


**“Helping Children Thrive:  
A Beginner’s Guide  
to The Pyramid Model”**



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**A little bit  
about me...**

- Daughter, Sister, Mother of 2, Partner
- From Connecticut and New Jersey
- 35 years – lots of different ECE roles
- How I was introduced to the Pyramid Model.

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**Waterfall Chat**

**How are you FEELING?**



- This is important because our feelings impact how we respond to others, including children.
- And feelings, emotions, are a big part of the Pyramid Model!

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**Session Outcomes:**

1. **Define the Pyramid Model** as an evidence-based framework that informs teacher practice to promote social-emotional competence and prevent challenging behaviors in young children.
2. **Identify the three levels of the Pyramid**, distinguishing between universal supports for all children and targeted or individualized interventions for those who need extra help.
3. **Apply practical, everyday tools**—such as thinking about “Hot Buttons” or how you give praise—to create a more supportive and responsive environment for children.

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**Agenda**

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What is the Pyramid Model?

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Level 1: Positive Relationships & Supportive Environments

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Level 2: Targeted Social–Emotional Supports

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Level 3: Intensive, Individualized Supports

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Families

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Putting It Together

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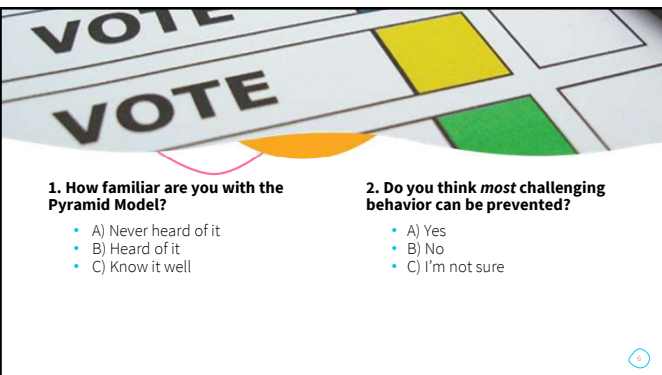
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**1. How familiar are you with the Pyramid Model?**

- A) Never heard of it
- B) Heard of it
- C) Know it well

**2. Do you think most challenging behavior can be prevented?**

- A) Yes
- B) No
- C) I'm not sure

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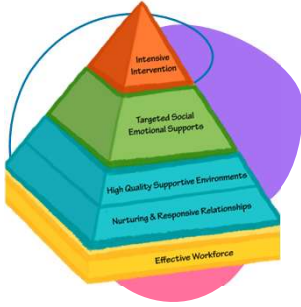
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**What is The Pyramid Model & Who Uses It?**

The Pyramid Model is a *framework* to help young children learn how to manage feelings, build friendships, and solve problems.

**Effective Workforce:** providers & early educators, coaches, families, early childhood special education, early interventionists, mental health consultants ...

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**Goal of the Pyramid Model**

To ensure that every child has the support, experiences, relationships, opportunities, guidance, and instruction to thrive in their social-emotional development and learning.




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**Nurturing and Responsive Relationships**

- Build nurturing relationships with children
- Create responsive relationships with families
- Support children's engagement and play
- Respond to children's conversations
- Praise and encourage appropriate behavior
- Support communication for children with special needs




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## Hot Buttons Activity

### 1. Identify the "Hot Button"

Write down three specific challenging behaviors that trigger an immediate, strong emotional reaction in you (e.g., hitting, defiance, whining).

### 2. Identify your Feeling

Write down the specific emotion you feel when that behavior occurs (e.g., frustration, embarrassment, feeling disrespected).

### 3. Identify the Impact

Reflect on how your emotional reaction (your "hot button") changes your behavior toward the child. How does this impact the trust and the relationship you are trying to build with that child (and their family)?



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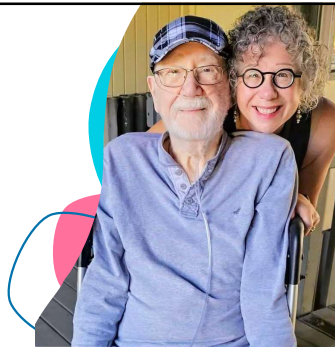
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## Quick Chat Activity

Take a moment and be the 3-year-old you again. Who is your favorite person, as a 3-year-old?

- Now think for a moment about **why** that person was your favorite.
- In the chat type 3 words that described that relationship.



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## Supportive Environments

- Create defined centers with adequate materials
- Balance your schedule (large & small group)
- Structure transitions
- Teach and promote a small number of rules
- Design activities that are engaging to children
- Provide clear directions and individualize instruction for children who need support



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### What you can do TODAY!

**Build Positive Relationships**

- ☐ Smile, greet children by name
- ☐ Show interest in children's stories
- ☐ Use warm, caring tones
- ☐ Spend one-on-one time

**Create Supportive Environments**

- ☐ Clear routines
- ☐ Picture schedules
- ☐ Give children choices
- ☐ Arrange the room so children can move and stay calm
- ☐ Simple rules or expectations (3-5 rules)

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### Targeted Social Emotional Supports



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### Targeted Social Emotional Supports – Tier 2

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| <div style="text-align: center; font-weight: bold; color: white;"> <br/>             Teaching about Feelings         </div> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use books, pictures, mirrors</li> <li>• Name your own feelings</li> <li>• Help children label their feelings</li> <li>• Notice the feelings of other and respond</li> </ul> | <div style="text-align: center; font-weight: bold; color: white;"> <br/>             Teaching Friendship Skills for Peer Interactions         </div> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Asking to join play</li> <li>• Sharing</li> <li>• Taking turns</li> <li>• Giving something</li> <li>• Getting something</li> </ul> | <div style="text-align: center; font-weight: bold; color: white;"> <br/>             Teaching Problem-Solving         </div> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Awareness - Stop</li> <li>2. Clarify - What's the problem?</li> <li>3. Consider - What are my choices?</li> <li>4. Execute - Try a solution</li> </ol> | <div style="text-align: center; font-weight: bold; color: white;"> <br/>             Coaching Children in the Moment         </div> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Using the relationship and tools in the environment from level 1.                 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Stay close</li> <li>• Offer calm support</li> <li>• Guide through steps</li> </ul> </li> </ul> |
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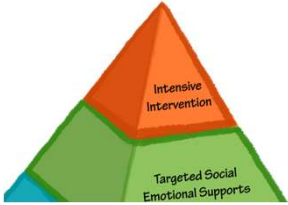
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### Intensive Interventions




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**1. How many children do you think truly need intensive support?"**

- A) 1-5%
- B) 6-10%
- C) More than 10%

**2. At what point is it appropriate to implement Intensive Interventions?**

- A) When a behavior is getting more frequent or intense.
- B) When behavior interferes with learning or the safety of others.
- C) When the other levels of the Pyramid have not resulted in the desired change.
- D) All the above.

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### Families: Partners of the Pyramid

- Keep communication open and positive from day one
- Share simple strategies that work for you, with families
- Ask about home routines, and child strengths and needs




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### Putting it all together!



- The Pyramid Model is not “one more thing”—it is a framework of everyday teaching strategies.
- Most challenging behavior decreases when the blue (universal) part of the Pyramid is strong.
- Minor changes in teacher practice can make big differences.

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### Waterfall Chat

What is one small change or strategy you want to explore or implement right away?



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### To Learn More

[National Center for Pyramid Model Innovations \(NCPMI\)](#)

[The Pyramid Model Consortium](#)

Ask about Pyramid Model implementation in your state!

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Thank you

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