



Resource Guide for Developing Integrated Strategies to Support the Social-Emotional Wellness of Children

Quick Start Guide

The *Resource Guide for Developing Integrated Strategies to Support the Social and Emotional Wellness of Children* is part of the Office of Child Care (OCC) initiative to further integrate social-emotional support strategies into child care's mixed-delivery system. The Resource Guide is intended to help inform decisions about how to best integrate social-emotional wellness supports at the regional, state, territory, tribal, and local levels. This quick start guide summarizes strategies that can be used; the full guide can be found on the Early Childhood Training and Technical Assistance System website.

Rationale—Why This? Why Now?

Effects of the pandemic on the social-emotional health of children, especially those experiencing multiple hardships, include the following:

1. Changes in routines
2. Long-term psychological effects, such as feelings of uncertainty, fear, and loss of control
3. Isolation from friends and extended family
4. Loss of family members
5. Decreased access to health, community, and social supports—for example, many children access supports through schools, which have been closed to contain spread of the disease
6. Caregivers and families experience increased stress from the following:
 - a. Financial insecurity and challenges in accessing basic needs
 - b. Tensions in relationships and domestic violence related to household confinement

Getting Started

1. Familiarize yourself with the impact of the overall social-emotional wellness of children and the benefits of implementing an integrated, comprehensive system of supports.
2. Conduct an analysis of the current needs related to social and emotional wellness and determine the outcomes desired from an identified intervention.
3. Identify stakeholders that need to be involved in the initial planning and implementation.
4. Perform a scan of available social-emotional strategies and current strategies being used.
5. Establish which strategy or initiative will be expanded or introduced.

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6. Determine the resources needed to launch and sustain the initiative.
7. Design an evaluation to validate the efficacy of the initiative.
8. Launch initiative.

Social and Emotional Wellness Strategies

1. Coaching or consultation, or both (for example, child care health consultation, Infant/Toddler Specialists, and so on)
2. Infant and early childhood mental health consultation
3. Positive behavioral interventions and supports (for example, Pyramid Model)
4. Quality rating and improvement system—embedding social-emotional indicators
5. Training and professional development
 - c. Relationship-based care training for trainers
 - d. Social-emotional support strategies
 - e. Trauma-responsive caregiving
 - f. Developmental screening and social-emotional screening tools
6. Inclusion of social-emotional development within early learning guidelines
7. Creation or adoption of social-emotional toolkits (for example, Afterschool Alliance’s Social and Emotional Learning Toolkit)
8. Identification and alignment of social-emotional wellness efforts across the state’s early childhood system
9. Ensure that core knowledge and competencies for the child care field include a focus on understanding best practices to support social-emotional development

Pyramid Model for Promoting Social Emotional Competence in Infants and Young Children: Implementing Evidence-Based Promotion, Prevention, and Intervention Practices in Early Care and Education Programs (from section 5 of the full manual)

The Pyramid Model for Promoting Social and Emotional Competence in Infants and Young Children (Fox et al., 2003; Hemmeter et al., 2021; Hemmeter, Ostrosky, & Fox, 2021) was developed to provide early educators with guidance on the promotion, prevention, and intervention practices that are needed to support young children’s social-emotional development and effectively intervene in challenging behaviors. The Pyramid Model can be implemented within family child care homes, child care centers,

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Head Start, public preschool programs, early intervention, and early childhood special education programs. In some programs, the implementation of the Pyramid Model has been referred to as using Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS). The Pyramid Model is recognized as offering PBIS practices that are developmentally appropriate and culturally responsive. The implementation of the Pyramid Model is guided by a program-level leadership team that

- ◆ establishes and maintains staff buy-in,
- ◆ fosters family engagement,
- ◆ establishes program-wide expectations related to social-emotional skills and behavior,
- ◆ provides ongoing professional development and coaching for classroom fidelity of implementing Pyramid Model practices,
- ◆ establishes procedures for addressing challenging behavior using a team-based process, and
- ◆ uses data for decision-making.

The [National Center for Pyramid Model Innovations](#), funded by the Office of Special Education Programs, offers free resources to help practitioners, programs, trainers, coaches, and states implement the Pyramid Model.

Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation: A Prevention-Based Approach to Supporting Social-Emotional Wellness in Early Care and Education Settings (from section 6 of the full manual)

In infant and early childhood mental health consultation (IECMHC), consultants with expertise in early childhood development and mental health form collaborative partnerships with adults who care for young children. Within that collaboration, professionals build their capacity to support children's healthy social-emotional development and to respond appropriately to mental health needs (Cohen & Kaufmann, 2000/2005; Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, 2014). There are IECMHC programs across the country at the state, tribal, and local levels.

IECMHC is a broad intervention that is implemented in systems serving young children, including early childhood education, home visiting, child welfare, early intervention, and primary care. By definition, IECMHC is an indirect service (typically working with the provider, not with the child directly) that is multilevel and focused on equity.

There are five stages to implementation of IECMHC. The phases of consultation may repeat or continue in an ongoing capacity. Understanding the role of the consultant and the consultee in each of these stages is critical. The stages, as outlined by the Center for Child and Human Development (2016), are as follows:

- ◆ "Initiation"
- ◆ "Exploration"
- ◆ "Plan Development"

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- ◆ “Plan Implementation”
- ◆ “Revisit Plan and Goals” (p. 14)

For further information, you may want to visit the [Center of Excellence for Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation](#).

Relationship-Based Care for Infants and Toddlers: A Training for Trainers—Professional Development Strategy (from section 7 of full manual)

The free Relationship-Based Care for Infants and Toddlers: A Training for Trainers series is offered by the Child Care State Capacity Building Center’s Infant/Toddler Specialist Network via a request from the state, territory, or tribal CCDF Administrator. The series provides rationale and guidance for implementing relationship-based care in family child care homes and early care and education centers that serve infants, toddlers, and their families.

The content is based on the understanding that relationships are essential for healthy development. Responsive, nurturing relationships with caring adults provide safety and support for infants and toddlers to develop a sense of security and discover the world around them.

The training for trainers relies on the essential program practices for relationship-based care described by the Program for Infant/Toddler Care (Lally & Mangione, n.d.).

Implementation support may include the following:

- ◆ A community of practice
- ◆ Coaching
- ◆ Consultation
- ◆ Office hours with the Infant/Toddler Specialist

This training can be accessed via a request from the state, territory, or tribal CCDF Administrator to the Child Care State Capacity Building Center’s State System Specialist.

Social and Emotional Strategies for School-Age Children (from section 8 of the full manual)

To provide effective care to school-age children, we must understand how they develop relationships, manage their emotions, cope with stress, and develop social skills, from young children to adolescents.

Access to developmentally appropriate frameworks and strategies can assist school-age care programs and family child care educators in meeting the social and emotional health needs of school-age children. The strategies below are based on the understanding that relationships are essential for healthy development. Responsive, nurturing relationships with caring adults and peers provide safety and support for school-age children to develop a sense of security and discovery and to excel socially, emotionally, and academically.

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The following strategies are available to support social and emotional health in school-age children:

- ◆ Pyramid Model and PBIS
- ◆ Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning Framework
- ◆ Positive Youth Development Framework principles
- ◆ Adverse Childhood Experiences Resources

CCDF Lead Agencies—and their designated networks—in states, territories, and tribes can receive training and technical assistance from the [National Center on Afterschool and Summer Enrichment](#).

References

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