

National PBIS Leadership Forum | October 22 - 23, 2025 | Hilton Chicago



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5F - What is Tier 2 When You are Four?

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- Topic: Early Childhood PBIS
- Keywords: Tier 2, Social Skills, Behavior



The National PBIS Leadership Forum is a technical assistance activity of the Center on PBIS



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Positive Behavioral
Interventions & Supports

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Learning Objectives

1. *Learn the process for developing and delivering Tier 2 interventions to children in a preschool classroom*
2. *Identify the evidence-based instruction and interventions that are developmentally appropriate for young children*



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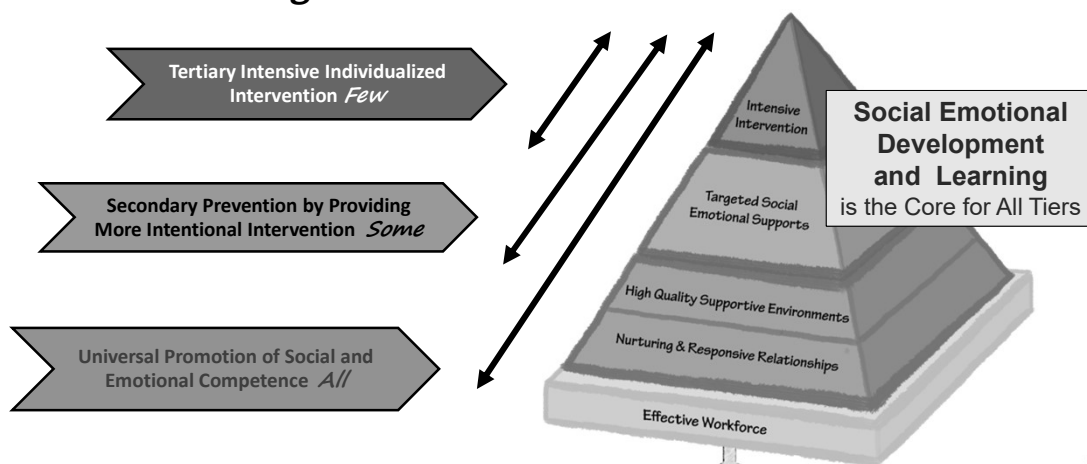
Agenda

- MTSS in early childhood
- Critical features of Tier 2
- Tier 2 for young children
- Resources



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Pyramid Model for Promoting Social and Emotional Competence in Infants and Young Children



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Goal of the Pyramid Model

Ensure each and every child has the support, experiences, relationships, opportunities, guidance, and instruction to thrive in their social-emotional development and learning



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Same Science, Different Context

- Developmental age
- Classroom activities
- Learning in the context of play
- Strategies for reinforcement
- Social, emotional, and behavioral skills are the foci
- Family engagement
- Meltdowns are expected



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Social-Emotional Learning

- Self-regulation, expressing and understanding emotions, problem solving, and developing social relationships
- All day, every day
 - Large group
 - Small group
 - Play



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Where we start is the same

- Tier 1
 - Teach, teach, teach
 - Practice, practice, practice
 - Positive descriptive feedback
- Is this sufficient for most children in the class?
 - If no, revisit Tier 1
 - If yes, some children might still need more support



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What is Tier 2 when you are 4?



Tier 2 and the Pyramid Model

The Pyramid Model

The Pyramid Model is a framework of evidence-based practices for promoting young children's social and emotional competence. The Pyramid Model builds upon a shared public health approach by identifying three levels of a pyramid: universal practices for all children used to develop social, emotional, and behavioral skills; targeted interventions for children who require additional support beyond universal practices; and individualized, intensive interventions for children with persistent challenging behaviors that have not responded to universal and targeted supports. As a multi-tiered system of supports (MTSS), the Pyramid Model gives early childhood practitioners a set of practices to systematically implement when practices to prevent challenging behaviors in children and promote their social, emotional, and behavioral growth. In the Pyramid Model, universal supports, or Tier 1, is provided to all children through practices based on establishing nurturing and supportive relationships and creating environments that promote connection, engagement, and social-emotional learning. At Tier 2, individualized social-emotional interventions are provided to all children as part of the high-quality early childhood program. Tier 2, the prevention level of the MTSS, includes targeted teaching and intervention strategies to address the social, emotional, and behavioral skill development needs of children who require additional support or the need for intervention beyond universal practices. The provision of Tier 2 is based on a strong foundation of universal practices. When universal practices are not fully implemented, it can lead to the over-identification of children who appear to need Tier 2 support. In the Pyramid Model, Tier 2 intervention is provided to children who have significant social-emotional or behavioral challenges and require a comprehensive, individualized support plan. Success with Tier 2 intervention is also dependent on the provision of strong Tier 1 and 2 supports.

From MTSS, the term "intervention" refers to specific, evidence-based strategies and practices designed to address children who need additional support beyond universal practices. The term "intervention" refers to targeted social-emotional, behavioral, and academic strategies and interventions designed to support the development and well-being of all children.

This document provides the Pyramid Model leadership team and practitioners with guidance on developing and implementing Tier 2 within the Pyramid Model. This guidance includes information on leading the development of Tier 2 intervention practices for identifying children who would benefit from Tier 2 practices, evidence-based strategies and interventions to use at Tier 2, considerations for program monitoring and the importance of professional development and coaching to support the use of effective Tier 2 practices.



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What are your big questions?

- Turn to your neighbor, what are questions you have about Tier 2 for children in preschool or kindergarten?

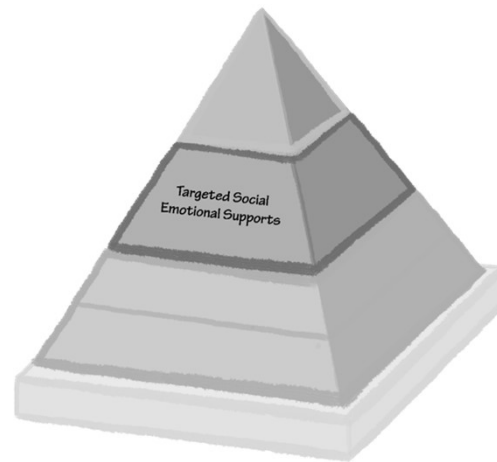


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Elements of Tier 2

- A Tier 2 team
- A child identification process
- Evidence-based interventions
- Progress monitoring
- Professional development



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Teaming at Tier 2

- Team Membership
 - Existing program-wide/school-wide team
 - **Early Childhood representation**
 - Smaller Tier 2 team
 - Member(s) with a background in behavior and effective behavior support planning
- Knowledge of **developmentally appropriate** Tier 2 strategies
- Establish processes
 - Child Identification
 - Family involvement
- Identify professional development and coaching needs
- Collecting and using data



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Sunshine School

Sunshine School is a PreK through 5th grade elementary school. The school is currently implementing school-wide PBIS. In reviewing team membership, the school-wide team realizes there is **no representation from PreK**. After inviting a PreK teacher to be on the team, the team realizes that their social-emotional learning curriculum **isn't developmentally appropriate for PreK**. As a team, they identify using **Pyramid Model practices** in their PreK and Kindergarten classroom.



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Child Identification Process

- Multiple sources of data
 - Behavior Incident Reports (EC-SWIS)
 - Universal/Developmental Screeners (e.g., ASQ-SE, DECA, SSBD)
 - Teacher/family concerns (social-emotional or academic)
 - Progress monitoring data
 - Child's environmental factors/trauma
- Behavior Flowchart
- Decision rules for Tier 2
- Promotes early identification of children at-risk



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About Sunshine School

Sunshine School uses **Behavior Incident Reports (BIRs)** to track child behavior in their PreK classrooms. Since the children are 4, they acknowledge that challenging behavior is **handled in the classroom**, as opposed to getting office discipline referrals (ODRs) as the older grades use. Additionally, they use the ASQ-SE as a universal screener for their PreK classrooms. This is **different from the universal screener used for K-5**.

The team reviews both pieces of data to identify children who may need Tier 2 support. The team also reviews any additional data they collect on children, such as family concerns.



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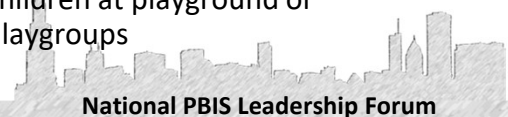
Reviewing Data for Tier 2

Dina

- Has multiple BIRs a week for physical aggression
- Multiple conferences with family regarding aggression
- Elevated on screener
- Teacher is concerned about aggression

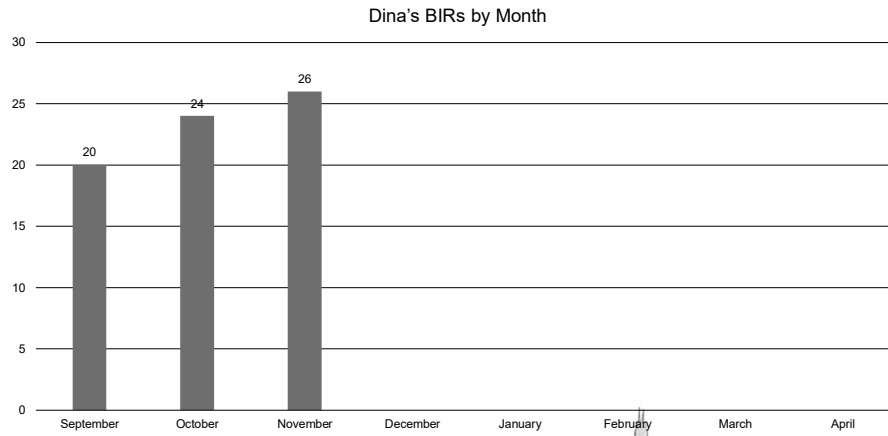
Javier

- No BIRs
- Elevated on screener
- Teacher concerns:
 - Does not play with others
- Family concerns
 - Does not play with other children at playground or playgroups



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Dina - BIRs by Month



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Evidence-Based Interventions



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Identifying Skills to Target



What skills does the child have now?



What skills does the child need?

What are the family goals?

What is developmentally and culturally appropriate?



How will you help the child move from where they are now to where you want them to go?



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Evidence-Based Interventions

1. Intensifying universal practices and curriculum
 - Higher frequency or increased dosages
 - Extensions or modifications of Tier 1
 - Meaningful reinforcers
2. Behavior support plans when function is known (TTYC)
3. Manualized Interventions
4. Embedded instruction
 - Interventions occur in the classroom
 - Opportunities for learning and practice throughout the day



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1. Intensifying Universal Curriculum

- How providers and caregivers deliver more intentional and intensive practices can vary.
- There is **no requirement** that practices designed to provide more support are delivered only in a **small group** configuration.
- For all children receiving tiered instructional supports, it is important to recognize that higher-tiered instruction is in **addition** to instruction at lower tiers.
- A child receiving instruction/intervention at Tier 2, would **still have access to and participate in quality Tier 1 instruction.**

Division for Early Childhood of the Council for Exceptional Children. (2021). *Multitiered system of support framework in early childhood: Description and implications*. <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED631347.pdf>

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Universal Social, Emotional, Behavior Skills



Expectations and Rules



Friendship skills



Emotional literacy



Self-regulation and anger management



Problem solving

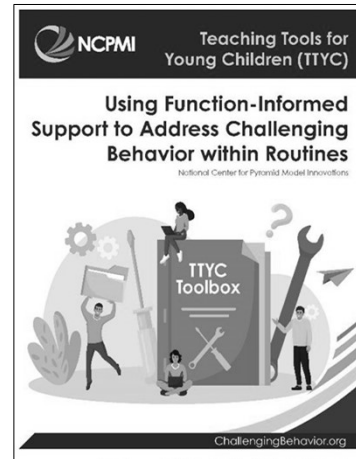


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2. Behavior Support when function is known

1. Teaching Tools Flow Chart
2. Tools for Partnering with Families
3. Data Tools to Inform Planning and to Monitor Progress
4. The Routine Guide
5. Child Routine Plan



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3. Manualized Interventions

- BEST in CLASS (Conroy et al., 2018; Sutherland et al., 2018) – behavior, engagement
- First Step Next (Walker et al., 2015) – follow directions, rules, wait for turn
- Incredible Years Small Group Dinosaur Child Program (Webster-Stratton, 2005; 2016) – social-emotional skills
- Stay-Play-Talk (Ledford & Pustejovsky, 2023) – peer interaction
- Banking Time (Williford et al., 2015) – relationship

NCPMI Banking Time: Strengthening Your Relationship With Individual Children

Strong, safe, nurturing, and responsive teacher-child relationships are essential for young children to thrive. Children may show you "rough" (bad) behavior that may mean many different things, or you might identify a child you want to strengthen your relationship with.

What is it?

Banking Time is a strategy that focuses on improving the relationship between a teacher and a child. Teachers use specific strategies to support positive relationships with children.

How do you use it?

- Identify a child with whom to use Banking Time.
 - The child might be someone you want to have a stronger relationship with.
 - It might be a child whose behavior would be helpful in building.
 - A child with behavior that is challenging for the teacher that they could use positive relationship time with a safe, neutral, supportive, and responsive adult.
- Meet with the child for play-based one-on-one relationship-building time 2-3 times a week for 10-15 minutes.
 - Choose a quiet space in the learning environment or a space outside the classroom.
 - Use a calendar where you can track.
 - Use the child's play-based activities that they will engage in with the teacher.
 - Make sure there are enough materials for the child and the teacher to play.
 - Engage in the activity with the child.

Banking Time strategies to try:

Follow the child's lead in play.

- Let the child pick what and how you play together.

The teacher has enough materials for both her and the child to use. The teacher also chooses the activity to use. The teacher also picks what materials for the child to use.

- Observe the child and their play before you jump in and play with them. Show your interest in what the child is doing by watching with limited talking.



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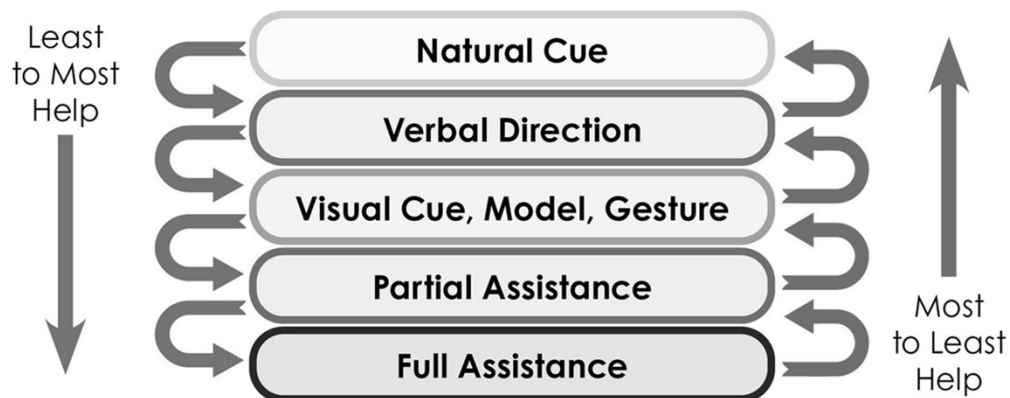
4. Embedded Instruction

- Identify the skill to target
- Identify a systematic instructional approach
- Identify when teaching will occur (routines, play, activities)
 - Increasing learning and practice opportunities
- Develop progress monitoring tool for classroom teacher to use



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Most-to-Least: Providing Extra Help (Prompts) to Respond



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Using a with Routine-by-Skill Matrix

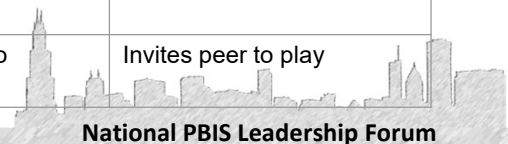
- Create a matrix.
- List daily activities/times of day down the left side (column).
- In the top row, list each child's name and their target skills.
- In the cells, list specific examples of the target skills, instructional opportunities, or materials.



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Routine-by-Skill Matrix: Example

Target Skills (instructional strategy)	Amy	Zane	Tyler
	Identify emotion (least to most) Peer interaction (timer and positive descriptive feedback)	Greet peers (most to least) Choose a friend (most to least)	Invite peer to play (least to most)
Arrival/ Table time	Checks in with feeling chart	Says hello to peers	Invites peer to play
Circle time	Identifies emotions in self	Greets peer during Good Morning song	
Center play	Stays with peer for 5 mins	Chooses a friend to play with	Invites peer to play
Snack		Chooses a friend to sit next to	
Outside	Stays with peer for 5 mins	Chooses a friend to play with	Invites peer to play



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Let's Take a Look



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Dina needs Tier 2?

Dina

- Has multiple BIRs a week for physical aggression
- Multiple conferences with family regarding aggression
- Elevated on screener
- Teacher is concerned about aggression

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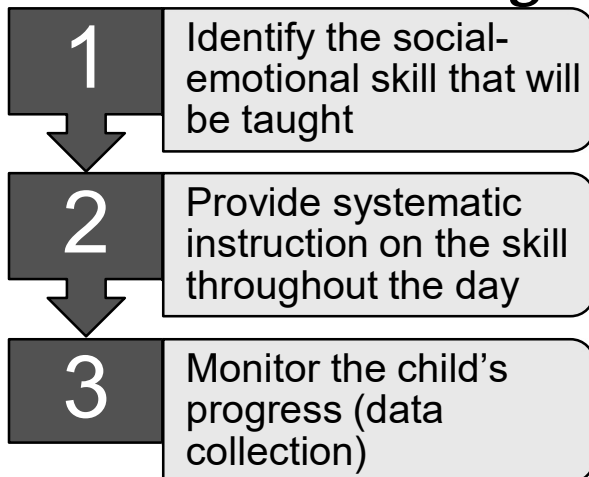
Interventions for Dina

- The team met with the teacher to **gather more information**. The teacher identified that Dina needs **additional practice on self-regulation and handling disappointment**. The teacher has taught the **entire class** self-regulation strategies; however, Dina will benefit from more **instruction, practice opportunities, and feedback** to learn to use the strategies when she is disappointed.
- **Embedded instruction** on self-regulation is the tier 2 intervention for Dina

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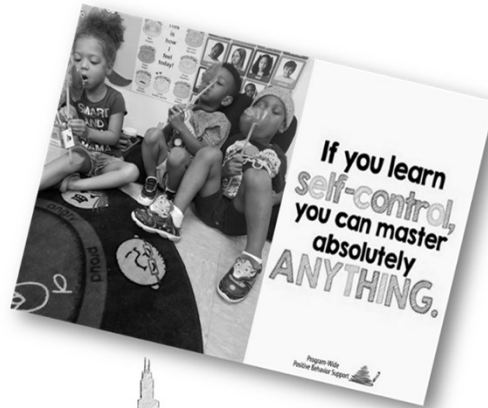
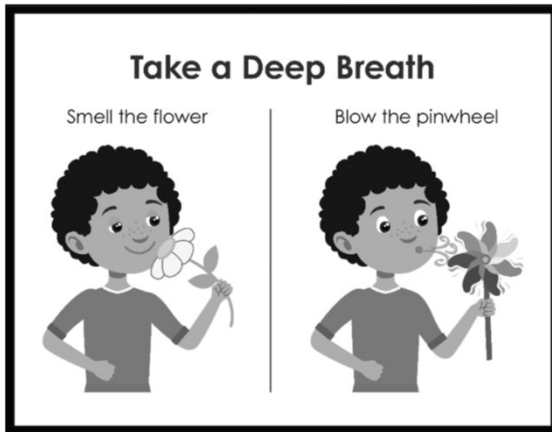
Using Systematic Instruction to Promote Learning



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Teach and Practice Taking a Deep Breath



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The Turtle Technique

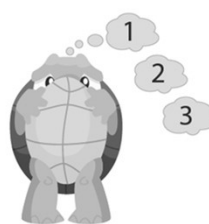
Step 1: Recognize your feelings.



Step 2: Stop your body.



Step 3: Tuck inside your shell and take three deep breaths.



Step 4: Come out when you are calm and think of a solution.



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Javier needs Tier 2?

Javier

- No BIRs
- Elevated on screener
- Teacher concerns:
 - Does not play with others
- Family concerns
 - Does not play with other children at playground or playgroups



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Intervention for Javier

The team meets with the teacher to **gather more information**. Considering both the teacher's and family's concerns along with his score on the screener, the team decided to use the evidence-based intervention called **Stay, Play, Talk**.



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Stay-Play-Talk

Teach peer buddies to:

- Stay and follow the child's lead in play
- Play with the peer by engaging with the same toys in similar ways
- Talk about or comment on the peer's play



<https://challengingbehavior.org/docs/Stay-Play-Talk.pdf>

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Stay-Play-Talk Sessions



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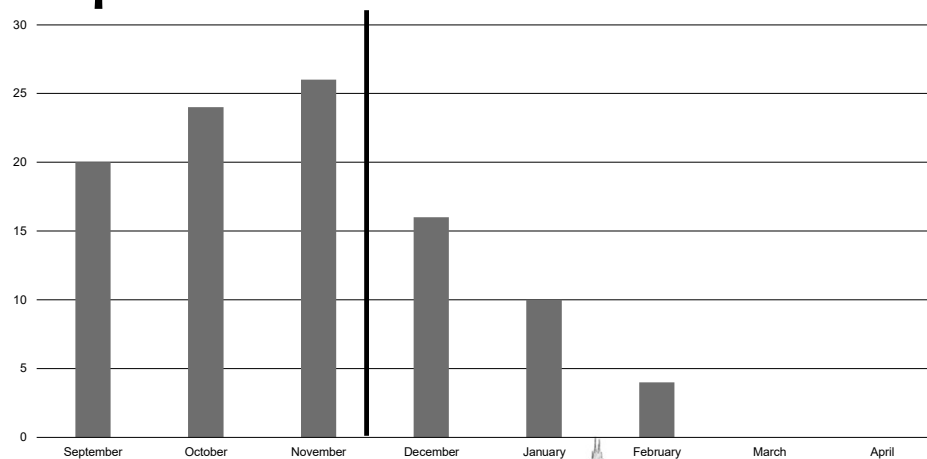
Considerations for Progress Monitoring

- Frequency of data collection
- Measuring skill development
 - Frequency
 - Duration
 - Rate of Opportunities
 - Behavior Rating Scale
- Measuring the decrease in behavior incidents
- Ease of use
- Use of graphs
- Plan for sharing progress with families



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BIRs by Month pre and post-intervention



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Progress Monitoring Data Collection

Child Name: Kaleb

Date	9/2	9/3	9/4	9/5	9/6	9/10	9/11	9/12	9/13	9/17	9/18	9/19	9/20	9/21	9/24	9/25
Skill: <i>Tap a child to initiate a social interaction</i>	4 3 2 ✖ 0 ND	4 3 2 ✖ 0 ND	4 3 2 ✖ 0 ND	4 3 2 ✖ 0 ND	4 3 2 ✖ 0 ND	4 3 2 ✖ 0 ND	4 3 ✖ 1 0 ND	4 3 ✖ 1 0 ND	4 3 2 ✖ 0 ND	4 3 ✖ 1 0 ND	4 3 ✖ 1 0 ND	4 3 ✖ 1 0 ND	4 3 ✖ 1 0 ND	4 3 ✖ 1 0 ND	4 3 ✖ 1 0 ND	4 3 ✖ 2 0 ND
Skill: <i>Pass a toy or object to a peer</i>	4 3 ✖ 1 0 ND	4 3 ✖ 1 0 ND	4 3 ✖ 1 0 ND	4 3 ✖ 1 0 ND	4 3 ✖ 2 0 ND	4 3 ✖ 2 0 ND	4 3 ✖ 2 0 ND	4 3 ✖ 1 0 ND	4 3 ✖ 2 0 ND	4 3 ✖ 2 0 ND	4 3 ✖ 2 0 ND	4 3 ✖ 2 0 ND	✖ 3 ✖ 1 0 ND	✖ 3 ✖ 1 0 ND	✖ 3 ✖ 1 0 ND	✖ 3 ✖ 1 0 ND

Score: ND = no data, 0 = refused, 1 = adult provides full physical, 2 = adult provides partial physical, 3 = adult provides gesture, point, or verbal direction, 4 = independent

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Professional Development

Pyramid Model Module Series
Introduction to the Pyramid Model



Pyramid Model Preschool Module Series
Nurturing and Responsive Relationships



Pyramid Model Preschool Module Series
High-Quality, Supportive Environments



Pyramid Model Preschool Module Series
Teaching Social-Emotional Skills



Pyramid Model Preschool Module Series
Individualized Teaching of Social-Emotional Skills



Pyramid Model Preschool Module Series
Addressing Challenging Behavior



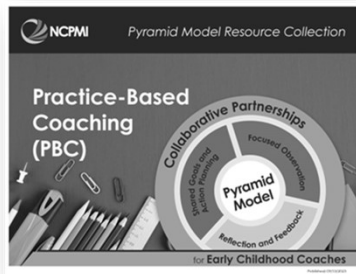
Pyramid Model Preschool Module Series
Overview of Prevent-Teach-Reinforce for Young Children



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Implementing Practices with Precision



School Leader's Guide to Professional Development and Practice-Based Coaching

Developed by Meghan van der Horst, Ashley Kromer, Madeline Yip-Hoi, Jennifer Harris, Denise Briscoe, Karen Koster, Sarah Koster, and Mary Louise Hamhaber



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Questions and Reflections



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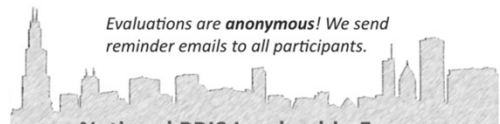
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