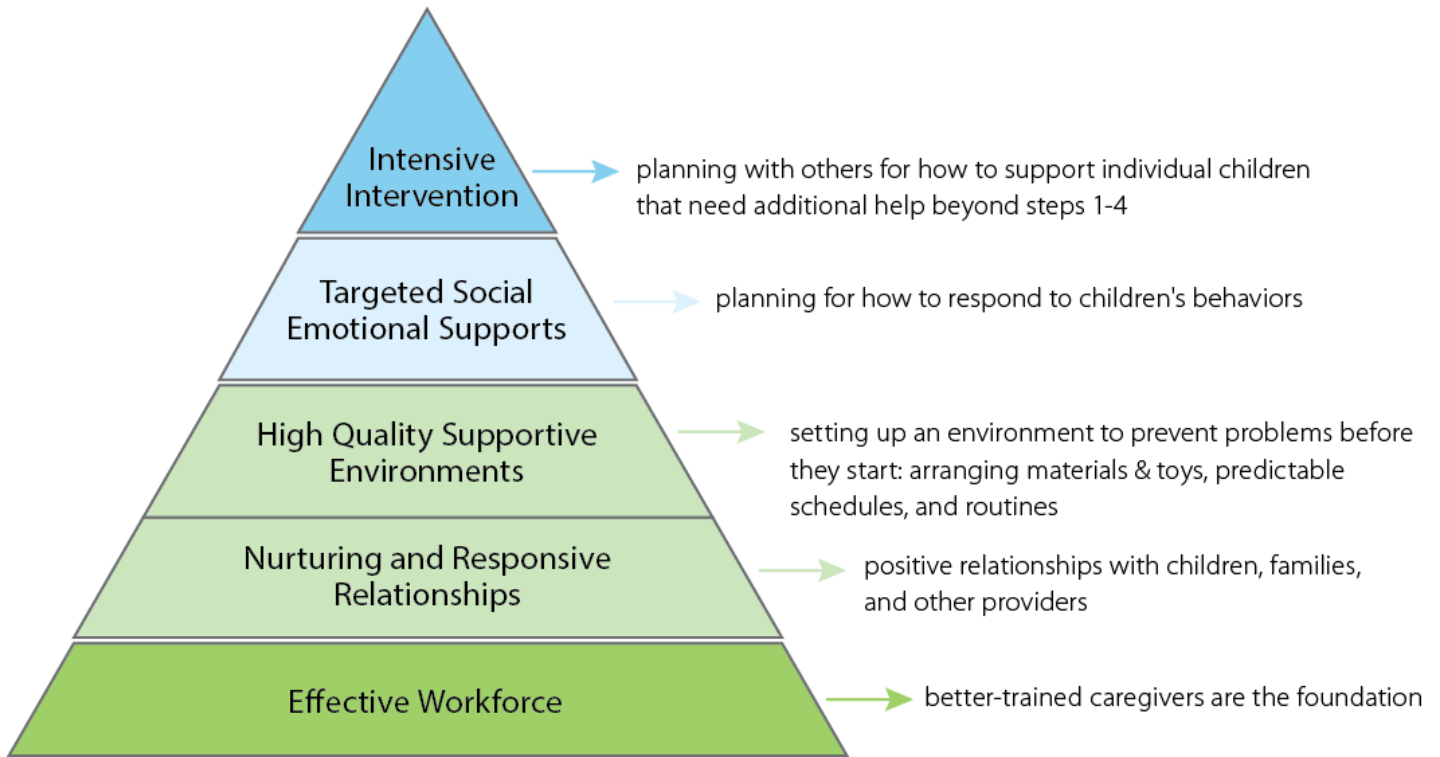


**Pyramid Model for Supporting Social/Emotional Competence:
Create an environment that supports children's healthy social-emotional development**

1. Build Nurturing and Responsive Relationships with Children and Families
2. Create a High-Quality Supportive Environment (inclusive, consistent educators)
3. Targeted Social-Emotional Supports (practice pro-social behaviors within curriculum)
4. Individualized Intervention



Simple Strategies for Building a Supportive Environment

When little people are overwhelmed by big emotions, it's our job to share our calm, not join their chaos. -L.R. Knost

Prevention Steps for Child Care Programs: Plan, Practice, Promote!

Plan: Identify the behaviors you want to see, post them in your program (positive language with both words and pictures).

Practice: Short "how-to" sessions, think "on-the-job" training, demonstrations, frequent reminders

Promote: Acknowledge *anything* positive to get started, highlight actions to promote self-esteem and good behavior, kids who feel good about themselves behave better. Focus on what TO do, instead of what NOT to do. (Look! You used your walking feet the whole time!, You helped your friend, that was nice!., You took turns, thank you!)

- Have parents complete an interest survey about their child to get to know them better. What do parents feel are their child's strengths? What goals do they have for their child? What are their likes, dislikes, favorites, comforts?
- Observe children in their natural habitat assess their development and learning. Get to know their interests and skill levels. When we observe and assess children's development, not only do we develop

a better understanding of their learning needs, we also get to know them more as an individual and it helps us to build a closer relationship with them.

- Shift gears! Put your energy into promoting the behaviors you want to see, and less energy focused on stopping violations already in progress. Praise and encourage appropriate behavior!
- Avoid empty praise phrases like “good job!” Point out specifics. If the child did a “good job” describe what was good about it. This teaches children to evaluate their own merit.
- The environment is the third teacher...is it engaging? Inviting? Does the environment help them make good decisions? Make your space work with you, instead of against you.
 - Ideas: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uXDxaBstacl>
- Get rid of clutter, reduce available toys, and organize them. Less is more! No, really it is. Big boxes full of toys lead to a ginormous mess as children dig to find just the right toy. It’s also frustrating. Imagine looking for your keys in that big box. Use small boxes with labeled pictures.
- Supply materials that engage cognitive thinking – children whose minds are engaged are less likely to act out. Remove battery operated toys that tell children how to play with them (90% toy, 10% child), incorporate wide variety of blocks, ramps, puzzles, manipulatives, and loose parts: <https://www.backwoodsmama.com/2018/02/loose-parts-play.html>
- Teach routine. Following a regular routine gives children and stability and security, reduces anxiety, and helps them develop trust and independence. Teach expectations and limits/boundaries, BE CONSISTENT!
- Use the buddy system: pair children together foster the development of friendships. Sometimes, children aren’t naturally great “players” and sometimes it’s hard to make friends. Pair them with a child they don’t typically play with, watch closely to help them build an understanding of one another, and encourage them to imagine and problem solve together.
- Open, honest communication with parents supports the child’s best interests and needs. Stay in communication with parents along the way, especially when behaviors become disruptive to the child’s growth and learning and the children in your child care.

Family Conferences: When a behavior is hindering development and learning on a consistent basis, it’s time to observe, document, and plan strategies with the child’s family.

THINK: Thoughtful, Helpful, Insightful, Nice, Kind

Tips for Parent Conferences regarding concerns and challenging behaviors:

- Be friendly, sympathetic. Parents are likely feeling frustrated and a little defensive.
- Speak in a kind, helpful tone.
- Have the child’s best interest in mind, tell this to the parents.
- Remain objective: stick to facts!
- Ask questions and listen well.
- Use the compliment sandwich.
- Explain what you’ve tried.
- Don’t drag it on.
- End on a kind note. Set a meeting time within 2 weeks to review and make changes if necessary.

Questions to discuss with parents at conferences:

1. Using your observation and documentation notes: 1. Identify the behavior 2. When and where does it occur? How often? Is there a specific person/toy involved (do not reveal names, confidentiality is important!)
3. Is there a disability to consider? How about a stressful situation/change at home or childcare?
4. What have we tried so far? What has worked? What hasn't worked?
5. What do we think the behavior might mean? Is there an unmet need or skill that needs development?
6. What are this child's strengths, and can we use them to build a plan?
7. What would we like to try next?
8. What is the educator's role? What is the family's role?
8. Set a meeting time to revisit and review.
9. List resources for intervention and make a referral, if necessary.

Resources for Parents and Educators:

- ◆ Behavioral Challenges in Early Childhood Settings by Connie Jo Smith
- ◆ Center on Social Emotional Foundations for Early Learning: <http://csefel.vanderbilt.edu/index.html>
- ◆ Teaching Tools for Young Children: <https://challengingbehavior.cbcs.usf.edu/resources/index.html>
- ◆ Nebraska's Children: <https://www.nebraskachildren.org/our-approach/evidence-based-strategies/pyramid-model.html>
- ◆ Zero to Three: <http://www.zerotothree.org/child-development/challenging-behavior/>
- ◆ PBS: <https://www.pbs.org/parents/thrive/how-to-coach-kids-through-big-emotions>
- ◆ NAEYC Classroom Environment: <https://www.naeyc.org/resources/blog/why-creating-classroom-community-so-important>