

# What Do We Know about the Pyramid Model Framework?



## LEARNINGbyte



### PURPOSE OF ACTIVITY

The purpose of this activity is to increase familiarity with using the Pyramid Model Framework in early intervention to support families in facilitating infant-toddler social and emotional development.



### TIME REQUIRED: 45 - 60 MINUTES



### RESOURCES NEEDED

- Laptops or other wifi-enabled devices with internet access (several are needed depending on the size of your group)
- Laptop, projector and screen (for sharing videos)
- Flipchart or Whiteboard and Markers
- Handouts:
  - [The Pyramid Model for Supporting Social Emotional Competence in Infants and Young Children Fact Sheet](#)
  - [Early Intervention Implementation Checklist](#)
- [Video: Pyramid Model Overview](#)
- [Video: Pyramid Model Framework in VA](#)

**Note for Activity Leader:** Be sure to review all resources and familiarize yourself with the Pyramid Model Framework before meeting with staff. A great way to do that is by reviewing the [National Center for Pyramid Model Innovations](#) (NCPMI) site, focusing on the Pyramid Model and Resource Library tabs.



### SPECIFIC STEPS

1. Email staff the link to the handouts to read before the meeting.
2. Instruct staff to bring their laptops or other wifi-enabled devices to the meeting. Provide the link to the [NCPMI site](#) and ask them to have it ready on their device for the meeting.
3. During a staff meeting, introduce the Pyramid Model Framework to your staff, then ask the question: *What do you already know about the Pyramid Model Framework?*
4. Explain that you are going to watch the [Pyramid Model Overview video](#). Instruct staff to watch the video and listen for information that connects to coaching. Play the video (runtime: 8:58).
5. After watching the video, invite staff to share their thoughts. Ask: *What did you notice about how the Pyramid Model Framework connects to the coaching approach used in VA?*
6. Explain that you are going to watch the [Pyramid Model Framework in VA](#) video that explains the relationship of the Pyramid Model Framework practices and principles to those we support in VA's early intervention system. Play the video (runtime: 9:13)



7. After watching the second video, invite staff to share their thoughts and questions. Use a flip chart or whiteboard to organize thoughts and questions into two columns: *Things We Like*, *Things We Have Questions About*
8. Introduce the [Pyramid Model Resource Library](#) onscreen and model how to navigate it on a large screen. To help staff begin to explore the Library and consider how they might use tools, use one of the following options for discussion:
  - a. Invite your staff to share a recent situation from an intervention visit that involved social-emotional development and/or a child’s challenging behavior, or
  - b. Use the sample scenario on the next page that reflects a situation from an intervention visit that involved social-emotional development and/or a child’s challenging behavior.
9. After discussing the scenario, have staff work individually or in pairs to find tools/resources on the Library site that they could use to manage the situation. Encourage them to use the search category: Early Intervention. Give staff 5-7 minutes for this activity, then invite them to share what they found and why they think it could be helpful.
10. Debrief by inviting staff to go back to the lists of Things We Like and Things We Have Questions About and add or make changes. Then, wrap-up by asking the following questions:
11. *What do you know NOW about the Pyramid Model Framework?*
12. *What do you still need to know? What additional information do you need?*
13. Share the [Early Intervention Implementation Checklist](#) with staff. Instruct them to read it and use it as a self-assessment tool after at least one visit between now and the next staff meeting. When you meet next, ask staff to share what they noticed about which practices they are already doing and where they need to grow.



# Sample Scenario: Everett

Imagine that you have been working with Everett for 10 months . He lives with his mom, dad, and his 2 older sisters. His mom, Mrs. Sampson, referred Everett to the ITC office last year because of concerns with Everett’s communication, social emotional skills (including lack of affection towards others), and intense single-focused interests. His dad works full time as a truck driver. Everett’s paternal grandmother lives nearby and babysits when needed.

Everett is generally a happy child and will smile to show he enjoys an activity. You have observed that Everett often throws items but sometimes, he will also take several turns playing back and forth games with cars and balls with his sisters, mom, and dad. He loves popping bubbles and playdoh and will share space and attention with others during these activities. He will initiate play by handing an item to whoever he is inviting to play. Everett waves, gives kisses and hugs both on request as well as to initiate interactions. He signs “more” to ask for things he enjoys like bubbles or firm squeezes and when he wants more juice or cookies. He also claps, jumps, and continues play when he is engaged. When he is not interested, he will ignore, whine, or throw the item away from the play partner.

Everett has recently been diagnosed with autism spectrum disorder. His mom expected this diagnosis but his grandmother is having difficulty with his diagnosis and his individual differences compared to her other grandchildren. During a recent visit, Mrs. Sampson shared that the grandmother has been making negative comments about Everett. His grandmother is upset because she thinks that Everett does not like her and does not listen to her. She has made comments about wishing that Everett would just act “normal,” that she cannot take him anywhere because he does not behave, and that he does not listen to her. For example, his grandmother often complains that Everett touches her breakables on her coffee table after she’s told him not to; she says she is not going to move them because “this is her house so he needs to learn how to behave.” His grandmother also feels like he should be getting more early intervention services because her friend has a grandchild with autism. She says that when the therapists started working with that other child, the child started talking and making more progress. This is a comment that the grandmother had made to Mrs. Sampson more than once and Everett’s mom feels like his grandmother is blaming her for the diagnosis.

After the visit, you reflect on what you learned from Mrs. Sampson. She shared a very emotional and personal experience within her family that adds stress to her daily routine especially when she needs the grandmother’s assistance with babysitting. This also impacts the parents’ relationship because Everett’s mom is upset with her husband’s mother regarding her unwanted opinions and advice about their son.

## Instructions:

1. Review the resources in the Pyramid Resource Library.
2. Work with a partner to identify 2 resources you think might be useful to use with Everett’s family to address the concerns described in the scenario.
3. Describe how you would use each resource and provide a specific example.

