

A Newsletter from your Technical Assistance Center, PCA-NJ

A Partnership for Promoting Social-Emotional Development and Full-Inclusion in High-Quality Early Education



Gerard Costa, Ph.D., Director CAECMH

Click [here](#) to find out more about the CAECMH.

Have you ever asked yourself one of the following questions: Is my program fully supporting our children's social-emotional development? Are our teachers implementing the curriculum in a way that that fosters healthy social-emotional growth? Why are we struggling to support children with challenging behaviors and how do we include all children, regardless of need, into our high quality program? If you have ever asked yourself any of these questions, you are not alone.

Early childhood educators have long recognized the importance of supporting early social-emotional development. Research has consistently taught us that a child's early interactions with their parents and family shapes who they are for a lifetime and that those interactions, both positive and negative, are greatly influenced by the quality of their early education experiences. Classroom environment, curriculum implementation, and the teacher's beliefs and attitudes about this key area play a critical role in how effective schools are at supporting healthy development in children.

Another key element of a "high-quality" infant, toddler, or preschool program is the ability to support all children regardless of need, yet the guidance on *HOW* to do so often falls short.

One of our primary goals at the Grow NJ Kids TA Center is to connect programs to the supports they need to succeed. We are prepared to help you toward inclusive early-education that supports the healthy social-emotional development of all children. For most programs, this support will come directly from your TA Specialist. For those with the greatest need, we have connected to the best possible resource to support you.

The Grow NJ Kids Technical Assistance Center at PCA-NJ is thrilled to announce a new partnership with the Center for Autism and Early Childhood Mental Health (CAECMH) at Montclair State University under the leadership of Dr. Gerry Costa, one of NJ's leading experts in the field of early-childhood mental health. The partnership is aimed at helping Grow NJ Kids providers better support social-emotional development and/or inclusion in their programs. The services provided by the CAECMH are rooted in research and evidence-based practice to help centers obtain and sustain quality practice in these specialized areas. Consultation from CAECMH may be available based on both the needs and desires of programs. You and your TA Specialist will determine together if the support of CAECMH is what your program needs to succeed. On-site consultation is limited however other opportunities to connect with CAECMH will be made available in the coming months through professional development and webinars. For more information, contact your TA Specialist or Colleen Hicks, Director-Grow NJ Kids TAC Central and Northeast at cmhicks@preventchildabusenj.org.

Why Focus on Social Emotional Development?



Most teachers have felt the heartache of teaching a “difficult child.” We have felt the frustration that comes from spending class time working with aggression and an uncooperative child, while the plan for the day and the rest of the class is left astray. Far too often, teachers scramble to determine how to “fix the child,” rather than working on their teaching strategies, their environment, and focusing on the individual needs of each child. When teachers shift their *primary* focus to social-emotional development, they will notice these “challenging” behaviors diminishing and a sense of harmony returning to the classroom.

Research indicates that a child’s social emotional competence is critical for school readiness and success. School readiness includes the healthy development of social competencies such as the ability to understand the feelings of others, to control one’s own feelings and behaviors, to cooperate with peers, and to follow simple directions. Developing positive social emotional competencies not only contributes to school readiness, but also lays the foundation to be able to function as a contributing member of society. Beginning at birth, one of the greatest influences on a child’s social emotional development is the quality of nurturing relationships with his primary caregivers and his ability to have secure attachments. Many children spend most of their waking hours in the care of someone other than their parent(s), and quite often these caregivers are teachers in child care settings. Therefore, early childhood educators play a pivotal role in the development of a child’s social emotional skills as the connections they form with these children are as important as the child/parent relationship. Research overwhelmingly supports that the investment of teachers in the social emotional development of children yields greater success in academics as a natural byproduct.

The GNJK Technical Assistant Specialists are dedicated to working with programs toward fully supporting the social-emotional development of young children. Understanding “the *why*” we need to do so is the first step, and providing the strategies is next. See page three to learn about “the *how*.”



References:

- Boyd, J., Barnett, S., Bodrova, E., Leong, D., & Gomby, D.** (2005). Promoting Children’s Social and Emotional Development Through Preschool Education, New Brunswick, N.J.: National Institute for Early Education Research
- Zins, J. E., Bloodworth, M. R., Weissberg, R. P. & Walberg, H. J.** (2004). In J. Zins, R. Weissberg, M. Wang, & H. J. Walberg (Eds.) Building academic success on social and emotional learning: What does the research say? Teachers Press.



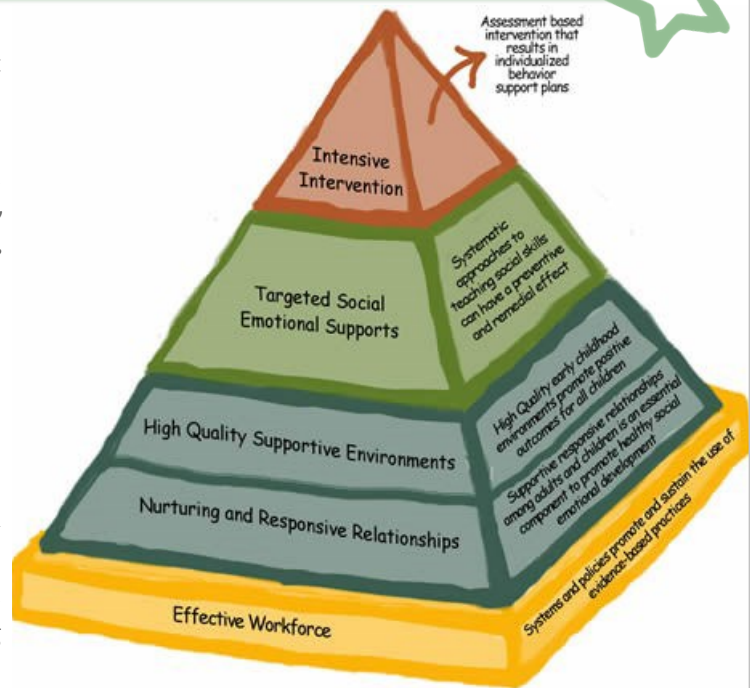
PCA-NJ, your GNJK Technical Assistance Center, operates a broad range of preventative service designed to support the improvement and quality of professional workforces and programming, resulting in significant positive impacts on family functioning and health in all 21 counties.

preventchildabusenj.org

The Pyramid Model

Most early childhood educators agree that providing a program that supports a child's social emotional development is indicative of a high quality program. However, centers are often challenged with moving from *what they know is best* to actually being *able to implement appropriate strategies* to fidelity. To help programs “walk the talk,” GNJK TAS encourage all centers to begin looking into the Pyramid Model, (right.)

The Pyramid Model is a tiered intervention framework that will give teachers strategies and practices for supporting the social-emotional development of children in their classrooms. Programs that have implemented the Pyramid Model have reported some of the following outcomes:



Click the image to view a larger version of the Pyramid Model

- Intentional teaching of social emotional competence
- Enhancement of partnerships with families
- Internal capacity to intervene effectively with challenging behavior
- Improved staff confidence in supporting **ALL** children
- Reduced staff attrition and increased staff job satisfaction
- Capacity to support all children rather than dis-enrolling children
- Improvement in overall program quality



Are you interested in learning more about the Pyramid Model? Are the above outcomes something you desire for your program? Does the idea of having strategies in place to help prevent challenging behaviors appeal to you? If you answered yes to any of these questions, your TAS will guide you to training opportunities and numerous resources available regarding the Pyramid Model.

Click here to see how one director explains the impact of implementing the Pyramid Model at her child care center.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bPVgEzMYQho>

References:

Catalano, C., Costa, G., Mulcahy, K. (2016). Preparing for an Integrated System of Infant and Child Program Quality Improvement: Promoting Social –Emotional Development and Full Inclusion, Montclair, NJ: Center for Autism and Early Childhood Mental Health

Need to Know!

Save the date for these upcoming opportunities...



Webinars <i>Open to all GNJK programs</i>				
Date	Time	Topic	Presenter(s)	Description
March 9	1:00	“Culturally Responsive Interactions”	Vasu Nacha, Sr. TAS	This webinar will provide participants with an understanding of the various dimensions of culture (national and organizational) that shape individual values and beliefs and how incorporating this information can help center directors to improve their day-to-day interactions and management skills. Registration URL: https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/register/2227495482017923329
March 29	1:00	“Building Better Environments for Infant and Toddlers”	Simone Taylor, Sr. TAS Brianni Isaac, TAS	This webinar will provide participants with an understanding of how to appropriately set up infant and toddler classrooms. Registration URL: https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/register/722997437851312898



GNJK Peer Learning Communities (PLC)

County– specific

Date	Time	Location	County
March 15	6:30	CHS, 1433 Hooper Avenue, Suite 340, Toms River <i>(combined with Directors Meeting)</i>	Ocean
March 16	12:00-1:00	Urban League– 253 Martin Luther King Dr. Jersey City	Hudson
March 23	1:00-3:00	1001 Spruce Street #210, Trenton	Mercer
March 23	1:30-3:30	30 Van Dyke Avenue, New Brunswick– Room 104	Middlesex & Somerset
March 24	1:30-3:30	3301 C Route 66, Neptune NJ <i>(tentative)</i>	Monmouth
March 24	2:00-4:00	570 Broad St, Newark – 9 th floor training room	Essex

Needs Assessment Survey

Please help us cater to YOUR needs by completing our Needs Assessment survey. Follow this link and share your thoughts about PLCs.
<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/gnjkneedsassessment>



Training

Click on the link provided below to view all currently offered professional development opportunities specifically designed for GNJK centers.

[Trainings](#)



**Prevent Child Abuse
New Jersey™**

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Northeast Region TA Center 550 Broad Street, Suite 1105 Newark, NJ 07102 973.371.5301

www.preventchildabusenj.org/programs/growtac