

The North Carolina Department of Public Instruction Social Emotional Foundations for Early Learning Initiative (NCDPI SEFEL)

The NCDPI SEFEL initiative is funded through the 619 Preschool Disabilities grant for the purpose of improving child outcomes and increasing preschool inclusion (LRE) opportunities for preschool children with disabilities. The initiative offers Local Education Agencies (LEAs) support to pilot elements of a **program wide implementation** plan over a 4 year period using the Pyramid Model for supporting social emotional competence in infants and young children (hereafter referred to as the Pyramid Model). This Pyramid Model was developed by two national research centers, the Center for Social and Emotional Foundations for Early Learning (CSEFEL) and the Technical Assistance Center on Social Emotional Intervention for Young children (TACSEI).

Currently nine pilot LEAs have model classrooms that have reached or are approaching fidelity. All are now engaged in planning program wide implementation. Four additional LEAs are initiating the program during the 2011-2012 school year.

Stages of Implementation

Effective program-wide implementation transpires over time and occurs in different stages. Below are the stages of implementation with examples to support each stage.

- Exploration and Adoption - assessing the potential match between the evidence-based practices and program needs to make the decision to move forward.
 - 1 day administration overview offered to interested LEAs with follow-up
 - LEA announces their desire to begin a program-wide initiative by signing a written assurance document between the LEA and DPI
- Program Installation – identifying and putting in place the structural supports necessary to initiate the program.
 - LEA selects high performing classroom teachers and support staff that will become the targeted classrooms
 - LEA designates consultants/coaches and trainers who will take the lead on the project for training and coaching in subsequent years
 - Training of the LEA consultants/coaches and trainers with train-the-trainer NCDPI SEFEL materials and information on consultation and coaching
 - LEA assembles an administrative implementation team who will support the initiative.
- Initial Implementation – supporting change in practice with a facilitative leadership team
 - LEA trainers conduct training for targeted classroom staff
 - LEA consultants/coaches support targeted classroom staff to implement the Pyramid Model through classroom visits
 - Regular community of practice sessions for the Pyramid Model offered to staff
 - Leadership team meets regularly to develop a 3-5 year program wide implementation plan based on the *Early Childhood Program-Wide PBS Benchmarks of Quality* (written by Lise Fox, Mary Louise Hemmeter, and Susan Jack, 2010).

- Full Operation – occurring once the new learning becomes integrated into practitioner, organization, and community practices.
 - Program wide implementation of Pyramid Model through the NCDPI SEFEL initiative is expanded into all LEA preschool classrooms and maintained
 - Changes in policies are reflected in practice
 - Performance evaluation becomes a critical component of program quality assurance and continuous improvement by using an evaluation tool measuring fidelity of implementation of the Pyramid Model (Teaching Pyramid Observation Tool) and measuring progress in children’s social emotional development by using the tool, Social Skills Improvement System
- Innovation – refining and expanding of the new evidence-based practice that will later be included in the “standard model” or implementation practice
 - LEAs blend Second Step & Becky Bailey’s Conscious Discipline into the Pyramid Model when implementing in the classroom
- Sustainability - long-term survival and continued effectiveness of the implementation site
 - LEA ensures funding streams available to sustain the Pyramid Model for high fidelity implementation and positive child outcomes
 - Training and coaching offered to all new classroom staff and administration as turnover occurs

NCDPI SEFEL Implementation

DPI has been piloting several steps in the LEA implementation plan over the past 3 years. During this time critical components have been identified that need support and planning not only at the classroom level but also at the program level.

- Pilot Project – Phase 1

Established a North Carolina CSEFEL demonstration site by training LEA staff and providing consultation and coaching 3 times a month to classroom staff until fidelity was reached [based on the Teaching Pyramid Observation Tool for Preschool Classrooms (TPOT)]. Support was also given to the demonstration classroom for off-site visitors (assisted in developing guided observation process).

- Pilot Project – Phase 2

LEA leadership team was established and included the preschool coordinator, classroom teacher, LEA SEFEL consultant/coach, and trainers. Personnel were trained to be trainers of the Pyramid Model and to be consultants/coaches. The LEA leadership team developed a five year LEA program wide implementation plan which includes an evaluation plan for meaningful data collection and data-based decision making.

- Phase 3 – 10 LEAs

The NCDPI SEFEL initiative is being implemented in 10 LEAs across North Carolina, increasing into three more LEAs in January 2012. The state (DPI) is supporting LEA leadership teams to implement the initiative. Support is given through “train the trainer” sessions and materials for the LEA trainers and coaches. LEA trainers and consultants/coaches receive technical assistance as they train and coach their targeted classroom staff. Monthly LEA SEFEL community of practice sessions have been established and each LEA leadership team is developing a 3-5 year LEA program wide implementation plan to expand into all preschool classrooms.