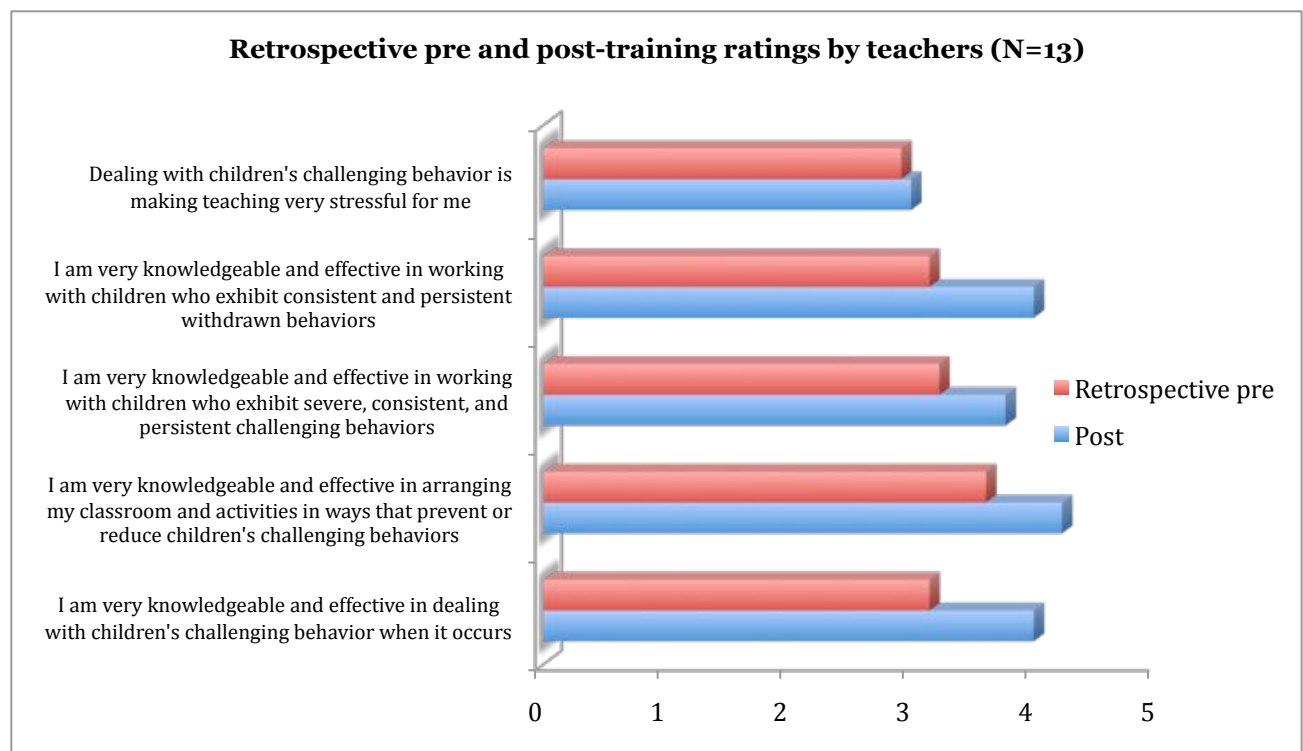
Data Collection

- Retrospective pre-and post surveys were distributed and returned at the final training session in September 2010.

- The focus group took place in April 2011 and included nine teachers. Years of experience teaching preschool ranged between 6 and 12, with a mean of 9 years.
- Key informant interviews were conducted between March and June 2011. Respondents included the School Readiness coordinator, School Readiness case manager, educational specialist, special education coordinator, the Head Start coordinator, a kindergarten teacher, and preschool site supervisor.

Successes

Surveys. Thirteen teachers completed retrospective pre and post-training surveys at the end of the fourth and final module of the Teaching Pyramid training. These respondents reported statistically significant differences ($p < .05$) on mean ratings of their knowledge and effectiveness in dealing with children with challenging behavior. Mean ratings for stress levels resulting from dealing with children's challenging behavior remained essentially the same from pre to post.



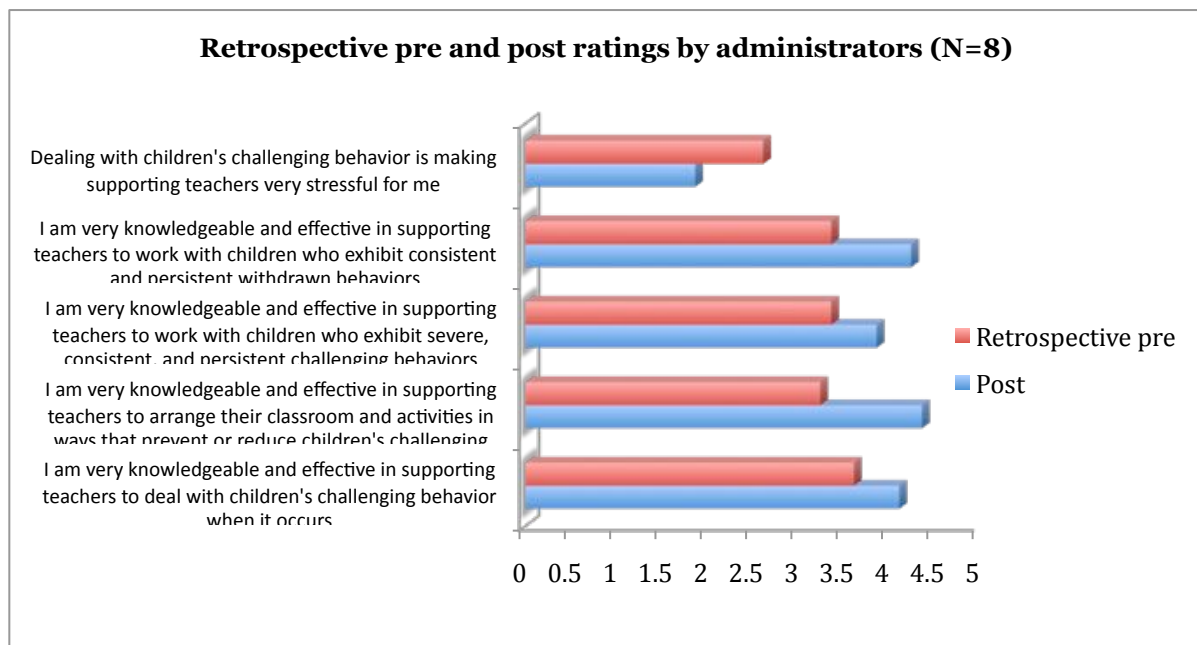
Note: 1=I never feel this way; 5= I feel this way all the time

On the post ratings, teachers compared the behavior of the children in their classroom during the final month of school to their behavior the month before the Teaching Pyramid training started. On a 5-point scale, with 1 = *Gotten much worse* to 5 = *Improved drastically*, the mean rating was a 3.8. It should be noted

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that teachers had only completed the first two modules of training by the end of the school year.

Administrators also reported statistically significant difference on all ratings of knowledge and effectiveness ($p < .02$) related to supporting teachers to work with children with challenging behaviors. On the post ratings, they compared the behavior of the children during the final month of school to their behavior the month before the Teaching Pyramid training started. On a 5-point scale, with 1 = *Gotten much worse* to 5 = *Improved drastically*, the mean rating was a 4.0.



Note: 1=I never feel this way; 5= I feel this way all the time

Focus group and key informant interviews. Focus group participants and key informants reflected on the positive impact of the Teaching Pyramid training on teachers, on children, and on the administration. According to two administrators, the teachers expressed less frustration. In addition, the training encouraged them to focus more on social-emotional development than previously, given a curriculum that focused heavily on academics. As one administrator noted, “It gave teachers a social-emotional understanding they didn’t consider before.”

Teachers experienced a paradigm shift, understanding that emotional literacy and pro-social behaviors were skills that could be taught along with literacy and numeracy:

We didn't look at behavior as something that needed to be taught like math and reading – that was a big awakening moment. Just taking that time to teach the child and make them aware of what happened, and how to replace their behavior with a more appropriate behavior is a big, big deal because before that teaching element was missing. (special education coordinator)

The School Readiness coordinator observed that the teachers were “less reactive; they look more for the antecedent that caused the behavior. Now they tend to question more and the students really like it.”

Two administrators commented on changes they had observed in the children. According to one,

It's working so well in the classroom – I can walk into a classroom and see the difference from this year to last year.

Teachers described children's increased facility at identifying and expressing their emotions, which “opened a forum of self-expression other than throwing tantrums.” As children became more verbal with one another, there were fewer conflicts:

We're seeing less conflict –especially the playground when we have less supervision. Now they're able to go to their super friend from their classroom and get that assistance so they don't have to wait until adults get involved. Kids are solving problems on their own (School Readiness educational specialist).

Administrators also experienced the benefits of the Teaching Pyramid training. The focus on the conceptual underpinnings of the strategies gave them background knowledge in social-emotional learning and information about specific strategies to use to support teachers who had children with challenging behaviors. In addition they experienced fewer students being sent to their offices.

There is more re-directing by the teachers rather than having a little visitor in our office every 5 minutes. I've totally seen the decline of students in my office – it's a massive decline, I can tell you that (School Readiness coordinator).

Another administrator commented, “We have more time to do the other stuff we are hired to do and walk around the classrooms a little bit more.”

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Focus group participants identified the coaching, the CSEFEL website with its materials and resources, and the opportunity to share experiences with colleagues during the trainings as keys to successful implementation of the Teaching Pyramid strategies. Three key informants stressed the critical role played by the Leadership Team: it made sure the Teaching Pyramid strategies were being implemented, monitored teacher feedback, and kept track of specific needs that came up during the trainings. Administration worked hard to ensure that the administrators on the Leadership Team were not viewed as “in charge” but, rather, that the team served as a mentorship opportunity for the rest of the members.

That way it's not so much you have to do this type of thing – that was our main goal. We were being strategic about it so it doesn't look like it's 'you have to' – it's do this because it's best practices (Head Start administrator).

Other key informants focused on the bigger picture. Two informants cited the fact that Vaughn is a charter school, whose teachers are there “because they want to teach and they respond well to implementing new things.” Two other informants cited the strong tradition of parent involvement and the fact that anything shared with the parents was always well received:

When we have parents come in and they want help, we tell them we have this program called Teaching Pyramid and this is what we're doing with the students. They are more than willing to come meet with me or another administrator and we briefly discuss what the whole pyramid does and how it promotes social competence in our students (school readiness coordinator).

Finally, the training occurred at an opportune time, as the mental health team had recently developed behavior expectations for pre-K through fifth grade in conjunction with input from parents, teachers and support staff. These expectations were compatible with the ones identified by the Leadership Team for the Teaching Pyramid: Be safe, Be respectful, and Be responsible. In addition, Response to Intervention (RTI) is used throughout the school, and teachers are familiar with the pyramid concept.

Challenges

According to the Head Start administrator, a significant challenge was the fact that the teaching assistants did not receive the Teaching Pyramid training from the WestEd staff. As a result, teachers and assistants were not always on the same page in addressing children's challenging behaviors. While the Head Start

administrator met with the assistants one hour a month, she felt it was not enough time to cover the material.

Now that I'm providing the training to them, they're more aware of how the Teaching Pyramid works but I think the whole process of not being with us and not being trained with us has slowed the process of implementing a bit.

It was left largely to the teachers to describe the framework and model the strategies for their assistants.

The other challenge was the lack of continuity between kindergarten and first grade in addressing children's challenging behavior. Members of the Leadership Team felt strongly that the Teaching Pyramid strategies should "trickle up;" that the approach could be tailored to be appropriate for the entire K-12 age range. Teachers on the Leadership Team expressed concerns about potential difficulties for students making the transition from classrooms that implemented the Teaching Pyramid to classrooms in which teachers had not been trained in the approach.

Program strategies for supporting parent engagement

The Positive Solutions for Families Training of Facilitators took place in March 2011, six months after the final module; no formal parent training had taken place by the time the focus group and key informant interviews were conducted.

Teachers reported informing parents about the Teaching Pyramid during parent conferences or when they picked their students up at the end of the day. They provided parents with specific strategies to use at home (e.g., scripted stories, visual schedules, solution kit) so children could experience consistency at home and at school. Teachers were more likely to share strategies with parents during IEP meetings, or on a case-by-case basis when there was a specific concern with an individual child. There was less information shared with parents about the foundations of the Teaching Pyramid – building relationships and creating a positive environment. Reflecting on sharing information with families, the School Readiness educational specialist commented, "It's an area we need to work on – make it more preventative rather than reactive."

In some cases parents noticed a difference in their children's behavior at home. According to the special education coordinator,

Parents are noticing a difference and are very happy they're not getting as much negative information being sent home or phone calls like 'your child once again hit somebody or got in trouble.' They've been asking 'What's going on? What's changing? Something is working,' and they're noticing how it's transferring from school to home.

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Maintenance efforts

Plans for maintaining the Teaching Pyramid include continuing monthly meetings of the Leadership Team, and providing time for two internal coaches to spend time observing and providing support to the classroom teachers who participated in the training. The plan is for coaches to report back to the Leadership Team at least every other month. “Implementation is number one for us,” the special education coordinator commented, “and we want to continue with having someone in charge of observing those teachers and giving them feedback so they continue those best practices they learned.”

Other plans include discussing the Teaching Pyramid at the monthly Student Study Team meetings, and continuing the training for classroom and outdoor play aides. The Head Start coordinator explained,

I give them monthly trainings, small workshops for about an hour. I take each module and introduce it to the teaching assistants and support staff we have on campus. I've included some activities we did at our training so they can have hands-on experience as well.

As noted earlier, however, she felt that one hour was not enough to cover all the material.

As a result of the Teaching Pyramid training, changes have been made to procedures for supporting children with challenging behaviors. The Behavior Observation Report, which includes a description of the challenging behavior and its possible triggers, consequences and functions is used in parent meetings. The Leadership Team reviewed their positive behavior support system to make sure it correlated with information from the Teaching Pyramid. They have a working draft of a checklist for teachers to remind them about strategies for building relationships and creating a positive classroom environment.

Finally, all the support personnel on the Leadership Team cover pre-K through 12th grade and they are committed to introducing the behavior expectations school-wide. They have already posted the expectations, with pictures for the children who were not yet reading, in the cafeteria and playground for K-5. In addition, the school psychologist planned to weave some of the Teaching Pyramid activities into the high school staff retreat during the past summer.

D. LENNOX SCHOOL DISTRICT

Introduction

The Lennox community is an unincorporated 1.3 square mile area of Metropolitan Los Angeles situated between the cities of Hawthorne, Inglewood and the Los Angeles International Airport. The majority of the 23,500 residents in the city of Lennox are Hispanic (92%). Other racial groups include 5% Black, and 3% White alone. Asians comprise less than 1% of the population. In 2009, almost 30% had incomes below the poverty level;¹² and in March 2011 the unemployment rate was slightly over 12%.¹³

The Lennox School District serves approximately 7,300 students. Thirty-four percent of the students are English language learners and 92% qualify for free lunch/compensatory meals.¹⁴ The Lennox Early Childhood Program, which is part of the district, serves over 900 children in three School Readiness programs and 19 state preschool programs. According to the application to First 5 LA, both programs work together to provide a smooth transition between the home, School Readiness, preschool settings, and kindergarten. The program uses the High Scope curriculum. The state preschool also has two special day classes for children with special needs.

Quoting from the application,

Although the Lennox School District has used Lee Canter's Assertive Discipline for years, there is no discipline program consistent in both the state preschool, school readiness and K-8th grade. So, having a consistent plan in terms of behavior across programs would be helpful. Currently children with challenging behaviors are referred to the Teacher Assistant Team or the Students Study Team for input from teaching staff, a counselor, psychologist and special education staff to offer adaptations, modifications, or accommodations to assist the child in the classroom setting.

Description of Teaching Pyramid Approach at Lennox

Leadership Team. The Leadership Team included the assistant superintendent, preschool director, pre-K teachers, special education teachers, disabilities coordinators, staff development specialist, parent coordinator, and School Readiness staff. The first meeting was held on August 12, 2010 and the final one on June 2, 2011.

¹² <http://www.city-data.com/poverty/poverty-Lennox-California.html>

¹³ <http://www.city-data.com/work/work-Lennox-California.html#unemployment>

¹⁴ <http://www.ed-data.k12.ca.us/>

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Training. Training took place between August 2010 and May 2011 and included 48 teachers, teacher assistants, administrators, therapists, and specialists. Modules 1 and 2 were delivered five months apart, Modules 2 and 3a three months apart, and Module 3b six weeks following Module 3a.

Technical assistance/coaching. Three members of the Leadership Team served as internal coaches. The preschool director selected five preschool classrooms and one School Readiness classroom, all with strong teachers, for ongoing coaching. Several other teachers requested coaching because of the needs of the children in their classrooms. Each preschool classroom had two teachers who shared responsibility for the classroom – one took the lead in the morning, one in the afternoon. Each classroom was observed and coaching conversations were conducted with the teaching team at the end of the day after the children went home. Coaching focused on classroom preventive practices and social emotional teaching strategies, as well as developing individualized positive behavior support plans for children with challenging behaviors.

On several occasions, the coach met with the internal coaches and director to share observations and recommendations. At other times, an internal coach joined the post-observation coaching conversation. Internal coaches and program administrators provided ongoing support to teachers between coaching visits, such as email reminders, discussions during staff meetings, classroom visits, and creation/delivery of visual supports

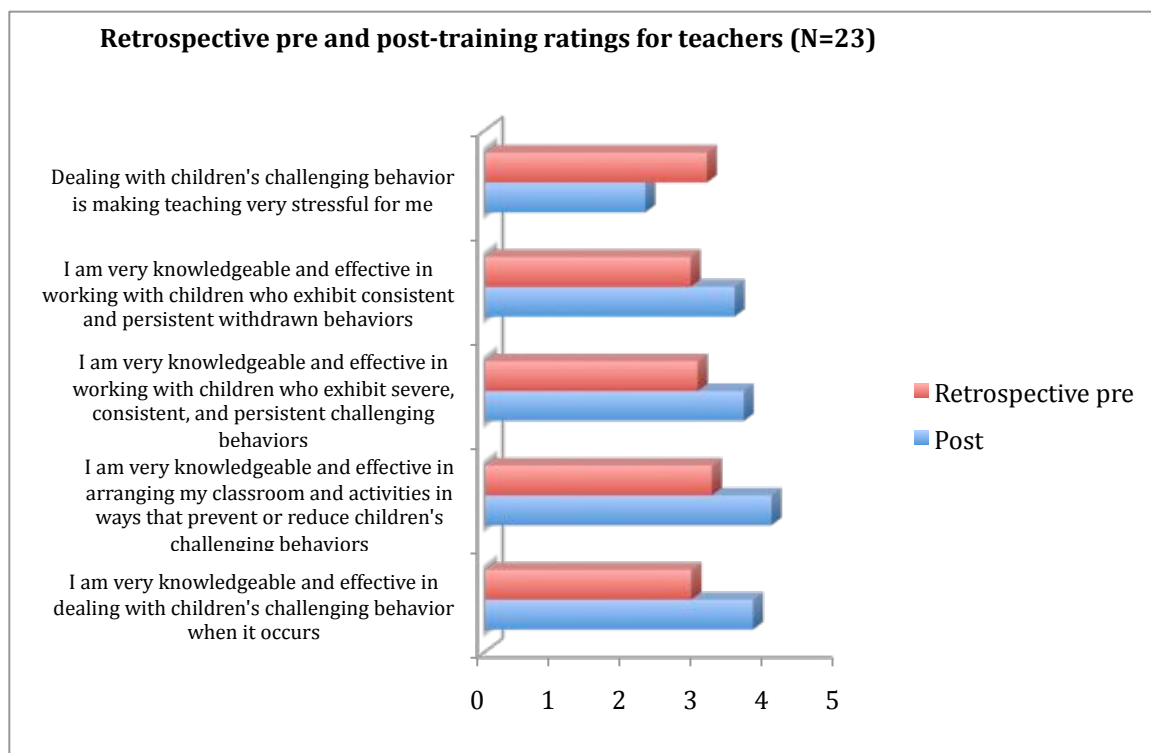
Family Modules Training of Facilitators. The Positive Solutions for Families Training of Facilitators was conducted on June 6, 2011. Participants included six members of the Leadership Team plus seven additional teachers.

Data Collection

- Retrospective pre-and post surveys were distributed and returned at the final training session in May 2011.
- The focus group took place in June 2011 and included seven teachers. Years of experience teaching preschool ranged between 1 and 10, with a mean of 6.8 years.
- Key informant interviews were conducted in May and June 2011. Respondents included the assistant superintendent, the School Readiness coordinator, School Readiness literacy coach, the State Preschool director, State Preschool development specialist, and a special education teacher.

Successes

Surveys. Twenty-three teachers completed retrospective pre- and post-training surveys at the end of the fourth and final module of the Teaching Pyramid training. Teachers reported statistically significant differences ($p < .05$) on retrospective pre- and post ratings of their knowledge and effectiveness in dealing with children with challenging behavior. Teachers also reported that dealing with children's challenging behaviors was significantly less stressful for them after they had completed the training.

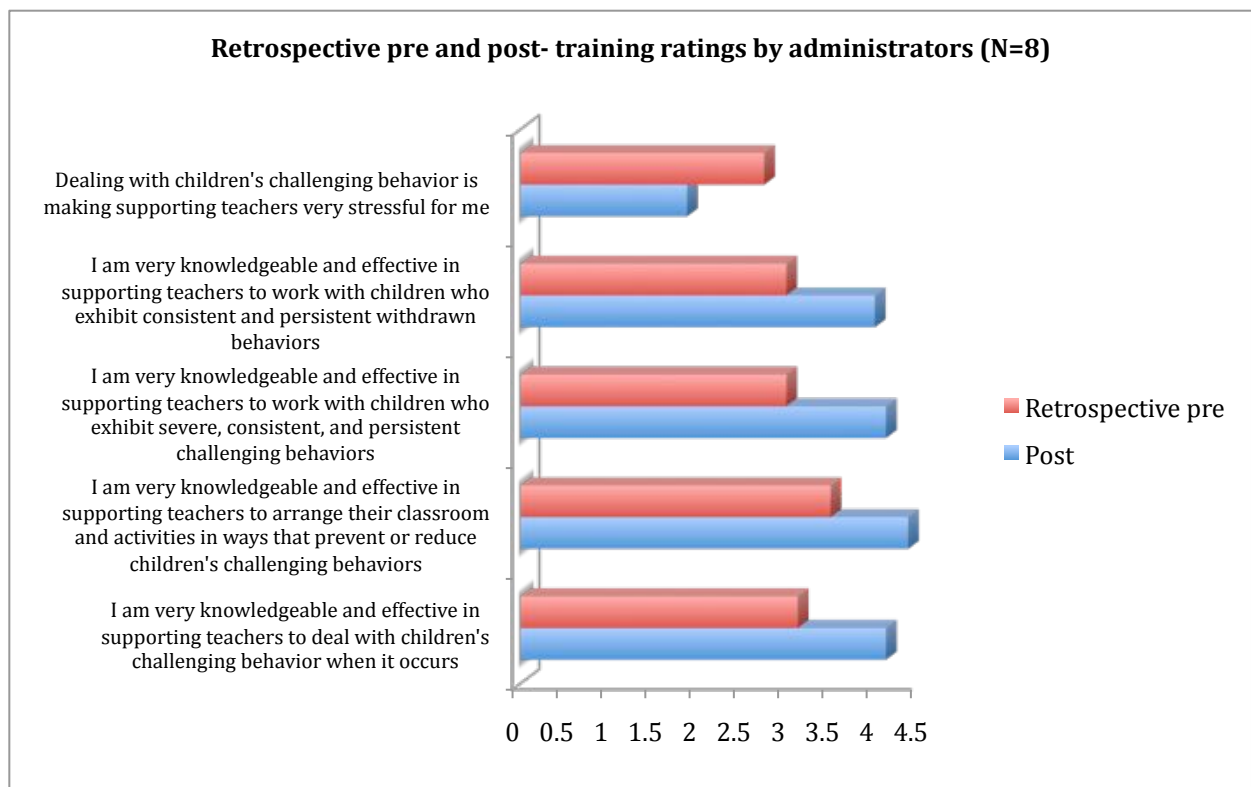


Teachers also rated the behavior of the children in their classrooms since the beginning of the Teaching Pyramid training. On a 5-point scale with 1= *behavior has gotten much worse* to 5= *behavior has improved drastically*, the mean rating was 4.25. Only one of the 23 teachers indicated that the children's behavior had stayed the same.

Eight administrators and program support personnel completed retrospective pre- and post-training surveys at the end of the fourth and final module of the Teaching Pyramid training. Administrators reported statistically significant differences ($p < .05$) on retrospective pre- and post ratings of their knowledge and effectiveness in supporting teachers dealing with children with challenging behavior. Administrators also reported that supporting teachers dealing with

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challenging behaviors was less stressful for them after they had completed the training, although these differences were not statistically significant.



1= I never felt this way; 5= I felt this way all of the time

Administrators also rated the behavior of the children in the classrooms with which they worked since the beginning of the Teaching Pyramid training. On a 5-point scale with 1= *behavior has gotten much worse* to 5= *behavior has improved drastically*, the mean rating was 4.43. Only one of the eight administrators indicated that the children's behavior had stayed the same.

Focus group and key informant interviews. Teachers in the focus group described themselves as more confident and more understanding:

I look at what is triggering that child to react this way. Before I would approach him and try to solve the problems for him and now I give supportive guidance to solving the problem.

Key informants concurred with the teachers; they described teachers as “feeling more successful;” “less exhausted;” “less frustrated.” The State Preschool director said that teachers were now approaching challenging behavior proactively, through their organization of the classroom environment, and, by approaching children in behavior situations as an opportunity for teaching appropriate social

strategies, and not in a reactive way. The School Readiness coordinator observed changes in the teachers of the children birth to three:

We've seen a lot less temper tantrum behavior this year. The teachers used to have a little time out chair, and now they're not doing that because the point is not punishment, it's teaching children what else they can do instead.

In the final Leadership Team meeting, members agreed that children were perceived differently as a result of the Teaching Pyramid training. Members also commented that the teachers did not view the training as “just another thing” they had to do. “They’ve had other trainings that have told them *what* to do,” one member commented. “The Pyramid tells them *how* to do it.”

Additionally, the special education teacher expressed increased confidence that more children with special needs could be successfully included in the general education classroom, given teachers’ adopting visual schedules and “taking a moment and thinking why the child is acting the way he’s acting, not just because he wants attention or he doesn’t want to listen.”

Many factors in Lennox support the successful implementation of the Teaching Pyramid. On a macro level, the district has adopted a strategic plan with a goal of “from cradle to college.” The district “recognizes the place of school readiness and early childhood in the educational pipeline,” according to the School Readiness coordinator. The School Readiness and State Preschool programs work together closely and plan joint trainings. The Teaching Pyramid is a good match with where the district is moving with RTI, and contains a logical set of tools to help children make a smooth transition from school readiness to early childhood to the elementary grades.

Second, in addition the district recognizes the importance of family involvement. One of the themes to emerge from the key informant interviews was the importance placed on relationships with the community. The School Readiness parent coordinator explained, “Relationships are something very important in Lennox so I think that’s a very good fit with the first level of the Pyramid.” A preschool special education teacher added, “Parents trust us and they believe we want what’s best for kids and the teachers in return want to help the community.” Part of the reason the teachers were so invested in the community, she felt, was that many of them attended school in Lennox themselves and still lived in the area.

Third, the focus on relationships extended to those between administrators and teachers and teacher assistants. “I’ve seen administration use the language and

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acknowledging us and leaving love notes here and there,” reported one of the teachers. In addition, members of the Leadership Team remained in close contact with the participants during the training. They made sure that the teachers had the Teaching Pyramid materials, and sent periodic e-mails to the classrooms, reminding the staff to make use of them. They used positive acknowledgements liberally; e.g., the preschool director acknowledged teachers and assistants for giving up their Saturdays for the training. After a visit to the preschool program by the new superintendent, one of the administrators sent the following e-mail:

Congratulations to all of you who have taken the Teaching Pyramid visuals and tools to the children you serve. It's great to step into classrooms and see how effectively and quickly you have incorporated the various strategies and materials. On Thursday, May 12, our new superintendent visited _____Preschool. He marveled at how well children were engaged and noted that every adult in the classroom was directly working with children and teaching. He said it was the highest level of engagement he has ever seen. Kudos to all of you for working hard and supporting the children at their level.

Finally, administrators and teachers alike demonstrated a high level of dedication and commitment. Staff members unable to attend the training asked their colleagues for copies of the materials, and Leadership Team members and teachers came in on Saturdays to duplicate materials and re-arrange classrooms to support implementation of the Teaching Pyramid.

Challenges

Focus group participants reflected on the predominant culture of the district and the difficulty in presenting the concepts of emotional literacy to parents:

Most of the parents are like us – I think most of us grew up in a family where you don't question your parents and you don't talk about your feelings. It's a culture clash in a way to ask the child how they feel, and I think it will take a while for them to get comfortable with that notion. I'm so happy they're training the parents because it's going to be a very new and difficult concept for them to grasp.

On the other hand, teachers in the focus group did not identify time as a challenge. As one participant explained, “as a preschool teacher it comes with the territory.” She continued,

For me it doesn't matter because the time I'm investing is a great investment. After a while the kids don't need your intervention because they can work it out on their own. If you use it and you're consistent with it, they can run with it and become independent.

Time was a challenge for administrators, the time to download the materials, copy them, laminate them, get them into the hands of the teachers, and follow up to be sure the materials were being used. Only two of the four School Readiness teachers were able to participate in the training, and while the participating teachers shared the materials with those unable to attend, it was not the same as learning the content first hand.

Strategies for promoting parent engagement.

Although the Positive Solutions for Families Training of Facilitators was not held until the end of the school year, Lennox utilized several strategies to promote parent engagement. During the first week of school there was a slide show including information about the Teaching Pyramid in a parent orientation meeting. In the presentation, parents were told that the strategies would help deal with challenging behaviors, and help all children to be successful. During the school year, the families were informed about the training in the weekly newspaper, and were also told that there was a parent training component, which would be made available to the entire parent body.

Teachers also used parent conferences to promote parent engagement.

During parent conferences one of the areas we have is impulse control and problem solving. This last parent conference I mentioned about Tucker Turtle and the solution kit and they really liked it. If the parents brought their children with them I had the children show the parents what we're doing when we're upset and I told them it's okay to validate their feelings. The parents loved it.

The special education teacher noted that they have always used parent conferences to talk about consistency, environments, acknowledging children, and the functions of behavior and she noticed that the general education teachers were using similar vocabulary with their parents.

Finally, several articles about healthy social emotional development and managing children's challenging behavior have been included in the weekly *Lennox School District Preschool Press* newsletter.

Maintenance efforts

Members of the Leadership Team added Teaching Pyramid strategies to the Teachers Assistance Team checklist, which outlines procedures for addressing challenging behaviors. The checklist was still in draft form at the final Leadership

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Team meeting. A goal for the coming year was to add social-emotional development to individual professional development plans for staff. Initially the preschool director selected teachers for coaching who she felt would be highly successful and that were “further along so it can sustain itself and continue as reinforcement.” According to the WestEd coach, these teachers demonstrated competence and confidence in creating healthy social and emotional experiences for children and providing individualized support for children with challenging behaviors. The Director planned to seek funding to bring the WestEd coach back next year to work with targeted teachers “a couple of times.”

The preschool director explained that the program planned to adopt the Teaching Pyramid strategies as “non-negotiable; like you don’t leave your house without brushing your teeth.” At the same time she planned to “chunk it;” to select one aspect each week to focus on. She explained

We would say at the beginning of the year, this is what I want you to pay attention to, like arriving and departing, because those are essential elements of building relationships. As the year progresses, cycling through the other aspects and not trying to do too much, but chunking it so it’s manageable and doable.

The assistant superintendent voiced strong support for continuing the Teaching Pyramid:

We have every intention for starting next year with this as the framework for all classrooms, whether those teachers participated with training or not. The Leadership Team has already talked about systems for bringing those on board that were not part of the training – they are 100% committed.

While the Leadership Team discussed plans for sharing the Teaching Pyramid framework district-wide at the kindergarten and elementary levels, the assistant superintendent reported that the district was opening an alternative school for grades 6,7, and 8, and was looking at using the Teaching Pyramid as a framework for the program.

E. PARAMOUNT UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

Introduction

The city of Paramount has approximately 55,000 residents. The majority of residents are Hispanic (78%), followed by Black (11%) White (8%), and Asian (2%).¹⁵ In 2009 the unemployment rate was almost 18%.¹⁶ The Paramount community has a high percentage of low-income children 0-5. Forty-four percent come from a single parent household, 35% of the mothers did not graduate from high school and the poverty rate is 84%.¹⁷

The Paramount Unified School District serves almost 16,000 students in Paramount and surrounding parts of South Gate and Long Beach. Thirty-four percent of the students are English language learners and 92% qualify for free lunch/compensatory meals.¹⁸ Approximately 600 children between 3 and 5 are served in a variety of programs throughout the district: six state preschool classes and one full-day class; four LAUP classes, and 3 special education Classes. School Readiness serves 60 children. The preschool programs are based on the California Preschool Learning Foundations and Desired Results. In addition the District has adopted the Preschool Open Court Reading Curriculum.

Description of Teaching Pyramid Approach at Paramount

Leadership Team. The initial Leadership Team meeting took place in August 2010 and the final one took place in May 2011. The eight members of the Leadership Team included the Early Childhood Education program director, special education coordinator, resource specialist, pre-K teachers, family advocate, and a behavior specialist. The Leadership Team provided the opportunity to bring special education and early childhood general education together for the first time. They revised the district's policies and procedures for supporting children with challenging behaviors and streamlined the referral process for special education services.

Training. Training took place between August 2010 and April 2011, and included 59 pre-K teachers, instructional aides, administrators, and members of the Special Education Support Team. Several of the special education aides were only able to attend Module 1 because it was difficult to get substitutes for the rest of the modules.

¹⁵ <http://www.city-data.com/city/Paramount-California.html>

¹⁶ <http://www.city-data.com/work/work-Paramount-California.html#unemployment>

¹⁷ <http://www.first5la.org/grantees/paramount-unified-school-district>

¹⁸ <http://www.ed-data.k12.ca.us/>

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Technical assistance/coaching. Coaching began in September 2010 and was completed in June 2011. The technical assistance focused on building positive relationships with children, parents, and colleagues, using Teaching Pyramid visual supports, and teaching children how to recognize and express their emotions. The preschool director selected 5 classrooms to receive ongoing coaching, based on teacher-expressed interest in coaching and commitment to implementing Teaching Pyramid strategies. Coaching conversations were conducted with each teacher immediately following the classroom observations and regular updates were provided to the director.

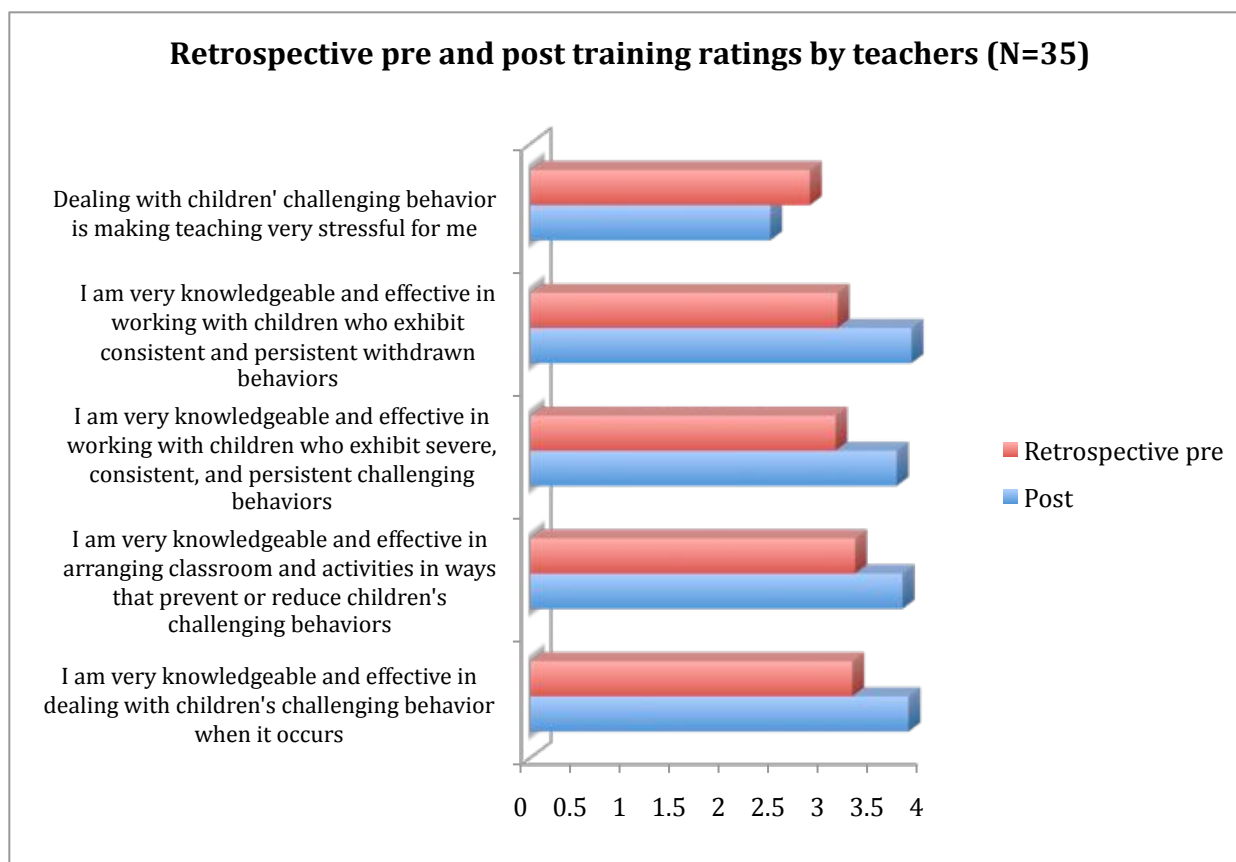
Family Modules Training of Facilitators. The Positive Solutions for Families Training of Facilitators was conducted on June 1, 2011, two weeks following the final Leadership Team meeting. The 15 participants included the Leadership Team and additional staff from Early Childhood and Special Education.

Data Collection

- Retrospective pre-and post surveys were distributed and returned at the final training session in April 2011.
- The focus group took place in June 2011 and included eight teachers from State Preschool (N=4), LAUP (N=3), and Special Education (N=1). Years of experience teaching preschool ranged from 1 to 25 with a mean of 11.8 years.
- Six key informant interviews were conducted in May and June 2011. Respondents included the directors of special education and early childhood education, the school psychologist, resource specialist, program specialist, and behavior specialist.

Successes

Surveys. Thirty-five teachers completed retrospective pre and post-training surveys at the end of the fourth and final module of the Teaching Pyramid training. These respondents reported statistically significant differences ($p < .001$ or greater) on mean ratings of their knowledge and effectiveness in dealing with children with challenging behavior. Mean ratings for stress levels resulting from dealing with children's challenging behavior were significantly lower on the post training ratings compared to the ratings on the retrospective pre surveys.

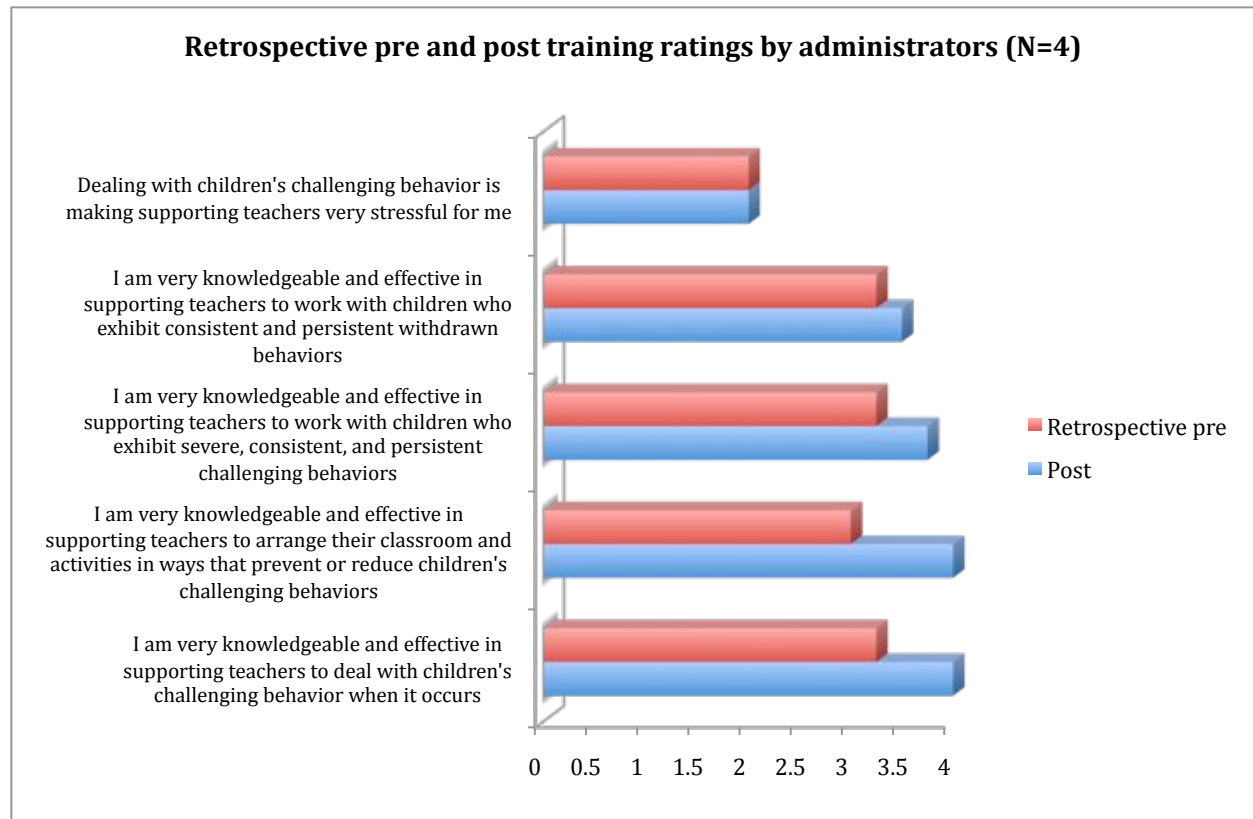


1 = I never feel this way; 5= I always feel this way

On the post ratings, teachers rated the behavior of the children in their classroom since they began the Teaching Pyramid training. On a 5-point scale, with 1 = Gotten much worse to 5 = Improved drastically, the mean rating was 4.29.

Only four administrators completed the retrospective pre and post surveys. Mean ratings indicated greater knowledge and effectiveness on the post-training ratings compared with ratings on the retrospective pre. Mean ratings for stress levels resulting from supporting teachers dealing with children's challenging behavior were unchanged, indicating relatively low stress levels at both periods. Administrators rated the behavior of the children in the classrooms with which they worked since the Teaching Pyramid began. The mean rating was 4.5 on the 5-point scale, with 5 indicating "Improved drastically."

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1 = I never feel this way; 5 = I feel this way all the time

Focus group and key informant interviews. Teachers and key informants reported that the Teaching Pyramid Training had a positive impact in several areas. In terms of the impact on teachers, they described teachers as interacting more with the children, and providing “more of a high quality supportive environment.” They described the special education teachers as “more focused, and working to get the kids more responsible rather than just telling them what to do.” The school psychologist added,

It's giving them the tools, the strategies to be able to intervene and what to do if a problem behavior seems to get out of control, or before a problem behavior gets worse.

The resource specialist concurred, commenting that prior to the Teaching Pyramid training teachers did not feel they had the tools to address children's challenging behaviors. Consequently they took the path of least resistance by referring to special education.

Focus group participants reflected on the changes they observed in the children after implementing the Teaching Pyramid strategies. As examples, they described the children as being more responsible, more independent, “learning to live by the concepts, not just to follow a rule.” They were generalizing what they learned

in the classroom into other environments; e.g., the playground. In another example, the behavior specialist described consulting with a teacher who needed help with a student's challenging behavior. The behavior specialist reminded her about some of the Teaching Pyramid Strategies and after only two weeks the teacher reported significant changes in the student's behavior.

One of the Teaching Pyramid strategies for building relationships among the staff is the use of "positive deposits" in the form of notes containing positive acknowledgements. Teachers reported a closer working relationship between themselves and their aides once they implemented this strategy.

We could say thank you everyday when they're walking out the door but when you say it everyday it's routine. When they get that note in the piggybank they feel more validated – 'okay they took the time to write and drop this in.'

The Teaching Pyramid Training had an impact on the program management level as well. Several key informants cited the collaboration between the preschool program and special education, which had not existed prior to the Teaching Pyramid training. Prior to the training the programs had been "two separate entities," according to the early childhood program director. She explained,

It has brought preschool and special education close together. It has created our Leadership Team. I was a one-girl show here in the district, and now I feel I have back up.

The two administrators worked together to plan meetings and implementation of the Pyramid.

Key informants offered several reasons why they felt the Teaching Pyramid strategies could be implemented successfully in Paramount. First the district is a relatively small one, and there is a strong belief in parent involvement. The school psychologist felt this would make it easy to reach out to the community. Second, the Teaching Pyramid Training addressed a gap in the preschool teachers' professional development. As the behavior specialist explained,

There really wasn't a cohesive plan in place for all the preschool teachers to be following. I think there was a lack of training of any type, and the fact that something was offered to them, they've really embraced it.

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Challenges

While many preschool teachers did embrace the Teaching Pyramid Strategies, there were some teachers who were resistant. “They have been doing things the same way for years,” the ECE Program director explained, “and this is brand new for them. They’re very excited but change takes time; this isn’t something that is a fly by night.” A special education teacher expressed concerns that the Teaching Pyramid philosophy did not support the use of a token reward system, and was troubled by the lack of compatibility between the two approaches.

Several key informants speculated that teacher resistance was caused in part by the isolation of the preschool classrooms from the K-12 program, and the fact that preschool teachers had not benefitted from the same professional development opportunities provided in K-12. The resource specialist described the preschool program as the “stepchild,” of the district:

The whole process that schools have had in place for year, RTI, had levels to go through in resolving a problem. That’s district mainstream. Preschool has never been involved in that.

In addition, the WestEd coach observed that they are isolated from each other. They are often the only preschool classrooms on an elementary campus and there is very little opportunity for interaction with other preschool teachers.

Prior to the Teaching Pyramid Training, special education was described as the “life support” for preschool; teachers had no other recourse for dealing with children with challenging behavior. They called for assistance with a child, and “even with the smallest thing the special education person would take it over.” According to the preschool special education resource teacher “The levels and the interventions from the teacher were not there at all, it was like going from nothing to special education, so that was a huge middle piece missing.” With the Teaching Pyramid, teachers were asked to implement basic strategies from the bottom of the pyramid before calling for assistance. Not surprisingly, some teachers found this transition a difficult one.

Finally, staffing structure posed a challenge. Each teacher worked a full day with two aides in the morning and two different aides in the afternoon. They worked only during class time and there was no planning time with aides.

Strategies for promoting parent engagement.

The Positive Solutions for Families Training of Facilitators was not held until the end of the school year, and formal parent training was planned for the upcoming

year. Teachers in the focus group described some of the informal strategies they used with parents: explaining the use of classroom expectations during parent conferences and making copies of the expectations for parent to use in the home and pointing out various Teaching Pyramid materials when parents came into the classroom. The behavior specialist and one of the teachers had a meeting for parents during which they introduced some of the Teaching Pyramid concepts and strategies, explaining how the positive strategies used in the classroom could be carried over to the home. The teacher gave the parents a copy of the solution cards to be used at home and the parents were very receptive. In another classroom the teacher instituted “Happy Friday” notes. She asked parents to write a note about their child, “I am happy and proud of ____ because ____,” which they placed in a big jar in the classroom. Every Friday, the teacher read them out loud to the children. All of the families participated in this activity and it was a highlight for the children.

Teachers on the Leadership Team reported that parents were hearing their children not only using the expectations “Be friendly,” “Be respectful,” “Be safe and healthy” at home, but understanding their meaning as well. The parents reported they were very surprised as well as pleased.

Maintenance efforts

At their final meeting, the Leadership Team developed a vision and action plan for the 2011-12 school year, and scheduled meeting dates to support sustainability and implementation of the Teaching Pyramid. They agreed to schedule an aide training day during the summer, when teachers would meet with their aides to set goals around the implementation of the Teaching Pyramid.

The early childhood director described her plans for maintaining the visibility of the Teaching Pyramid:

We’re going to state it again in our back to school meetings, and we’ll state it in every meeting we hold throughout the rest of the school year. I write weekly bulletins, and I’ll put blurbs in weekly bulletins about social/emotional and classroom tips, or little tips of talking with children or about dealing with challenging behaviors. We’re going to try many different ways. It will definitely be a topic throughout our meetings through the school year. Even if it’s just a small mention, it will be on the agenda all school year.

She also planned to support peer coaching so teachers could observe each other and provide encouragement for implementation of Teaching Pyramid strategies. Teachers made first and second choice requests for peer coaching partners and she planned to honor those requests. Other plans for maintenance included

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integrating the Teaching Pyramid into lesson plans, into teachers' and instructional assistants' evaluations, and into the consultation request form.

There was consensus among the key informants that the timing of the Teaching Pyramid training increased the likelihood that the strategies would be maintained over time. The district was in the process of modifying the RTI process for K-5, and the Teaching Pyramid aligned well with that process. In addition, the LAUP coach, who visits each LAUP classroom one a month, set goals for the coming year mainly around social-emotional issues, which would be compatible with implementing the Teaching Pyramid strategies.

F. AZUSA UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

Introduction

The city of Azusa has approximately 47,000 residents. The majority of residents are Hispanic (67%), followed by white alone (21%), Asian (7%) and black (4%).¹⁹ Thirty-nine percent of the residents speak English in the home. ²⁰ Almost 17% live below the poverty line, and the unemployment rate in 2009 was slightly over 13%²¹

The Azusa Unified School District includes 18 schools that serve 11,000 children. Twenty-six percent are English-language learners and 64% qualify for free lunch/compensatory meals.²²

Approximately 1,600 children between 3 and 5 are served in a variety of programs throughout the district. Three LAUP programs and two preschool special education classes are offered at Longfellow. AUSD contracts with the San Gabriel Valley YMCA to run LAUP and State Preschool programs at six other campuses throughout the district, and partners with Foothill Family Services to offer a home visiting program supported by School Readiness funds.

First 5 LA offered the Teaching Pyramid training to Azusa for a minimum of 30-40 participants. Because Azusa had only the one preschool (Longfellow), the assistant superintendent of AUSD requested and received permission to include teachers from the programs run by their partners (YMCA, Foothill Services, Plaza de la Raza). The assistant superintendent reflected on the advantages of collaboration among the different preschool programs:

We've discovered having a more powerful preschool program helps the K-12 system. We have found it's important to have the dialogue and articulation, so we can all be in-sync with each other. The Y has been a willing partner to articulate and to try to modify their curriculum and do what is helpful for students to transition into our system; so all of us have seen the benefits of working together.

In addition, one kindergarten and two elementary special education teachers participated in the training.

¹⁹ <http://www.city-data.com/city/Azusa-California.html>

²⁰ <http://www.city-data.com/races/races-Azusa-California.html>

²¹ <http://www.city-data.com/work/work-Azusa-California.html#unemployment>

²² <http://www.ed-data.k12.ca.us/>

Description of Teaching Pyramid Approach at Azusa

Leadership Team. The initial Leadership Team meeting took place in January 2011, and the final one took place in May of 2011. Members of the team included the assistant superintendent, program directors of the Longfellow and YMCA programs, pre-K teachers, program specialist, special education teachers and coordinator, and the school psychologist. The Leadership Team used a consensus building process to develop a shared vision for implementation of the Teaching Pyramid in pre-K and special education classrooms throughout the district.

The Leadership Team provided an opportunity for staff from the AUDS preschool programs (LAUP, State Preschool, Special Education) to collaborate. Previously, the assistant superintendent and the coordinator of the YMCA programs met regularly around administrative details, but the staff from the different programs had no contact with each other. The assistant superintendent commented on the benefits of the collaboration:

One of our goals has been to have articulation amongst all of our preschools . . . They were all working together [on the Leadership Team], and the value was making sure everybody understands what students need to know and be able to do as they enter kinder and the k-12 system. So, those conversations were held and they were fabulous.

Training. Training took place between January and May 2011, and included 39 teachers, general education instructional aides, administrators, and support staff. Special education aides did not participate.

Technical assistance/coaching. Coaching began in January 2011 and was completed in June. Coaching visits were conducted with five special education classes and two preschool classes that had requested support, as well as three preschool classes identified by the coordinator as candidates for coaching support. Coaching focused on supporting children's play, providing positive feedback and encouragement, building relationships with children and adults, and strategies for smooth transitions. In special education classrooms, the coach observed in the classroom and then met with each teacher afterward. For preschool classrooms, coaching conversations were conducted with each teaching team. The coach met with program managers/coordinators to share updates and recommendations.

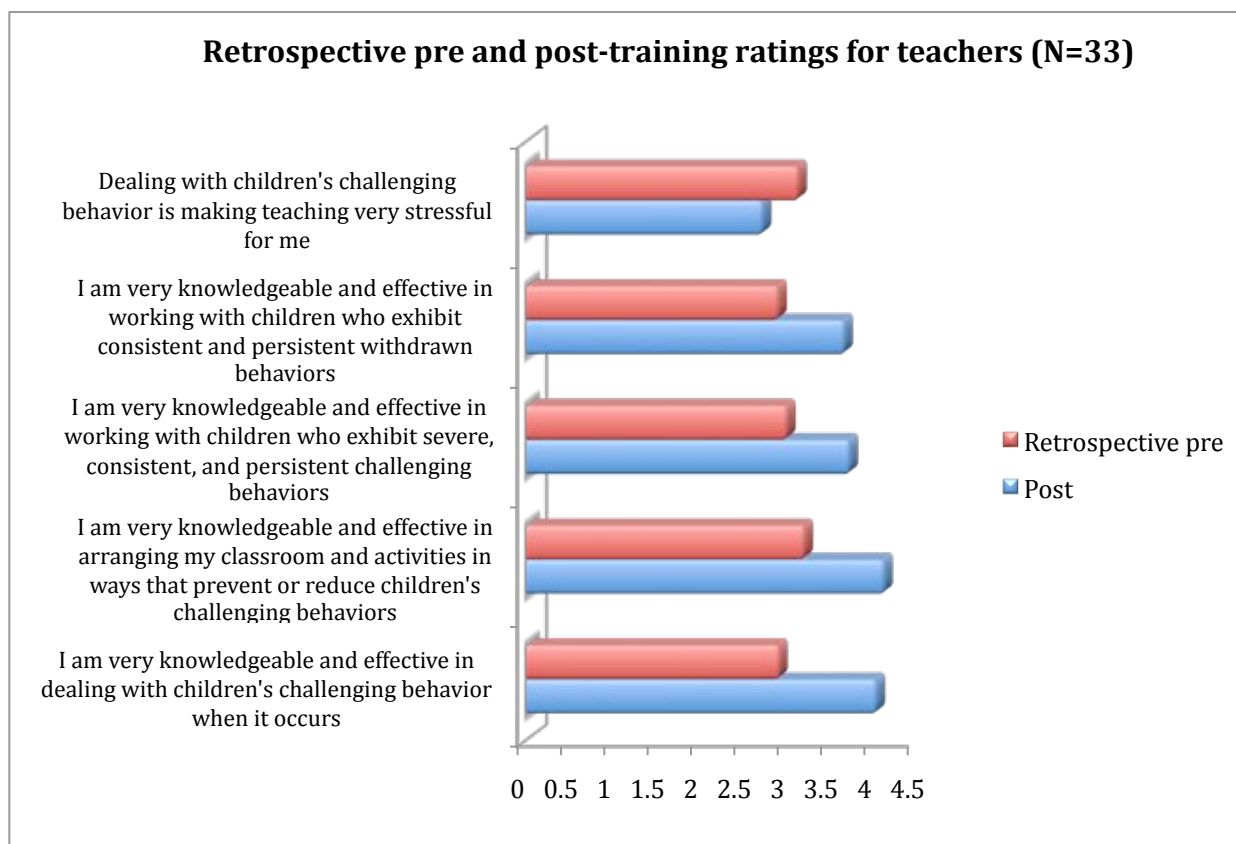
Family Modules Training of Facilitators. The Positive Solutions for Families Training of Facilitators was conducted on June 3, 2011, two weeks following the final Leadership Team meeting. Participants included members of the Leadership Team.

Data Collection

- Retrospective pre-and post surveys were distributed and returned at the final training session in May 2011.
- The focus group took place in May 2011 and included four preschool teachers and one special education teacher. Years of experience teaching preschool ranged between 2 and 39, with a mean of 10.8 years.
- Key informant interviews were conducted in May and June 2011. Respondents included the assistant superintendent, the program coordinators for the YMCA and Longfellow preschool, the school psychologist, coordinator of special education, and a preschool teacher who was a member of the Leadership Team.

Successes

Surveys. Thirty-three teachers completed retrospective pre- and post-training surveys at the end of the fourth and final module of the Teaching Pyramid training. These respondents reported statistically significant differences ($p < .02$ or greater) on ratings of their knowledge and effectiveness in dealing with children with challenging behavior. Mean ratings for stress levels resulting from dealing with children's challenging behavior were significantly lower on the post training ratings compared to the ratings on the retrospective pre surveys.



1 = I never feel this way; 5 = I always feel this way

Azusa Case Study

On the post ratings, teachers rated the behavior of the children in their classroom since they began the Teaching Pyramid training. On a 5-point scale, with 1 = Gotten much worse to 5 = Improved drastically, the mean rating was a 4.02.

Only three administrators completed the retrospective pre and post surveys. The N of 3 was too small for conducting statistical analysis; however, the means indicated greater knowledge and effectiveness on the post-training ratings compared with ratings on the retrospective pre. On the 5-point scales rating of the behavior of the children in the classrooms with which they worked since the beginning of the Pyramid training, all three indicted a “5” or “improved drastically.”

Focus group and key informant interviews. The teachers in the focus group commented that the Teaching Pyramid training made them focus more on children’s emotional literacy:

I think we’re more cognizant of our approach to the children and focusing more on feelings and how we feel and talking about feelings. Before we were more into the naming numbers and shapes and writing their names.

Administrators observed that teachers felt empowered and more in control of their classrooms, and were more intentional about setting up the classroom environment and designing the daily routine. The Special Education coordinator described the transformation in one teacher:

There is a teacher I’ve had huge concerns about with being negative and punitive, so I was really hoping she would benefit. The funny thing is she has benefitted the most. She’s been the most open, made the most changes. Her classroom is a completely different environment. Everyone’s classroom has improved because of the training, but hers in particular has made a 180, which is so amazing. She has made great comments, and she has seen a difference in her kids.

Other administrators commented on changes in children’s behavior as teachers provided them with more positive feedback. Children “talked to each other with kinder words.” The change was particularly noticeable in some of the children with more aggressive behavior. “You see that psychological effect really fast; when they see someone cares for them they totally mellow out.”

Teachers reported improved working relationships with their aides and with other teachers as they implemented the Teaching Pyramid concept of building relationships. In addition, they credited the more positive classroom environment with making the parents feel more comfortable. “In the beginning they would just focus on one teacher and now they feel a little more comfortable and say hello to all three teachers.”

Two administrators commented that the Teaching Pyramid training provided them with tools with which to support teachers who needed help with children's challenging behaviors, especially those teachers who were not able to participate in the training. And the school psychologist found that the Teaching Pyramid training resulted in more appropriate referrals, and fewer referrals for behavior problems that they were now able to address successfully in the classroom.

Administrators and teachers alike credited the district, and specifically the assistant superintendent, for creating a climate that supported implementation of the Teaching Pyramid approach. Teachers appreciated the fact that the administrators participated in the training:

It feels like they all know what we're doing and we're all in the process together. That's been a real positive.

Challenges

The most frequently cited challenges to implementation were time, and the fact that the training started in the middle of the school year. Administrators and teachers alike looked forward to beginning a new school year and having an opportunity to build Teaching Pyramid strategies into ongoing lesson plans. Several key informants cited the need for more teachers planning time. At the Longfellow preschool program, teachers had one day a month to do their lesson plans, DRDPs, and hold staff meetings. The school psychologist commented:

It would be really valuable if they had time during the school day, or during the workweek, where they could collaborate and say okay this is working or this is not working.

She added that there was no time for the teachers to function as peer coaches, which meant the responsibility for providing internal support fell on the administrators, who could not be in the classrooms as often as they would like.

The special education aides did not participate in the training, and the special education coordinator acknowledged this as a challenge. Because she was not "familiar with the Teaching Pyramid or what First 5 LA was offering" she did not invite the aides. In special education, aides outnumber the teachers in the classroom and, as one person, said:

They are working under the old assumptions and strategies. It has caused some conflict and issues, and as much as my teachers are trying to work with them, they are out there with kids the whole time.

Strategies for promoting parent engagement.

The Family Modules Training of Facilitators module was not completed until June 3, 2011, after the focus group and most of the key informant interviews. Although individual teachers had talked with some parents informally about the Teaching Pyramid and the expectations “We are caring,” “We are safe,” “We are respectful,” there had been no formal meetings or workshops by the end of the school year. Several administrators described plans for engaging parents when school resumed in the fall via newsletter, at back to school night. The director of the LAUP programs described her plans:

We have big goals and plans to discuss the Teaching Pyramid in every parent meeting I have. I will divide the parents into 10 to 15 groups in English and Spanish at different times and hold small workshops to make the parents aware, and show them how to utilize the materials we have here and in their homes.

At the final Leadership Team meeting, members created a workgroup to be in charge of planning and conducting parent workshops in the coming year.

School-community partnerships

According to the program specialist and special education coordinator, partnerships with outside agencies are in place primarily for middle and high school students. The school psychologist described collaboration between the district and Azusa Pacific University, Pacific Clinics and several other mental health agencies in the community. She described the implementation of the Teaching Pyramid strategies as “pre mental health support,” adding that any documentation and data collected as part of developing a behavior support plan would provide valuable input to any outside therapy or treatment plan.

Maintenance efforts

All three coordinators (Special Education, YMCA programs, Longfellow preschool) were committed to supporting implementation in the coming school year and beyond. The special education coordinator planned to hold training for all the program aides, preschool through high school. The director of the YMCA programs looked forward to continuing collaboration between her staff and the staff of the other preschool programs, adding that collaborating was important to the district because “all our children go into their kindergarten program.” The coordinator of the Longfellow preschool planned to include Teaching Pyramid refreshers in staff meetings held on pupil-free days.

The collaboration among programs resulted in a handbook on policies and procedures related to behavior management, incorporating strategies from the Teaching Pyramid and intended for use in all three preschool programs. The effort was spearheaded by the coordinator of special education, and included input from other members of the Leadership Team.

Key informants described the continuation of coaching and the Leadership Team as critical for maintenance efforts. The assistant superintendent received a great deal of positive feedback about the value of the coaching and added her endorsement:

Whenever you have instruction over a longer period not the one-shot model, and then on top of that have feedback and coaching in the classroom, it's the most powerful type of professional development, so we were thrilled.

The coordinators suggested two strategies for continuing coaching support: identifying peer coaches and writing grants to seek funding for coaching.

The school psychologist described the role of the Leadership Team:

So it's up to the Leadership Team to keep it alive and well. Fires have been lit under the teachers, and they're seeing in such a short time how effective it is, so I think there's total buy in. I don't think they'll need much prodding but I think the Leadership Team is what will keep it going.

At the final Leadership Team meeting, participants discussed options for keeping the Pyramid alive. One suggestion was to pick one strategy for discussion at monthly staff meetings, and have teachers reflect on what was working and what could be improved. Several members gave examples of the impact of the Teaching Pyramid:

- Change in how teachers view children, with a shift from “This child is so challenging that he is disruptive” to “This child is very challenging and he needs us.”
- Special education teachers are focusing more on student strengths
- The focus on specific children in classroom has brought teachers together with a common language and common goals

They identified existing strengths which supported maintenance efforts: the buy-in of participants who were trained; strong administrative support to move forward; new and strong relationships among staff from all preschool programs, and the fact that all Leadership Team members were on the same page.

Azusa Case Study

V. Summary of Cross-Site Findings

Data from the retrospective pre- and post-training surveys conducted at each site indicated that administrators and teachers made significant gains in knowledge and effectiveness in dealing with children with challenging behavior, or in the case of administrators, in supporting teacher to deal with children's challenging behaviors. They also rated the behavior of the children in their classrooms as ranging between "improved" and "improved drastically" since the beginning of the Teaching Pyramid training.

The case studies were designed to document the successes and challenges implementing the Pyramid Teaching in the six sites, and to document the program strategies for supporting parent engagement, school community partnerships, and maintenance efforts. It should be noted that the length of time between the completion of the training and the focus group and key informant interviews varied from one to nine months. Thus, at the time of data collection, three sites (Lawndale, Vaughn, Pomona) had been implementing the Pyramid strategies for most of the school year, while the remaining sites (Paramount, Azusa, Lennox) were in the very early stages of implementation. Nevertheless, the six sites shared many of the same successes and challenges. The following section describes these commonalities, identifies differences and concludes with lessons learned.

SUCCESSSES

Respondents in all six sites provided examples of the way in which implementation of the Teaching Pyramid had an impact on children and adults. Teachers described themselves, as did administrators, as more positive and confident and less frustrated. At two sites, administrators commented that teachers were being less reactive, and were focusing more on the antecedents that caused the behaviors. They were approaching children in behavior situations as an opportunity for teaching appropriate strategies. As one teacher commented during the final Leadership Team meeting, "I've changed from thinking 'this child is so challenging that he is disruptive,' to 'this child is very challenging and he needs us.'"

The training and implementation had a positive impact on adults as well. At four sites, teachers stressed the improved working relationships with their assistants. During the "hot buttons" activity, teachers and assistants shared feelings about which child behaviors they found particularly challenging, leading to improved working relationships in the classrooms. In sites where they experienced the training together, they gained a common language, leading to a more cohesive team for preventing and addressing challenging behaviors. One teacher

Summary of Cross-Site Findings

commented that as a result of the training she appreciated her aides more, and was giving them more responsibility in the classroom.

As teachers worked on building positive relationships, setting clear behavioral expectations and facilitating emotional literacy and friendship skills, they described children as better able to identify, express and manage their emotions, and increasingly skilled at settling conflicts verbally with less intervention from the classroom teacher. In addition, they reported that most children knew the expectations for their classroom and could identify behaviors illustrating these expectations. Importantly, these changes carried over to other settings (e.g., playground, home). Changes were particularly noticeable in children with challenging behaviors; and in three sites teachers commented on the speed with which these changes occurred.

Implementation of the Teaching Pyramid approach had a ripple effect beyond the classroom. Administrators commented that fewer children were being sent to the office with behavior problems, as teachers now had tools with which to prevent or address them in the classroom. Two school psychologists commented that the referrals that were made were more appropriate. One administrator commented that she now had more time to spend in the classrooms. In addition, administrators who participated in the training appreciated learning about specific strategies to use to support teachers who had children with challenging behaviors.

Four themes emerged around factors or circumstances facilitating implementation. First, teachers repeatedly identified the WestEd coaching, which they described as objective and strength-based and a critical adjunct to the training. The time for reflective practice increased their understanding of the framework. Because the WestEd coach was not a supervisor, the coaching was seen as genuine support, and not as monitoring. She reported that most teachers responded very positively to the coaching feedback and commented that teachers were most inspired to change when they needed help with an individual child's challenging behaviors. In classrooms with few challenging behaviors, there was less sense of urgency.

Second, administrative support was key. Teachers appreciated the fact that the administrators participated in the training, and credited them with establishing a climate that supported implementation. This was particularly true in Lennox, where the administrators identified the staff attendance at Saturday trainings as evidence of their commitment, and kept in close touch with participants between trainings through e-mails with reminders about ways to use the Teaching Pyramid materials and strategies.

Third, the fact that the Teaching Pyramid approach was compatible with other programs and/or curricula in the sites facilitated implementation. In Lawndale, the Teaching Pyramid shared many aspects with the High Scope curriculum. In Vaughn, behavior expectations had recently been developed for K-5, and these expectations were similar to those developed for the pre-K program by the Leadership Team. In addition, RTI was used in Vaughn, as well as in Pomona and Lennox, so the Pyramid concept was familiar to teachers.

Finally, the opportunity for teachers and aides to be trained together made implementation of the Teaching Pyramid strategies easier, as teacher and aides had a shared language and were on the same page as they worked to prevent or address challenging behaviors.

CHALLENGES

In addition to the many examples of successful implementation, every site was faced with challenges. Not surprisingly, many of these challenges related to time and money. Most teachers had little or no time during the day to spend planning or debriefing about the implementation of the Pyramid strategies. As examples, the Pomona teachers worked for eight hours in back-to-back programs. There was little time during their monthly staff meeting for training, and staff development days were typically dedicated to academic trainings. In Azusa, the preschool teachers had one day a month to develop lesson plans, work on DRDP's, and hold staff meetings. And in Paramount, teachers split their eight-hour days with two aides in the morning and two different aides in the afternoon. Their entire workday was spent in the classroom and they had no time to plan with the aides.

The WestEd coach commented on the challenges of providing technical assistance under these time constraints. The effectiveness of coaching depended in part upon having time for reflective conversations at the end of the coaching visit. When these conversations took place at the end of the school day, the teachers often ended up staying past their paid working hours and were usually exhausted. On other occasions, coaching conversations took place in the classroom while the aide supervised the children, or during the teacher's lunch breaks. In Azusa, the special education teachers had planning time built into their schedules and the WestEd coach was able to meet with them during those periods.

Time was also a factor in the ability of internal coaches to support implementation. Leadership Teams were asked to designate a member or members who could spend time with the WestEd coach during her coaching visits, and be available to teachers between coaching visits. In two of the sites,

Summary of Cross-Site Findings

there were no members who felt they had the time to fill these roles, and the WestEd coach met with the program manager or director to share observations and recommendations.

The internal coaches designated in the other four sites had difficulty finding the time to provide support to the classrooms. Vaughn designated two teachers, one from preschool and one from kindergarten, as internal coaches. Only one of them was able to observe in a classroom the same time as the WestEd coach, and then not until one of the last coaching visits. In Pomona, the cluster coordinators served as the designated coaches, but given the size of the district and the number of classrooms under their supervision, they were not able to support many of the teachers. In Lawndale, the internal coach took on additional administrative responsibilities during the first full year of implementation, making her less available as support. Three members of the Leadership Team in Lennox served as internal coaches and one was usually available to join the post-coaching conversations with the teachers at the end of the school day.

Funding cuts and staff attrition were other challenges. The potential loss of School Readiness funding meant that sites were faced with losing staff and classrooms, and administrators spent time and energy seeking alternate sources of funding. Other district cuts resulted in the distribution of pink slips and when funding was partially restored it was not always possible to rehire the same staff. As a result, administrators had to find resources to provide Teaching Pyramid training to the new hires. Two districts planned to use support staff that had been through the modules themselves, although administrators worried that there was no opportunity to provide the complete training package.

Teaching assistants and aides were not included in the training in every site, and in some cases teachers found it challenging to implement the Teaching Pyramid strategies as teachers and assistants were not always on the same page. In Vaughn, the Head Start administrator was responsible for training the teaching assistants. She met with them one hour a month, and worried that it was not enough time for covering the material. In Azusa, the special education aides, who outnumbered teachers in the classroom, did not receive the training. The Special Education coordinator reported that this caused some conflicts between the teachers and the aides.

PROGRAM STRATEGIES FOR SUPPORTING PARENT INVOLVEMENT

Three of the sites (Azusa, Paramount, Lennox) did not complete the Positive Solutions for Families Training of Facilitators until the end of the school year; Lawndale, Vaughn and Pomona completed the training between September and

March. The only site that offered formal parent workshops was Pomona. The two mental health specialists conducted workshops in Spanish for 12 participants and in English for 9 participants in two-hour sessions once a week for six weeks. The parents attended regularly and their response was overwhelmingly positive. At the final Leadership Team meeting members created a workgroup to be in charge of planning and conducting parent workshops in the coming year.

Teachers and key informants described a variety of informal strategies for supporting parent involvement. They introduced the Teaching Pyramid framework in parent-teacher conferences when parents were having problems with their children at home, and during IEP meetings. They often provided parents with materials (e.g., copies of the behavior expectations, solution kits, scripted stories, visual schedules).

Information shared during parent-teacher conferences and IEP meetings was usually “reactive rather than preventive” according to the School Readiness Educational Specialist at Vaughn. However, there was ample evidence that teachers and support personnel shared information about the foundations of the Pyramid as well (e.g., building positive relationships and arranging the environment to promote social-emotional development and provide support for children’s appropriate behavior). This information was shared when parents visited the classrooms, at parent orientation meetings, through monthly newsletters, and weekly newspapers. In Lawndale, the resource teacher covered the district’s behavior expectations, developed by the Leadership Team, in High Scope training for parents, also funded by First 5 LA. In Lennox, a special education teacher commented that special educators always used parent conferences to talk about the importance of consistency, acknowledging children, environments and the functions of behavior. She noticed that the general education teachers were beginning to use similar language.

Across the six sites, teachers and support personnel reported that parents noticed changes in their children’s behavior at home, and expressed surprise and pleasure at hearing their children use the expectations language, e.g., “Be safe,” “Be friendly,” “Be responsible.” In addition, the children could identify behaviors that exemplified being safe, friendly, and responsible. Teachers also reported that the implementation of Teaching Pyramid strategies had a positive impact on their relationships with parents: parents seemed more comfortable coming to the teachers and asking for advice when they had problems with their children.

Summary of Cross-Site Findings

SCHOOL-COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

There was little evidence that the Teaching Pyramid training and implementation facilitated the establishment of new community-school partnerships. The School Readiness coordinator in Vaughn identified partnerships with several agencies that provide parenting classes, including one agency that provided in-school services of individual child therapy and crisis intervention. She did not feel the Teaching Pyramid had led to more or fewer referrals to these agencies.

The Disabilities coordinator from Pomona, however, reported that referrals to community parenting classes had decreased, and speculated that the types of problems that were previously referred to parenting education or support groups were the types of referrals that “have been turned around before they have to be referred,” because teachers were implementing preventive Teaching Pyramid strategies and spending more time working with parents.

In Azusa, the School Readiness coordinator was not involved in the Leadership Team and did not participate in the training. Her supervisor, the assistant superintendent, described the home-based services and school-based support provided by Foothill Family Services. The Disabilities coordinator viewed the implementation of the Teaching Pyramid as a potential advantage to Foothill, in that any documentation of the antecedents and function of challenging behaviors could be used to guide a treatment plan.

According to the School Readiness coordinator in Lennox, implementation of the Teaching Pyramid created no new partnerships between School Readiness and community agencies. However, during debriefing sessions between the teacher, internal coach, and the WestEd coach, the internal coach frequently suggested referrals to community partners for an individual child or family the teacher had identified as needing additional support.

MAINTENANCE EFFORTS

A major point of discussion during Leadership Team meetings was how to keep the Teaching Pyramid approach alive once the training and technical assistance ended. Team members understood the importance of continuing to support fidelity of implementation by encouraging the appropriate use of supplies and materials, monitoring training and technical assistance/training needs, and problem-solving as needed for classroom- or site-specific issues.

Across sites, there were numerous examples of efforts by the Leadership Teams and district administrators to maintain implementation of the Teaching Pyramid

approach. All six teams committed to continue meeting, if not monthly, then several times during the school year. Two sites planned to fold the meetings into other standing meetings in which the majority of Leadership Team members were involved. Three of the six sites entered specific dates for future meetings on the school calendar.

All six sites recognized the need to continue some form of coaching and four sites had specific plans to do so. Vaughn planned to provide time for two internal coaches to spend time observing and supporting teachers, and then report back to the Leadership Team at least every other month. Azusa and Paramount planned to create a cadre of peer coaches, and Paramount planned to seek funding for additional coaching by writing grants. The Preschool director in Lennox planned to seek funding to bring the WestEd coach back to work with targeted teachers. Plans were less definite in Lawndale and Pomona: the designated internal coach in Lawndale had less time for coaching because of her recently assigned administrative duties and the site director in Pomona was not sure who would be available to serve as internal coaches, given the large number of staff layoffs.

Other maintenance efforts focused on trainings. The Head Start coordinator in Vaughn planned to continue conducting hour-long workshops every month with aides and support staff. In Azusa, the Special Education coordinator planned to hold trainings for all the Special Education program aides. The site director in Pomona planned to seek funding, possibly in the Head Start refunding application, to offer refresher courses for new teachers as well as teachers who had been unable to participate in all four Teaching Pyramid modules. In some sites, administrators planned to weave discussions of the Teaching Pyramid into other ongoing scheduled trainings or meetings (e.g., the High Scope meetings in Lawndale and the monthly Student Study Team meetings in Vaughn).

Several sites had already used the Teaching Pyramid framework to make changes to policies and procedures for supporting children with challenging behavior, increasing the likelihood that the Teaching Pyramid approach would be maintained. Two teams outlined plans to add Teaching Pyramid strategies to the staff manuals for the coming year. In other examples, the Special Education coordinator in Paramount spearheaded efforts to create a handbook on policies and procedures for behavior management, to be used in all the preschool programs, both general and special education. The Leadership Team in Lennox added Teaching Pyramid strategies to the Teachers Assistance Team checklist, which outlines procedures for addressing challenging behaviors. Finally, in four sites, teachers were instructed to complete the Behavior Observation Reports to identify the meaning/function and patterns of a child's challenging behavior before making a referral for challenging behavior.

Summary of Cross-Site Findings

Leadership Teams made it clear that participants in the Teaching Pyramid training were going to continue to be held accountable for implementing the strategies. Team members and internal coaches visited classrooms to make sure that the behavior expectations and visual schedules were posted. As the Preschool director in Lennox commented “These strategies are non-negotiable.” In two sites, strategies from the foundation of the Pyramid, building positive relationships and implementing preventive practices, were included in the evaluation forms for teachers and aides.

Two efforts related to maintenance had important implications for long-term sustainability. In Azusa and Paramount, Special Education played a major role on the Leadership Team. In Azusa, the Special Education coordinator took the lead in revising policies and procedures related to challenging behaviors. Prior to the Teaching Pyramid training, there had been no impetus or opportunities for general and special education programs to collaborate. Now they were working together to plan for continuing implementation of the Teaching Pyramid in Pre-K and special education classrooms throughout the district. Similarly, in Paramount, the Leadership Team provided an opportunity for general education and special education to come together for the first time and support healthy social-emotional development for *all* preschool children in the district.

Finally, Leadership Teams discussed plans for having the Teaching Pyramid approach “trickle up” to elementary school and beyond. Thus in Vaughn, where all the support staff on the team covered K-12, the Leadership Team planned to introduce the behavior expectations school-wide. The school psychologist planned to weave some of the Teaching Pyramid activities into the high school staff summer retreat. In Pomona, the assistant administrator described plans to provide training to elementary school teachers during the summer, and, in Azusa, the Special Education coordinator planned to hold a training for all the Special Education aides, pre-K through high school. While the Leadership Team at Lennox planned to share the Teaching Pyramid framework district-wide at the kindergarten and elementary levels, the assistant superintendent was considering using the Teaching Pyramid in the alternative school for grades 6, 7, and 8, which was opening in the coming year.

VI. Comparison with Other Research

Research on the Teaching Pyramid is currently being conducted in 11 states by the Center on the Social and Emotional Foundations of Learning (CSEFEL), hosted at Vanderbilt University. The Center was funded to foster professional development of the early care and education workforce around supporting the social-emotional development of young children birth to five. Participating states selected a minimum of three demonstration sites to demonstrate the effectiveness of the Teaching Pyramid approach and practices, and CSEFEL provided technical support for the evaluation of outcomes in these states. California applied and was accepted to be one of the CSEFEL states.

The 11 states received three years of technical assistance, but no funds to participate in the national CSEFEL effort. Demonstration sites were responsible for collecting the evaluation data and most, including California, relied on Vanderbilt University for support for data analysis. Because Vanderbilt is still in the process of aggregating and analyzing these data, there are no available data on the Teaching Pyramid approach from this project.

However, the qualitative findings from this report are consistent with data from a study of the Teaching Pyramid in Southeast Kansas Community Action Program Head Start (SEK-CAP) program, which serves 12 counties in southeast Kansas (Fox, Jack & Broyles, 2005; Hemmeter, Fox, Jack, & Broyles, 2007). Program outcomes were based on classroom observations and include:

- ❖ Reduced referral to outside agencies
- ❖ Increased use of comprehensive strategies and team planning
- ❖ Changes in individual interventions
- ❖ Improved staff satisfaction

Child outcomes in SEK-CAP, which were also confirmed by these case studies surveys, included:

- ❖ Children understand and follow behavior expectations
- ❖ The number of children reported as having challenging behavior has decreased

Finally, staff satisfaction surveys, interviews and focus groups documented the following outcomes for program staff, similar to the outcomes reported in the key informant groups and interviews in these case studies:

- ❖ Staff view themselves as having the skills to better support children
- ❖ Staff have the tools to address the individual needs of children with behavior challenges
- ❖ Staff look to each other as sources of additional information and support
- ❖ Staff are more confident in their interactions with parents and children

Comparison with Other Research

Importantly, the role of the mental health consultant with SEK-CAP changed over the course of the initiative. In the third year of the program, only three referrals for mental health intervention were made in comparison to 49 referrals in the year before the start of the PBS initiative. Prior to the Teaching Pyramid, most of the money spent on mental health focused on intervention; after the Teaching Pyramid, the focus shifted to prevention.

There are no similar studies with which to compare these six case studies, which focus on descriptions of the successes and challenges in implementing the Teaching Pyramid approach, program strategies for supporting parent engagement, school-community partnerships and maintenance efforts. Evaluations of positive behavior support rely primarily on quantitative data, and focus on the fidelity of implementation of the approach, and on pre and post-implementation changes in classroom practices, and children's social skills and problem behaviors. Further, many of them rely on single subject design and are conducted with young children with identified disabilities.

VII. Implications for School Readiness Efforts

In 2009, the First 5 LA Board of Commissioners approved a new six-year strategic plan, *Strengthening Families and Communities in L.A. County*²³. The intent of the Strategic Plan is to “improve the lives of young children and their families by positively impacting the systems and environments in which they live, learn, and play.” The plan is designed to build upon and strengthen existing services and infrastructures in Los Angeles County that have already benefitted from First 5 LA funding, and to improve their integration.

One of the four goals identified in the strategic plan is that children are ready for kindergarten. Since 2001, the School Readiness Initiative (SRI) has supported this goal by creating centers and programs that provide a wide range of services to help children from birth to five get ready for school. The initiative builds upon existing early childhood programs by integrating them with parenting/family supports as well as health and social services. Importantly, school readiness encompasses school’s readiness for children, as well as children’s readiness for school. It also encompasses family and community support and services that contribute to children’s readiness for school success.

The Teaching Pyramid approach, by promoting social-emotional development, providing support for children’s appropriate behavior, preventing challenging behavior, and addressing problematic behavior, has clear implications for current and future school readiness efforts. Recent research has focused on the link between healthy social-emotional development, behavior and school success (Raver, 2002; Zins, Bloodworth, Weissberg, & Walberg, 2004). Studies have demonstrated that academic achievement in the first few years of schooling appears to be built on a firm foundation of children’s emotional and social skills (Alexander, Entwistle, & Dauber, 1993; Ladd, Kochendorfer & Coleman, 1997; O’Neil, Welsh, Parke & Wang, and Strand, 1997). If young children are disruptive, have problems following directions, do not work well with peers, and have difficulty with impulse control, they are less likely to be successful in school. Impulse control has long-lasting benefits; a recent longitudinal study in New Zealand found that young children who exercise good self-control are more likely to become healthy, financially secure, trouble-free adults than children with poor self-discipline (Moffitt et al, 2011).

In each of the six School Readiness sites selected to receive training and technical assistance in the Teaching Pyramid, focus group participants and key informants provided numerous examples of the way in which Teaching Pyramid strategies have the potential to improve children’s readiness for school by facilitating their social skills and preventing or reducing challenging behavior. Teachers and

²³ <http://www.first5la.org/node/3820>

Implications for School Readiness Efforts

administrators observed these changes in the classroom, and reported that parents commented on similar changes at home.

In addition, the implementation of the Teaching Pyramid approach has implications for schools' readiness for children. First, the case studies document teachers' increased confidence and competence in supporting healthy social emotional development. Survey data indicated significant gains in teachers' and administrators' knowledge and effectiveness in dealing with children's challenging behaviors, a finding supported by the focus group and interview data.

Second, in five of the six sites, general and special education worked together on the Leadership Teams to plan and support the implementation of the Teaching Pyramid. In two of these sites, it was the first time such collaboration had occurred. The need for cross-disciplinary training and technical assistance to prepare early childhood educators who work with young children with challenging behaviors has been identified by Conroy et al (2004) who advocate explicit instruction in strategies to address such behaviors and the creation of partnerships between early childhood and special education professionals to better address the complicated and developmental needs of young children who are at risk for emotional/behavioral disorders. When such a partnership exists early childhood programs are better able to help all children get ready for school.

Third, the Teaching Pyramid training provided evidence to teachers and administrators that social and emotional skills are just as important a part of the curriculum as pre-academic skills. For some teachers and administrators, this represented a major paradigm shift, and a necessary one for helping children become successful learners.

Fourth, teachers and administrators in all six sites acknowledged the importance of having the Teaching Pyramid Approach "trickle up" to the higher grades. Three sites included kindergarten teachers in the training and five of the six Leadership Teams included support personnel from K-5. Two Leadership Teams had taken or were planning to take concrete steps to support a "cradle to college" vision by extending the Teaching Pyramid approach to middle and high school.

Finally, the School Readiness Initiative acknowledges the critical role played by families in helping to create successful learners. In the one site that provided the complete Teaching Pyramid training for parents, parents reported the training was very helpful, and that they enjoyed spending more time with their children. Teachers and administrators in all sites described a number of strategies designed to engage parents in the Teaching Pyramid approach. Several teachers reported that parents seemed more comfortable asking for their advice when they had problems with their children, after they had observed the Teaching Pyramid strategies and materials in the classroom.

VIII. Lessons Learned

Between January 2010 and June 2011, WestEd San Marcos delivered training and technical assistance on the Teaching Pyramid approach to five districts and one charter school in six School Readiness sites in Los Angeles County. These case studies highlight the successes and challenges experienced by the sites as they began implementing the Teaching Pyramid approach. Although sites are still in the very early stages of implementation, focus groups and key informant interviews with training participants highlighted several lessons learned.

- 1. Leadership Teams.** The Leadership Team played a critical role in supporting implementation. Effective teams had representatives from administration, teaching, and support staff, including special education or mental health, and personnel who had the authority to make decisions about policies and procedures and professional development. Participation by support staff representing elementary grades and higher facilitated dissemination beyond the early childhood program.
- 2. Administrators.** Administrators provided critical support to teachers and classrooms. Several administrators freed up staff meeting time to allow the teachers to download and duplicate the Teaching Pyramid strategies from the CEFEFL website. Other administrators assigned members of the Leadership Team to be in charge of downloading, duplicating, and disseminating the materials. In one district, two administrators took on the role of “cheerleader” between and after trainings by encouraging teachers in the appropriate use of Teaching Pyramid strategies and materials, and by providing positive acknowledgement to teachers who demonstrated implementation. In addition, administrators set the tone in terms of making the Teaching Pyramid a priority (e.g., declaring the use of behavioral expectations and visual schedules as “non-negotiable”).
- 3. Training.** Training afforded staff the opportunity to share ideas with colleagues with whom they normally had little contact (e.g., special education and general education, and in larger districts, pre-K teachers from different sites). When teachers and teaching assistants took the training together, teachers reported improved working relationships in the classroom, and increased success in promoting healthy social-emotional development. In some sites where the assistants/aides were not trained, the Leadership Team arranged mini-trainings by a member of the team; in other sites, the classroom teacher shared training materials and strategies with the aides.

- 4. Coaching/Technical Assistance.** Teachers and administrators described the coaching as essential to successful implementation. In most sites, the Leadership Team selected the stronger teachers as coaching candidates, who could “take it and run with it” and serve as mentor teachers once the funding ended. Teachers appreciated the fact that the coaching was strength-based, provided another pair of eyes in the classroom, and gave them the opportunity to reflect on the concepts and implementation of the strategies with fidelity in the meetings with the WestEd coach. In most sites, finding sufficient time for the WestEd coach and teachers to debrief was a challenge. While all sites identified internal coaches, not all coaches were able to spend much time in the classrooms, or participate in debriefing meetings with teachers and the WestEd coach. In larger districts, the internal coach was responsible for a large number of classrooms. Other internal coaches had multiple responsibilities, which did not leave enough time for visiting classrooms and meeting with teachers.
- 5. Parent engagement strategies.** Although only one site had conducted formal parent training by the end of the funding period, parents were exposed to the Teaching Pyramid approach in multiple ways. Teachers used parent conferences and IEP meetings to introduce strategies, although one behavior specialist commented that the emphasis in these meetings was on reactive strategies and that more needed to be done to disseminate the proactive, or preventive strategies. Other dissemination opportunities included back to school nights, parent orientation meetings, and school newspapers and newsletters. Parents reported seeing changes in their children’s behavior at home and teachers reported that parents were more comfortable seeking their advice about children’s behavior problems.
- 6. Relationships with community partners.** There was little evidence that the implementation of the Teaching Pyramid approach had an impact on sites’ relationships with community partners, although this may be related to the fact that implementation was in its earliest stages. In one site, the internal coach suggested referrals to community services during debriefing sessions with the teacher. In a second site, the Disability coordinator predicted a decrease in referrals to parenting education and support classes, as parents and teachers implemented Teaching Pyramid strategies. Another Disability coordinator speculated that community agencies could use information from the Behavior Observation Reports to develop more effective treatment plans.
- 7. Coordination of Teaching Pyramid with other approaches.** Sites were able to take advantage of the compatibility of the Teaching Pyramid approach with existing curricula and approaches. One administrator included a discussion of Teaching Pyramid Strategies in High Scope trainings; in

another site, the LAUP coach helped teachers set social-emotional goals that were compatible with healthy social emotional development. Three sites were in various stages of implementing RTI and these teachers and administrators were already familiar with the concept of the pyramid.

- 8. Sustainability.** All sites expressed a strong commitment to maintaining implementation over time, and all faced similar challenges in accomplishing this in the face of budget cuts and staff layoffs and turnover. All six Leadership Teams planned to continue to meet. Several sites planned to seek funding to replace that provided by First 5 LA in order to offer refresher trainings for existing staff, a condensed version of the training for new hires, or “tune up” coaching for the staff. Administrators and teachers alike expressed concern that the 14 days of coaching provided by the current funds was not enough to support continued implementation, particularly in the larger districts. One way to address this concern is for administrators to ensure that there are enough internal coaches with sufficient time to provide support to the classrooms.

In conclusion, in spite of the shared challenges and in spite of the fact that the Teaching Pyramid is only in its earliest stages of implementation, the training and coaching have led to changes in the classrooms in all six sites. For many teachers and administrators, the Teaching Pyramid training produced a paradigm shift as they came to understand that healthy social and emotional development is as crucial to academic success as are pre-literacy skills, and that social-emotional skills can be intentionally and systematically taught in the classroom. Importantly, the impact of the Teaching Pyramid approach has the potential to go well beyond the classroom, as policies and procedures related to addressing children’s challenging behaviors are articulated and applied across programs, as general and special education establish a partnership for promoting healthy social-emotional development, and as some districts elect to introduce the Pyramid approach up through high school, from “cradle to college.”

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Appendices

APPENDIX A ~ TEACHER RATING SCALE

Teacher Rating Scale Post Evaluation

Teacher ☐ Instructional Aide ☐ Date _____

Instructions:

Please read the statements below and check the answer that best describes how well you **currently** agree with each statement. The information you provide is strictly confidential.

1. I am very knowledgeable and effective in dealing with children's challenging behavior when it occurs.

I feel this way:

All the time ☐ *Most of the time* ☐ *Some of the time* ☐ *Once in a while* ☐ *Never* ☐

2. I am very knowledgeable and effective in arranging my classroom and activities in ways that prevent or reduce children's challenging behavior.

I feel this way:

All the time ☐ *Most of the time* ☐ *Some of the time* ☐ *Once in a while* ☐ *Never* ☐

3. I am very knowledgeable and effective in working with children who exhibit severe, consistent, and persistent challenging behaviors.

I feel this way:

All the time ☐ *Most of the time* ☐ *Some of the time* ☐ *Once in a while* ☐ *Never* ☐

4. I am very knowledgeable and effective in working with children who exhibit consistent and persistent withdrawn behavior.

I feel this way:

All the time ☐ *Most of the time* ☐ *Some of the time* ☐ *Once in a while* ☐ *Never* ☐

5. Dealing with children's challenging behavior is making teaching very stressful for me.

I feel this way:

All the time ☐ *Most of the time* ☐ *Some of the time* ☐ *Once in a while* ☐ *Never* ☐

6. **Since my Pyramid training**, the behavior of the children in my classroom has:

Improved Drastically ☐ *Improved a little* ☐ *Stayed the same* ☐ *Gotten a little worse* ☐ *Gotten much worse* ☐

Appendices

Teacher Rating Scale Retrospective Pre Evaluation

Instructions:

Now, stop and think back to the beginning of the Teaching Pyramid training. Read each statement again and check the answer that best describes how well you agreed with each statement **before** attending the Teaching Pyramid training.

1. I was very knowledgeable and effective in dealing with children's challenging behavior when it occurred.

I felt this way:

<i>All the time</i>	<i>Most of the time</i>	<i>Some of the time</i>	<i>Once in a while</i>	<i>Never</i>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

2. I was very knowledgeable and effective in arranging my classroom and activities in ways that prevented or reduced children's challenging behavior.

I felt this way:

<i>All the time</i>	<i>Most of the time</i>	<i>Some of the time</i>	<i>Once in a while</i>	<i>Never</i>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

3. I was very knowledgeable and effective in working with children who exhibited severe, consistent, and persistent challenging behaviors.

I felt this way:

<i>All the time</i>	<i>Most of the time</i>	<i>Some of the time</i>	<i>Once in a while</i>	<i>Never</i>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

4. I was very knowledgeable and effective in working with children who exhibited consistent and persistent withdrawn behavior.

I felt this way:

<i>All the time</i>	<i>Most of the time</i>	<i>Some of the time</i>	<i>Once in a while</i>	<i>Never</i>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

5. Dealing with children's challenging behavior was making teaching very stressful for me.

I felt this way:

<i>All the time</i>	<i>Most of the time</i>	<i>Some of the time</i>	<i>Once in a while</i>	<i>Never</i>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Thank you!

APPENDIX B ~ ADMINISTRATOR RATING SCALE

Administrator Rating Scale Post Evaluation

Administrator ☐ Program Support ☐ Date _____

Instructions:

Please read the statements below and check the answer that best describes how well you **currently** agree with each statement. The information you provide is strictly confidential.

- I am very knowledgeable and effective in supporting teachers to deal with children's challenging behavior when it occurs.

I feel this way:

All the time ☐ *Most of the time* ☐ *Some of the time* ☐ *Once in a while* ☐ *Never* ☐

- I am very knowledgeable and effective in supporting teachers to arrange their classroom and activities in ways that prevent or reduce children's challenging behavior.

I feel this way:

All the time ☐ *Most of the time* ☐ *Some of the time* ☐ *Once in a while* ☐ *Never* ☐

- I am very knowledgeable and effective in supporting teachers to work with children who exhibit severe, consistent, and persistent challenging behaviors.

I feel this way:

All the time ☐ *Most of the time* ☐ *Some of the time* ☐ *Once in a while* ☐ *Never* ☐

- I am very knowledgeable and effective in supporting teachers to work with children who exhibit consistent and persistent withdrawn behavior.

I feel this way:

All the time ☐ *Most of the time* ☐ *Some of the time* ☐ *Once in a while* ☐ *Never* ☐

- Dealing with children's challenging behavior is making supporting the teachers very stressful for me.

I feel this way:

All the time ☐ *Most of the time* ☐ *Some of the time* ☐ *Once in a while* ☐ *Never* ☐

- Since I began my Pyramid Training**, the behavior of the children in the classrooms with whom I work has:

Improved Drastically ☐ *Improved a little* ☐ *Stayed the same* ☐ *Gotten a little worse* ☐ *Gotten much worse* ☐

Appendices

Administrator Rating Scale Retrospective Pre-Evaluation

Instructions:

Now, **stop and think back to the beginning of the Teaching Pyramid training.** Read each statement again and check the answer that best describes how well you agreed with each statement **before** attending the Teaching Pyramid training.

1. I was very knowledgeable and effective in supporting teachers to deal with children's challenging behavior when it occurs.
I felt this way:

<i>All the time</i>	<i>Most of the time</i>	<i>Some of the time</i>	<i>Once in a while</i>	<i>Never</i>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. I was very knowledgeable and effective in supporting teachers to arrange their classroom and activities in ways that prevent or reduce children's challenging behavior.
I felt this way:

<i>All the time</i>	<i>Most of the time</i>	<i>Some of the time</i>	<i>Once in a while</i>	<i>Never</i>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. I was very knowledgeable and effective in supporting teachers to work with children who exhibit severe, consistent, and persistent challenging behaviors.
I felt this way:

<i>All the time</i>	<i>Most of the time</i>	<i>Some of the time</i>	<i>Once in a while</i>	<i>Never</i>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. I was very knowledgeable and effective in supporting teachers to work with children who exhibit consistent and persistent withdrawn behavior.
I felt this way:

<i>All the time</i>	<i>Most of the time</i>	<i>Some of the time</i>	<i>Once in a while</i>	<i>Never</i>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. Dealing with children's challenging behavior was making supporting the teachers very stressful for me.
I felt this way:

<i>All the time</i>	<i>Most of the time</i>	<i>Some of the time</i>	<i>Once in a while</i>	<i>Never</i>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Thank you!

APPENDIX C ~ KEY INFORMANT INTERVIEW (PHONE)

Key Informant Interview (Phone)

Thank you for agreeing to take the time to speak with me about the implementation of the Teaching Pyramid in [name of district]. If it is OK with you, I would like to tape this interview instead of taking notes. At any time you may ask that the tape be turned off. No names will be used in the report and there will be no way for the individual speakers to be identified.

1. To begin, please describe the role played by the Leadership Team in supporting the implementation of the Teaching Pyramid (TP).
2. How have **you** been involved in supporting implementation?
3. How has the Teaching Pyramid training and coaching had an impact on teachers?

*Probes: How has it helped teachers prevent challenging behavior?
How has it helped teachers address problematic behavior?*

4. How has the implementation of the Teaching Pyramid had an impact on children?
5. How are parents and family members being informed about the implementation of the Teaching Pyramid?
6. What has been the parent/family member response?
7. What has been the impact of the Teaching Pyramid training at the program management or administrative level?

*Probes: Impact on administrators
Policies and procedures*

8. Does [name of district] collaborate with outside community agencies to obtain mental health services for children and parents?
9. If NO: As a result of TP training, are there any plans to partner with outside community agencies?
10. If YES: Will the TP training have any impact on collaboration with . . . [name of agency]
11. What have been some of the challenges in implementing the TP in [name district]?
12. Is there anything about [name of district] or the community that has made it **easy** to implement the TP?
13. How is the program planning to support implementation of the Teaching Pyramid in the future?

Probe: (if not mentioned): Is there a role for the Leadership Team?

14. Is there anything else about your experience with the TP you would like to share?

APPENDIX D ~ FOCUS GROUP QUESTIONS

Focus Group Questions

Thank you for taking the time to meet today. We are asking you to reflect on the Teaching Pyramid training and coaching and to share your perceptions about the successes and challenges you experienced as you implemented the Pyramid. A few comments about focus groups before we start:

- *There are no right or wrong answers – we are interested in your opinions and experiences related to the training and coaching.*
 - *The tape recorder is being used so that no one has to take detailed notes during the conversation. At any time, you may ask that the recording be turned off. While we want everyone to have a chance to participate, for the benefit of the tape, please try and speak one at a time.*
 - *No names will be used in the write-ups and there will be no way for individual speakers to be identified. [_____] is taking notes just in case there is a recording glitch.*
1. I'd like to begin by asking you to think back to your classroom before you started the training and coaching. How have your relationships with the children changed?
 2. How have your relationships with the other adults in the classroom changed?
 3. What changes have you seen in individual children as a result of using the Teaching Pyramid? Examples?
 4. How have you introduced the Teaching Pyramid strategies to parents and family members of the children in your classroom? How have parents and family members responded?
 5. What changes have parents reported seeing in their children?
 6. What changes have you noticed in your relationships with parents and family members?
 7. How has the Teaching Pyramid reached your classroom?
 8. What factors made it easier to use the Teaching Pyramid in [name of district]?
 9. What made it challenging to use the Teaching Pyramid in [name of district]?
 10. Thinking about the coaching, how did it help you implement the Teaching Pyramid
 11. Is there anything else about your experience with the Teaching Pyramid you would like to share?