

APPENDIX 2: Positive Behavior Intervention and Support (PBIS)³³

Program-wide positive behavior intervention and support (PBIS), traditionally practiced in school-based settings, is increasingly being implemented in early childhood settings, with promising results. Program-wide PBIS is a systems approach to establishing the social culture and behavioral supports needed for all children in a school or early childhood program to achieve both social and academic success. It is not a specific curriculum; rather it is a group of effective practices, interventions, and evidence-based implementation supports. PBIS strategies are typically organized into three progressively intensive tiers, with specific interventions being executed across primary, secondary and tertiary tiers. The process is facilitated by a knowledgeable behavioral consultant, who, in partnership with the program team, builds the capacity of school personnel to foster the social-emotional and behavioral development of all students.

There are PBIS frameworks specifically for young children. As an example, the Pyramid Model for Supporting Social Emotional Competence in Infants and Young Children provides a tiered intervention framework for supporting social-emotional and behavioral development. The first tier includes practices to promote nurturing and responsive caregiving relationships with the child and high-quality supportive environments. The second tier includes explicit instruction in social skills and emotional regulation for children who require more systematic and focused instruction. The third tier is for children with persistent challenging behaviors that are not responsive to interventions at other tiers and involves implementing a plan of intensive, individualized interventions. The general application of program-wide PBIS in early childhood settings requires programs to establish a team, develop a set of behavioral goals, teach positive behavior, perform functional assessments of challenging behaviors, and use the assessment to construct individualized behavior support plans. For program-wide adoption, programs need administrative support to provide a sustained commitment and ensure training for staff, competent coaching, access to specialists in mental health and behavior, the use of process and outcome data for decision-making, and the development of policies and procedures that support the implementation of a PBIS framework.

In elementary schools, randomized control trials have found that program-wide PBIS reduced discipline referrals and suspensions, and improved fifth grade academic performance.³⁴ Studies have also found that the use of program-wide PBIS was associated with improved perception of school safety, and improvements in the proportion of students at third grade who met the state reading standard.³⁵ The emerging research in early childhood settings is promising. Results from the first randomized control study examining the Pyramid Model in early childhood settings found that children enrolled in the intervention classrooms demonstrated improved social skills and reductions in problem behavior.³⁶ A comparative study found increased positive child behaviors and decreased negative child behaviors in Pyramid Model classrooms, compared to control classrooms.³⁷

The resources below provide information and resources to implement PBIS:

- [Center on the Social and Emotional Foundations for Early Learning](http://csefel.vanderbilt.edu/)
<http://csefel.vanderbilt.edu/>
- [Technical Assistance Center on Positive Interventions and Supports](https://www.pbis.org/)
<https://www.pbis.org/>
- [Technical Assistance Center on Social Emotional Interventions](http://challengingbehavior.fmhi.usf.edu/)
<http://challengingbehavior.fmhi.usf.edu/>

³⁴ Bradshaw, C., Mitchell, M., & Leaf, P. (in press). Examining the effects of school-wide positive behavioral interventions and supports on student outcomes: Results from a randomized controlled effectiveness trial in elementary schools. *Journal of Positive Behavior Interventions*.

³⁵ Horner, R., Sugai, G., Smolkowski, K., Todd, A., Nakasato, J., & Esperanza, J., (in press). A Randomized Control Trial of School-wide Positive Behavior Support in Elementary Schools. *Journal of Positive Behavior Interventions*.

³⁶ Hemmeter, M.L., Synder, P., Fox, L., & Algina, J. (April 2011). Efficacy of a classroom wide model for promoting social-emotional development and preventing challenging behavior. Paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Educational Research Association. New Orleans, LA.

³⁷ Gettinger, M. & Stoiber, K. C. (2006). Functional assessment, collaboration, and evidence-based treatment: Analysis of a team approach for addressing challenging behaviors in young children. *Journal of School Psychology, 44*(3), 231-252.