

North Carolina Pre-K Pyramid Model Evaluation Study

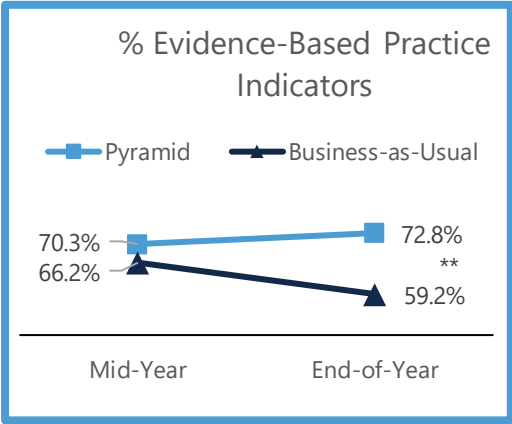
Implementation and Outcomes Executive Summary

A pilot implementation of the NC Preschool Pyramid Model (Pyramid Model) in NC Pre-K classrooms located in private center-based settings was conducted during the 2022-23 school year. The Pyramid Model is a social-emotional coaching program to support NC Pre-K teachers to engage in practices that are evidence-based. This pilot implementation of Pyramid Model was an expansion of implementation in NC Pre-K classrooms located in public school settings.

An outcomes evaluation included 40 classrooms (24 pilot classrooms, 16 public school classrooms, and 9 comparison classrooms who had not yet implemented). The study also included 253 children, 196 children enrolled in Pyramid Model classrooms and 57 in non-Pyramid classrooms. A process evaluation then focused on what supports may be necessary to implement the Pyramid Model to fidelity in NC Pre-K classrooms. Eighteen focus groups and interviews for coaches, administrators, teachers, and parents/guardians were conducted across the two years. Participating classrooms were located in one urban and three rural counties in different regions of North Carolina.

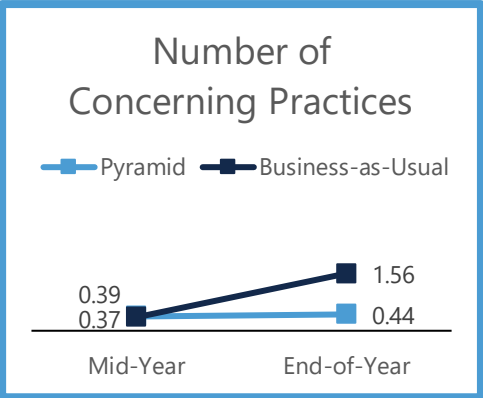
Outcomes Evaluation Study Results

Positive outcomes were noted in Pyramid Model classrooms, with high-quality teacher-child interactions observed at mid-year and end-of-year. Most NC Pre-K classrooms were also observed having children engaged in social-emotional learning activities at least some of the time during their observation which increased across the school year; Pyramid classrooms more than Business-as-Usual classrooms.



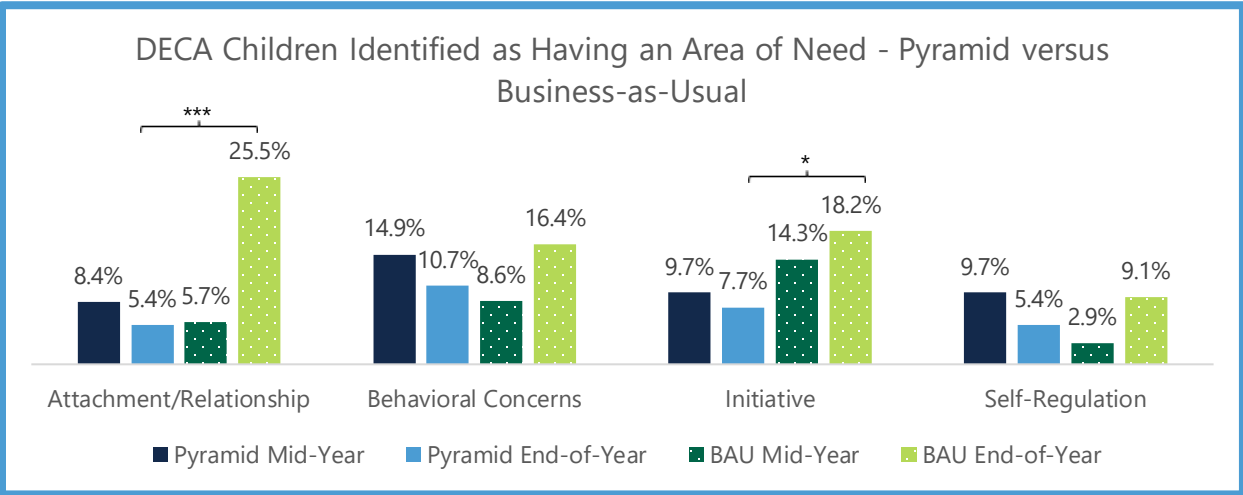
Notes. * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$.

Pyramid classrooms also demonstrated many improvements in their Pyramid Teaching Practices from mid-year to end-of-year, with very high scores in the area of supportive conversations with children. They also showed an increased use of 5% or more indicators in following practices: connecting with families, transitions between activities, and teaching social-emotional competencies. However, teaching problem-solving strategies were observed less often at end-of-year.



Pyramid classrooms stayed stable in the number of observed practices that are not supportive of social-emotional development (17 possible red flag indicators) from the mid-year (0.39) to end-of-year (0.44), while Business-as-Usual classrooms started out with similar levels at mid-year (0.37) and increased from mid-year to end-of-year (1.56).

Children in Pyramid Model classrooms had higher social skills ratings than the national average, demonstrated more initiative, and had fewer children screening positive for need of additional support services than Business-as-Usual classrooms. Behavioral concerns increased more in Business-as-Usual classrooms, while both groups showed improvements in behavioral regulation. Public school Pyramid attendees also had more positive relationships with adults.



Notes. * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$.

Process Evaluation Study Results

The implementation of Pyramid model showed effectiveness in improving child outcomes by providing them skills to navigate and solve their own problems. The Pyramid Model enabled teachers to feel more confident in their ability to provide support to the children and engage with families in their classrooms. It also paved the way for more meaningful family engagement to be able to support children's social-emotional needs not just in the classrooms, but also at home. Below are results from the focus groups regarding effectiveness of the Pyramid Model Implementation.

Child Outcomes: Teachers and administrators believe that **children have strategies to solve their own problems** as a result of the support provided through the Pyramid Model coaching.

Teacher Outcomes: Pyramid coaches have identified several strengths of the Pyramid Model implementation. One commonly noted strength of the Pyramid Model is that it is successful in increasing **teachers' confidence** to support children's social-emotional needs.

As a result of the Pyramid Model, teachers are reportedly **spending more time on supporting child development and classroom instruction and less time on behavior problems** and disruptions. Coaching is reported to have improved teachers' confidence in addressing disruptive behaviors and managing difficult situations in the classroom. Teachers reported being prepared with resources to utilize in advocating for themselves and their students which has made a difference in teacher preparedness and readiness to enhance their skills.

Summary

Piloting the Pyramid Model in private center-based settings resulted in improved use effective teaching practices, reduced referral identification of children, and improved children's confidence and independence. Study findings reflect classrooms prepared for implementation, were more favorable than previous studies, and similar effects may be observed upon scaling but with classrooms that are likely less ready than those reflected in this study. Finally, scaling is contingent on adequate statewide staffing, planning time, and related resources, particularly for classrooms located in private center-based settings.

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