



A Message from the California Head Start Association

by Pamm Shaw, President, California Head Start Association

As a partner with the California Head Start–State Collaboration Office (CHSSCO), the California Head Start Association is excited to increase its use of technology and “think green” while providing the community with the first electronic-only edition of *Bridges*. The CHSSCO works closely with the California Head Start Association and has some interesting opportunities for participation over the next year addressing issues of common interest to both Head Start and state-funded child development programs, including licensing, child health, and staff development.

This issue of *Bridges* will focus on the California Collaborative on the Social and Emotional Foundations for Early Learning (CA CSEFEL), which promotes the social–emotional development and school readiness of young children from birth to age five. The CSEFEL started as a national resource center funded by

the federal Office of Head Start and Child Care Bureau to disseminate research and evidence-based practices to early childhood programs. California is a partner state in the effort, providing training and technical assistance to:

- enhance the knowledge and skills of the early childhood workforce;
- support the implementation and sustainability of evidence-based practices;
- increase the size of the workforce skilled in supporting the social–emotional development of young children (birth to age five).

The CSEFEL has developed a conceptual framework of evidence-based practices for promoting young children’s social and emotional competence and for preventing and addressing challenging behavior. This framework is referred to as the “Teaching Pyramid for Supporting Social–Emotional Competence in

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In This Issue

Welcome to the first edition of the *Bridges* e-journal, a publication previously offered in both hard-copy and electronic versions but now available exclusively online. With input from the California Department of Education (CDE), the California Head Start–State Collaboration Office Advisory Committee, and staff from the Region IX State Training and Technical Center, the *Bridges* e-journal will provide Web links, photographs, diagrams, and resources to share with staff members and colleagues.



CALIFORNIA HEAD START–STATE COLLABORATION OFFICE

Bridges is produced by the California Head Start–State Collaboration Office (CHSSCO), which was created to promote partnerships between Head Start and the larger child care and development community at the state and local levels. *Bridges* is funded by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration on Children and Families, and the California Department of Education. The opinions expressed are those of the authors and not necessarily those of the Department. CHSSCO is located in the Early Education and Support Division, 1430 N Street, Suite 3410, Sacramento, CA 95814.

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Head Start State-Level Support and Collaboration

by Nancy Remley, Director, and Stephanie Myers, Coordinator, California Head Start–State Collaboration Office

The California Head Start–State Collaboration Office (CHSSCO), California Head Start Association, and Region IX State Training and Technical Center have all participated on the California Collaborative on the Social and Emotional Foundations for Early Learning (CA CSEFEL) state leadership team since the collaborative's inception several years ago. As Head Start and other early education programs have continued to look for resources to better meet the social–emotional needs of the young children they serve, the CA CSEFEL has developed statewide training events, activities, and products to meet those needs. The CA CSEFEL state leadership team believes that the statewide, coordinated technical assistance approach helps programs to improve classroom environments and all services provided. We hope this first edition of the *Bridges* e-journal is helpful and will provide more opportunities for agencies to share resources for staff training, parent education, and other purposes. ■

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Infants and Young Children.” The CSEFEL has developed extensive, user-friendly training materials, videos, and print resources to help programs implement this teaching model.

Visit the CHSSCO Web site at <http://www.cde.ca.gov/sp/cd/re/chssco.asp> and see the array of resources found in this edition of *Bridges*. Please take advantage of some wonderful training opportunities in the coming year. ■



By using the Emotions Chart on the first day of class, I was able to make a connection with each child upon arrival.

View from a Teacher

Using an Emotions Chart with Children

by Rebecca Larsen, Gilroy Unified School District

By learning and teaching the language, strategies, and tools from the CA CSEFEL Teaching Pyramid, I have been able to empower the students in my classroom to express themselves and their emotions. The Emotions Chart has quickly become a part of the rituals in my class, much like children washing their hands upon arrival at school. Each student answers the question “How am I feeling?” by finding a picture that matches his or her emotions. The emotions depicted in the images range from happy, sad, and angry to shy, frustrated, scared, or silly. Pictures of the emotions are attached to the chart by self-sticking fabric fasteners. The pictures can easily be changed to depict a variety of emotions so that the chart remains interesting to the students.

By using the Emotions Chart on the first day of class, I was able to make a

connection with each child upon arrival. This was the beginning of my relationship with each new student. Many of my students are English learners, and even though some had difficulty communicating with me in English, the chart helped each child express his or her feelings. I could identify the children’s feelings by the pictures they chose to represent their emotions. The children enjoyed identifying their emotions as pictured on the chart.

Over time, the children began to verbalize their emotions in English in addition to choosing pictures. Many children would choose the same emotion day after day. I was able to start conversations and build relationships with the children by focusing on their emotions. For instance, when a child chose the happy picture, I would ask, “What makes you happy?” The replies might be as simple as “My

mom” or “I am wearing pink today, and pink is my favorite color.” When a child chose “sad” or “angry,” I would ask, “What made you sad [or angry]?” The children enjoyed these interactions, which led to more conversations with each child.

The Emotions Chart is an effective teaching tool. By using the chart when each child arrived at class, I was able to understand how a child’s day had begun or where it might be headed. If children are upset when they arrive at school, they will most likely have a difficult time transitioning to daily routines. Being familiar with each child’s emotions creates the perfect opportunity to engage with the child, understand situations that may have upset the child, and help to defuse negative situations before they happen. ■



California Head Start Training and Technical Assistance Center

by Rebecca Votaw, Early Childhood Education Specialist
California Head Start Training and Technical Assistance Center

The California Head Start Training and Technical Assistance Center has participated in the CA CSEFEL state leadership team since its inception. Head Start and Early Head Start grantees have benefited from this participation through attendance at the CSEFEL training institutes, access to a multitude of materials and resources, and, most important, the cohesive partnerships that have been developed on the leadership team.

In California, all of the programs and agencies that are involved with the leadership team are embedded in many layers of systems. We are much closer now to bridging the gaps in these systems by having individuals from many different state departments and agencies working together with one main objective: to ensure that every young child in California starts life with a strong, secure social and emotional foundation. ■

Race to the Top–Early Learning Challenge Team

California was successful in the highly competitive federal Race to the Top–Early Learning Challenge (RTT–ELC), winning a grant of \$75 million over four years (January 2012 through December 2015). California’s RTT–ELC team implements a unique approach that builds upon local and statewide successes to create sustainable capacity at the local level and address the geographic and cultural diversity of California. We believe this approach best meets the needs of early learners, especially those with the greatest needs. To achieve these ambitious goals for early learning, California is using most of the RTT–ELC funding to develop and expand efforts to improve outcomes for children with high needs. One such effort is the implementation of a local Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System (TQRIS). Approximately 74 percent of the grant funding is being spent at the local level to support a voluntary network of 17 Regional Leadership Consortia in 16 counties. Each consortium is led by an established organization that is already operating or was developing a quality improvement system and allocating local resources to the efforts. Nearly 1.9 million children, or 70 percent of children under age five in California, are represented by the 16 counties.

In addition, California is using a portion of the RTT–ELC grant funds to make several one-time investments in state capacity through nine projects. One of these investments is in the California Collaborative on the Social and Emotional Foundations for Early Learning (CA CSEFEL), through a contract with WestEd’s Center for Child and Family Studies. The CA CSEFEL project provides support to programs in each of the 17 consortia to implement, with fidelity, the CSEFEL Teaching Pyramid approach (i.e., creating child care environments that emphasize strong relationships, support social competence, and reduce challenging behaviors of infants and young children). The project recruits, trains, and supports a network of regional CSEFEL Teaching Pyramid trainers and coaches. Those trainers and coaches provide CSEFEL-based technical assistance to early learning and development programs that participate in the local TQRIS within the consortia. The programs train the staff, adapt the environments, and develop leadership teams to create safe and nurturing environments for all children. The project is also involved in other efforts: (1) host a California CSEFEL Teaching Pyramid Web site to share new and adapted materials, (2) create a Web-based overview of the CSEFEL Teaching Pyramid, and (3) sponsor CSEFEL regional symposia. For further information about RTT–ELC activities and projects, please visit <http://www.cde.ca.gov/sp/cd/rt/>. ■

Why Focus on Healthy Social-Emotional Development?

Executive Function and Its Central Role in School Success

by Laura Fish, Master Coach, CA CSEFEL Teaching Pyramid
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It's free-play time at the Lynden Child Development Center. Four children cluster together daily, as usual. Melanie, age five, calls out excitedly to the group: "Hey, guys, let's play family again!" Taking charge, she points to the others in turn and says, "You be the daddy, you be the sister, and you're the baby." Four-year-old Tess pauses—and then decides that being the daddy will be fun because this means she'll get the big cell phone. Degitu, also four years old, thinks back to yesterday's play and agrees to her role as "sister." "Okay, but I get the silver necklace this time!" Melanie looks at the necklace and agrees because she wants the gold one anyway. Samantha, age three, walks toward one of the baskets and picks up a cell phone. "Nooo, Samantha!" says Tess. "That is for mommies only. Babies don't talk on the phone." Tess takes the phone and gives it to Melanie. Samantha goes back to the closet, gets her doll as she did yesterday, and puts it in the stroller.

The children begin to set the rules of engagement and define their roles. Experience from previous family-play episodes moves the action forward. Taken together, this activity constitutes typical dramatic play in a preschool classroom.

Throughout their play, members of this "family" will make decisions ("Should we eat rice or pasta?"); solve problems ("We only have three bowls and four people! Give baby a plate instead"); and resolve conflicts ("Here, baby, you can have the blue chair, I'll use it next time. Don't cry!")—all of which demonstrates complex social politics. Play provides children with the opportunity to practice and refine their skills in executive functioning.

What Is Executive Function?

Executive function (EF) involves the complex problem solving and critical thinking that lead to the ability to accomplish goals—from playing a schoolyard game to studying nanotechnology. More specifically, EF refers to the set of cognitive processes that support an individual's capacity to engage in goal-directed behavior.

EF skills include those abilities that *control* behavior—such as attention, motivation, and emotion regulation—and



those that *guide* behavior, such as planning, organizing, monitoring, reasoning, problem solving, and responding flexibly. According to the Center on the Developing Child at Harvard University, EF is that group of skills in the brain that "helps us to focus on multiple streams of information at the same time, monitor errors, make decisions in light of available information, revise plans as necessary, and resist the urge to let frustration lead to hasty actions."

It does not take any great cognitive leap to see that these skills are integral to classroom success at every level, from preschool through college and beyond. In fact, a student will not be able to meet the rigorous demands of the Common Core State Standards (educational standards for kindergarten through grade twelve) if he or she has not developed decent EF skills. Since we now know that EF skills begin developing—or atrophying—in very early childhood, attention to these skills is vital from the moment a child is born. The next section discusses how EF skills work in the brain and what parents and teachers need to know and be able to do so that children enter school with these skills in place.

Components of Executive Function

The neurologically based skills that make up executive function may be classified as follows:

- **Working memory** keeps information in mind long enough

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to initiate and complete tasks. Working memory helps with the planning and organizing required for such things as following rules while engaging in a task, collecting and keeping track of needed materials, following directions, solving problems step by step, and creating the roles and rules involved in any kind of complex activity, from playing “house” as a child to programming computer software later in life.

- **Inhibitory control**—or impulse control—helps a person pause to think before acting. This skill is necessary to filter out distractions, delay gratification, and break habitual behaviors. It is crucial for regulating emotions and making choices about appropriate ways to express those emotions. We all need this skill to forgo doing what we want to do in place of doing what we are supposed to do—essentially, to be able to discern the right choices and the most important things to attend to in any given moment. For example, a child uses these skills when continuing to build a block tower even though other children are running through the area; when waiting to eat lunch until everyone is served; when playing games such as Red Light/Green Light and Simon Says; and when calling for help instead of striking back, despite being angry, after being hit by another child. Adults use impulse-control skills when they go to work rather than stay in bed after a late night, when they refrain from yelling at their boss for a harsh performance evaluation, and when they get up to comfort a crying child rather than stay in bed.
- **Cognitive or mental flexibility** is the capacity to shift mental focus and consider choices for an appropriate response—both intellectually and emotionally. It is the ability to adjust to changes, revise plans, and consider something from a different perspective. This flexibility helps a person sort out competing demands, priorities, and expectations. For children, cognitive flexibility supports their ability to effectively manage such things as transitions, to try multiple options for conflict resolution, and to understand rules and expectations that might be situational (e.g., “In the morning we can play with water, but in the afternoon we play with the sand”; or, when a child is older: “I can swim in the pool, but only when a lifeguard is present”).

These three domains work in an interrelated fashion to support optimal executive function. For example, it takes *working memory* to remember that the teacher told the class to put

coats and backpacks in cubbies before going to the table, *inhibitory control* to resist the urge to throw the things on the floor and run to the table with excitement to start playing, and *cognitive flexibility* to follow the teacher’s expectations—when, at home, children get to drop things on the floor and Mom puts them away. When fully integrated, skills that make up executive function support a person’s ability to engage in purposeful, goal-directed, problem-solving behavior by overriding impulsive thoughts and responses in order for a person to think through possible outcomes and realize goals.

According to research from the Center on the Developing Child at Harvard University (2011), children’s EF skills facilitate early cognitive achievement in school in the areas of reading, writing, and mathematics. Scientists argue that EF skills “support the process (i.e., the *how*) of learning—focusing, remembering, planning—that enables children to effectively and efficiently master the content (i.e., the *what*) of learning—reading, writing, computation.”

What Happens in the Brain?

The capacity for cognitive processing is dependent upon the healthy development of several systems in the prefrontal areas of the brain, which begin to form during infancy and continue to grow and refine throughout adolescence and into early adulthood. In their book *The Whole-Brain Child*, Daniel Siegel and Tina Payne Bryson (2011) liken the brain to a two-story house. The “downstairs” brain, which includes the limbic system and brain stem, develops first and is responsible for primary bodily functions, such as breathing, heartbeat, and reflexive reactions and impulses. The “fight, flight, or freeze” response is seated in this part of the brain, as is emotional reactivity.

Much of the normal behavior seen in very young children comes directly from this downstairs brain: random movement from activity to activity, the inability to follow serial directions, distractibility, impulsivity, emotional outbursts, and underdeveloped empathy. The “upstairs” brain, or the cerebral cortex and its various parts, is where the brain’s EF activity occurs: the ability to focus, think, plan, organize, control impulses, and regulate emotions. Although this upstairs brain is not fully developed until a person reaches his or her mid-20s, evidence of executive function appears in early childhood.

As children develop, they begin to attend to tasks for longer periods of time; can follow multistep directions; and show a burgeoning capacity to stop, think, and act before grabbing a toy, running into the street, or punching their friends. They also begin to identify, understand, express, and manage their emotions in appropriate ways—evidence that the upstairs brain is becoming integrated with the downstairs brain. Siegel and Bryson call

this process *vertical integration*, as the “staircase in the mind” connects the downstairs brain, which developed early, with the upstairs brain, which is still under construction. This vertical integration allows children to gradually and progressively engage in more intentional, thoughtful, and controlled ways by regulating their emotions, choosing appropriate behaviors, and using logic and reasoning to initiate, plan, organize, and carry out tasks.

Although a child’s genetic makeup establishes the potential and capacity for brain development and integration, the child’s experiences are what affect the likelihood that this potential will be realized—and that a child will be able to successfully tackle a rigorous academic curriculum.

... all teachers and parents can better support children of all ages by implementing strategies to enhance the development of EF skills.

How Does Executive Function Develop?

The early building blocks of EF skills are acquired as infants engage in rudimentary planning and problem solving, which at first are largely grounded in meeting immediate needs: “If I cry, they come feed me [or hold me or change my diaper].” Responding and relating to infants in these most basic ways helps them to develop the belief that they matter and that it is worth their while to engage with the world.

By age three, most children begin more complex problem solving, such as “the square block goes here, the round one goes there.” This requires working memory (holding two rules in mind simultaneously), inhibitory control (resisting distraction and any strong emotional response in order to complete the task), and cognitive flexibility (shifting attention from one rule to the other and trying different solutions until one works to complete the task). Many older preschoolers begin to show strengthened inhibition in the face of strong temptations (e.g., “I really want to kick the ball now, but I’ll wait my turn”) and cognitive flexibility as demands change (e.g., “Yesterday I played with all the trucks, but today other children want to play”). The ability to regulate emotions is also being strengthened during this time, supporting optimal functioning in the working memory, inhibitory control, and cognitive flexibility as children begin to use rational thought to overcome emotional reactivity.

What Supports Development of Executive Function?

Young children develop and refine EF skills in cooperative play: they make plans to organize activities, create rules and roles for the players, organize materials needed, adjust rules and ideas to support the progress of the play, and solve problems, resolve conflicts, and regulate their emotions. Those building blocks for initiating, planning, organizing, focusing, and problem solving (the “how”) that are so necessary to carrying out school-age academics (the “what”) begin to take shape in play in early childhood.

We also know that a safe, supportive, and enriching environment with responsive and caring adults gives children the best chance of optimal EF development. Research from the Center on the Developing Child at Harvard University (2011) points to a healthy “environment of relationships” as foundational for executive function to develop. Siegel and Bryson (2011) identify the tenets of a quality relationship as one in which engaged adults do three things for and with children:

- They ask children open-ended questions.
- They listen to and help children tell their stories.
- They consider children’s ideas and validate the children’s feelings.

Recent studies show that curricula that enhance social and emotional learning also have the potential to strengthen executive function. Two studies found that classroom-level interventions that promote social and emotional competence in preschool for all children (universal interventions)—such as CA CSEFEL’s Teaching Pyramid and the classroom practices mentioned above—also produced improvements in young children’s EF skills and in their engagement in learning (Bierman 2010).

Children with disabilities typically benefit from universal interventions. Sometimes these children also need individualized supports. Special education teachers and parents of children with disabilities already use many of the strategies that help children improve EF, such as breaking down directions into steps; creating individualized, visual mini-schedules; using visual cues, peer buddies, and first–then cues; and taking advantage of targeted supports for identifying, expressing, and managing emotions. (For additional information, visit <http://www.chrisdendy.com/executive.htm> [accessed November 25, 2013]).

Scaffolding children’s entry into play and providing support during play constitute crucial opportunities for children to practice EF skills with their peers. The key is to link these strategies to the EF functions through acknowledgments: for example,

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"You were able to wait for your turn after reviewing the schedule," and "You washed your hands, then came to snack. You followed directions." Adjusted for age and situation, these kinds of acknowledgments are helpful to all of us.

Based on research findings, the Council for Exceptional Children (2011) calls for the provision of targeted instruction in EF strategies for children with disabilities, which includes creating structured play environments in which rules and routines are predictable and appropriate behavior is consistently commended.

What Interferes with Executive Function Development?

Early stressful experiences have a deleterious effect on EF development. Extended exposure to chaos, threats, violence, and neglectful environments—and to the strong emotions that a young child must manage as a result—all keep the brain in a "fight or flight" mode so that higher-level thinking skills do not have a chance to develop. In fact, prolonged stress can permanently alter the brain of a young child and result in detrimental effects. (For more information on this topic, see Toxic Stress: The Facts at http://www.developingchild.harvard.edu/topics/science_of_early_childhood/toxic_stress_response/ posted by the Center on the Developing Child at Harvard University.)

We also know that children with certain disabilities—those who are slower to develop the cognitive skills necessary to engage in cooperative play, for example, or those who have a more difficult time than most in regulating their feelings—may be excluded from play, disregarded, or relegated to a role they do not desire.* This denigration results not only in fewer opportunities to develop and refine important EF skills, but also in the risk of developing or worsening challenging behaviors—an understandable result of the strong emotional response most of us feel to being excluded.

At some point in their development, most typically developing children show a weakness in one or more of the EF domains. However, children with certain disabilities are at heightened risk of delayed or impaired development of these skills. Unfortunately, these children often receive interventions for managing their behavior without consideration of their EF skills, which have traditionally been considered a school-age concern rather than one belonging in early childhood. We now know that preschool children who have difficulty focusing, making transitions, listening to adults' directions, and engaging in impulsive or aggressive behaviors may indeed be experiencing delays in the development of EF skills (National Center for Learning Disabilities 2013).

What's Next?

Research confirms that, if children are to realize academic success, their early care and education experiences must support the development of their EF skills. Teachers and parents of children with disabilities and children from high-risk families can learn how to systematically and intentionally teach and support EF skills from birth. However, all teachers and parents can better support children of all ages by implementing strategies to enhance the development of EF skills. Parents and educators can begin by looking at how they interact with children and make sure the environments they create are caring and supportive. Through actions and words, adults model what executive function looks and sounds like. Training that helps adults develop and enhance environments that foster EF skills is an important step, as well.

A focus on EF, built upon a working knowledge of how emotional development in young children shapes their cognitive development, can serve as a powerful tool to prepare children to come to school ready to learn and eager for rigorous standards. ■

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*To date, much of the research regarding executive function and disabilities has focused on school-age children with attention deficit disorder, autism, and learning disabilities, but more work is being done to shed light on children from birth to age five.

The CA CSEFEL Teaching Pyramid Framework

by Linda Brault, WestEd Center for Child and Family Studies, and Co-Chair of the CA CSEFEL State Leadership Team

The California Collaborative on the Social and Emotional Foundations for Early Learning (CA CSEFEL) developed its Teaching Pyramid framework based on a journal article from *Young Children* (Fox et al. 2003)—an article that presents a model for supporting social competence and preventing challenging behaviors in young children. The CA CSEFEL framework was designed to guide learning experiences of early childhood professionals during training sessions, facilitate reflective practice, and complement classroom-based coaching.

The evidence-based materials used for this framework were originally developed by the Center on the Social and Emotional Foundations for Early Learning (CSEFEL) and enhanced for California by WestEd. The CA CSEFEL Teaching Pyramid conceptual framework—with an emphasis on strong relationships, support for social and emotional competence, and the prevention of challenging behaviors—promotes belonging for all infants, toddlers, and preschool-age children. If the Teaching Pyramid framework is implemented with fidelity, children will demonstrate greater social competence, emotional literacy, and fewer behavior challenges.

The content of the preschool training is most useful in addressing the social-emotional needs of young children ages three to five years. There is a separate training for teachers of infants and toddlers (birth to three years). The training reflects a commitment to promoting the social-emotional development of all young children by using preventive strategies and recognizes the need for more intensive interventions when children have significant social-emotional needs and challenging behaviors.

The CA CSEFEL Teaching Pyramid training materials and experiences address the diverse learning styles and needs of adult learners. Additionally, the training series takes into consideration small-group settings, focuses on offering a variety of activities and materials, and provides opportunities for interaction and thoughtful reflection—all to support optimal learning of key concepts.

The CA CSEFEL Teaching Pyramid content is aligned with the three-volume *California Preschool Curriculum Framework* (2010a, 2011, and 2013) and the *California Early Childhood*



Educator Competencies (2012a). Enhancements to CSEFEL materials are designed to be responsive to the cultural and socioeconomic diversity of California's children.

To support program wide implementation of the CA CSEFEL Teaching Pyramid framework, early childhood professionals play a key role in developing and maintaining specific policies and procedures that support children through:

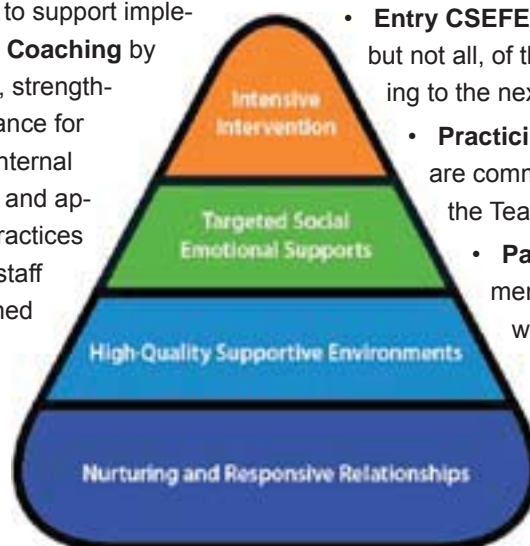
- promotion of healthy social and emotional development;
- prevention of challenging behaviors;
- development of individualized intervention plans when needed.

The CA CSEFEL Teaching Pyramid approach is built on the U.S. Department of Education's Positive Behavior Interventions and Support model and incorporates quality early childhood practices. These strategies have been further adapted to incorporate "facilitative administrative practices" as described in Mincic, Smith, and Strain (2009). The power of the CA CSEFEL Teaching Pyramid is most clearly seen when it is implemented program wide across an entire site, district, or agency. There are six recommended components of this program wide approach:

1. Planning by a group of leaders. **The leadership team**, including administrators, teachers, and specialists, is a steering committee for program wide implementation of the Teaching Pyramid. Team members attend all training sessions and provide support for training, coaching, and classroom practices.

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2. Training in a systematic way. The **Teaching Pyramid training series** is designed to meet the diverse needs of adult learners. The purpose of the Teaching Pyramid training series is to support the integration of the Teaching Pyramid approach into everyday teaching practices. The training occurs on four separate days spread over a period of several months, with a full day of training devoted to each of the four tiers on the Teaching Pyramid.
3. Coaching and technical assistance to support implementation with fidelity to the model. **Coaching** by an external source provides on-site, strength-based support and technical assistance for teachers, as well as mentoring for internal coaches to enhance understanding and application of the Teaching Pyramid practices in the classroom. The coach helps staff members take what they have learned in the training series and apply it to the work in their classrooms. Internal coaches are members of the staff who follow up between external coaching visits to support teachers and strengthen the teachers' skills.
4. Incorporation of family engagement to strengthen the link between home and school. **Materials designed for family members** are part of the Teaching Pyramid approach because strong partnerships with family members are an important component of the Teaching Pyramid framework which includes the family perspective Positive Solutions for Families" and the "Teaching Pyramid for Families"—are designed for parent groups. Six sessions have been developed that are appropriate for use at parent meetings or parent support groups.
5. Identification and training of those responsible for the development of positive behavior support plans. The top of the pyramid **training** focuses on the development of positive behavior support plans based on the Teaching Pyramid materials. Participants go deeper with materials introduced in the final module (3b) and practice development plans based on case studies.
6. **Follow-up for sustainability** after training ends. Advanced training and additional technical assistance are important to strengthen the knowledge base of staff members and ensure sustainability. Additional coaching from external and internal resources is highly recommended.



The following components must be in place to successfully implement the Teaching Pyramid approach: (1) staff members who are trained on all tiers/modules of the Teaching Pyramid, (2) coaching support (external and internal) for teachers to implement the framework, and (3) a leadership team that meets regularly to guide the implementation.

The CA CSEFEL has identified programs that use the Teaching Pyramid approach and materials in various ways:

- **Entry CSEFEL Sites**—community sites that have some, but not all, of the components and are interested in growing to the next level
- **Practicing CSEFEL Sites**—community sites that are committed to implementing all components of the Teaching Pyramid model
- **Partner CSEFEL Sites**—sites that implement all components with fidelity to the framework and collaborate with CA CSEFEL on data collections and other efforts
- **Mentor CSEFEL Sites**—sites that continue the partner CSEFEL activities, have implemented the framework with fidelity, agree to reach out and mentor other programs, and participate in a Leadership Summit or other regional gathering

Ongoing support will be available in the form of an online forum (such as the Communities of Practice) for sharing and communicating across programs. Symposia also will be held to implement sites in each region, honor partner and mentor sites, and provide a forum for cross-site sharing. Practicing sites are encouraged to complete the CA CSEFEL survey at <http://www.cainclusion.org/camap/>. ■

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The CA CSEFEL Teaching Pyramid and the Strengthening Families Initiative

by Linda Brault, WestEd Center for Child and Family Studies, and Co-Chair of the CA CSEFEL State Leadership Team

The California Department of Social Services' Office of Child Abuse Prevention has embraced the Strengthening Families Initiative (SFI) as the basis for its work in California—and the CA CSEFEL Teaching Pyramid is a good fit with the initiative. The SFI advocates five protective factors that are recommended in the prevention of child abuse and neglect. The CA CSEFEL Teaching Pyramid framework effectively addresses all five factors:

1. Parental Resilience (enhancing parent–child relationships and connections to support services)
2. Social Connections (ongoing parent support groups and enhanced parent–teacher relationships)
3. Concrete Support in Times of Need (outreach and prevention of child abuse)
4. Knowledge of Parenting and Child Development (information about healthy social and emotional development and positive discipline practices)
5. Social and Emotional Competence of Children (child participation in classrooms as an intentional approach to social and emotional teaching and learning).

The SFI has three levers for change, all of which align with the CA CSEFEL Teaching Pyramid. The first lever is parent partnership. There is an opportunity to have a parent or parents as active members of the CA CSEFEL Teaching Pyramid Leadership Team, a group of community agencies and parents who are responsible for planning and supporting the implementation of the Teaching Pyramid by adhering to evidence-based Benchmarks of Quality. The leadership team utilizes the second lever (Policy and Systems Change) to effect and maintain changes in program policies, procedures, supports, parental involvement, and interagency collaboration. Finally, the third lever (Professional Development) is training of current and prospective teachers to implement the Teaching Pyramid in programs and family child care

... the CA CSEFEL Teaching Pyramid is a good fit with the [SFI] initiative.



Implementation of the Teaching Pyramid in Head Start/Early Head Start

by Craig Zercher, Senior Research Associate, WestEd Center for Child and Family Studies

In 2007, San Francisco State University (SFSU) Head Start/Early Head Start embarked on a program to promote the social and emotional development of the children served. Working with a member of the national Center on the Social Emotional Foundations for Early Learning (CSEFEL) program, Head Start/Early Head Start began by forming a leadership team to learn about the commitments and potential benefits associated with the adoption of the Teaching Pyramid framework. The leadership team consisted of the executive director, the service area managers, and community partners (including the supervisor of the agency providing mental health consultation). This team learned that the framework is different from other training programs in that it goes beyond teacher training alone and involves administrators and community partners in a holistic approach to supporting children and families.

All the centers are now using CSEFEL strategies and materials to promote healthy social and emotional development and prevent and address challenging behavior.

The leadership team chose to adopt the framework in five of its 10 grantee-operated centers. The team began some planning and oversight activities using a tool for implementation called the Benchmarks of Quality. A schedule was developed for training teachers in the three modules. A Behavior Support Team was formed to provide support for using the new strategies in classrooms. The team also arranged for mental health consultants to attend the training events, provided resources to translate materials into four languages, and set up “Expectations” events in all five centers. After two years of focused effort in changing practices and systems, the leadership team was so pleased with the results—decreases in behavior incidents in the five centers using CSEFEL compared with the five centers that were not involved—that it decided to provide the resources for expanding the framework to the remaining five centers (including an Early Head Start center and home visiting program).

The leadership team used the Benchmarks of Quality as a guide to replicate the adoption process in the new centers. In addition, because parent surveys often included requests for help with child discipline and parenting, the team decided to adopt



the CSEFEL Positive Solutions for Families program. Family advocates were paired with their center’s mental health consultant and trained in the six-session parent group program. With support from First 5 San Francisco, the Behavior Support Team was replaced by Behavior Support technicians who worked for extended periods with teachers in all 10 centers to help them develop inclusive practices for children with disabilities and successful interventions for children with challenging behavior.

All the centers are now using CSEFEL strategies and materials to promote healthy social and emotional development and prevent and address challenging behavior. Teachers began sharing their practices through training events and monthly meetings of a newly formed Teacher Network. Family advocates and mental health consultants shared their experiences through an annual Positive Solutions co-training. SFSU Head Start/Early Head Start was recognized by the California Department of Education as a CA CSEFEL Mentor Site and participated in CA CSEFEL Training of Trainers and Training of Coaches events. The WestEd Teaching Pyramid staff began providing training to some of the delegate and partner programs.

In the fourth and fifth implementation years, SFSU Head Start/Early Head Start received a Head Start Early Childhood Mentor Coaching grant. Evaluation data of the coaching project in the most recent program year (the fifth year of CSEFEL adoption) showed that almost all of the classrooms were using the framework with good fidelity (as measured by the Teaching Pyramid Observation Tool) and also experienced increases in CLASS (Classroom Assessment scores over the course of the program year. SFSU Head Start/Early Head Start continued to institutionalize the framework by including it in interagency agreements, system-area handbooks, parent handbooks, annual pre-service refreshers, lesson plan formats, and annual “Expectations” events for families. Although children continue to experience challenges in social and emotional development, teachers and parents now have a dependable set of tools, strategies, and supports that they can use to help children develop the skills and competencies necessary to be successful in school and life. ■

Integrating CSEFEL into the State's Professional Development System

by Arlene Paxton, Director, PITC Partners for Quality, WestEd

The Program for Infant/Toddler Care's (PITC's) Partners for Quality is one program in the state's continued focus to ensure that all professional development efforts are aligned with California's Early Learning and Development System. This includes the CA CSEFEL Teaching Pyramid framework, with its emphasis on strong relationships, support for social competence, and the prevention of challenging behaviors.

Since 1986, the PITC has worked to assist child care centers and family child care providers with implementation of high-quality infant/toddler care. The PITC has developed strategies to help infant/toddler care teachers read the emotional, social, and intellectual messages of children in their care and respond to those messages. The PITC has also recommended policies that allow programs to focus on the quality of the relationships between infant/toddler care teachers and children and between teachers and family members. Relationships are viewed as the foundation of high-quality care (Mangione et al. 2011).

As part of the statewide CSEFEL effort, the PITC is represented and actively participates on the State Leadership Team. In addition, the PITC is collaborating with the CA CSEFEL to train PITC Partners for Quality staff in the CA CSEFEL Teaching Pyramid framework and to integrate content from that framework into the PITC's on-site training, coaching, and mentoring activities.

In June 2011, Partners for Quality collaborated with the Working Together/Teaching Pyramid staff to explore ways in which both programs could provide training on the CA CSEFEL Teaching Pyramid framework as an extension of ongoing focus on social-emotional development and relationship-based practices. As a result of this partnership, adaptations were made to the CA CSEFEL Teaching Pyramid (for infants and toddlers) Inventory of Practice.

Partners for Quality regional coordinators work with various community-based organizations to promote quality improvement and advance the profession of infant/toddler care. These regional coordinators also work with some community colleges to provide courses on infant/toddler development and care. In that capacity, the regional coordinators also are incorporating CA CSEFEL Teaching Pyramid concepts into their work. ■

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SEEDS Project Expands CSEFEL Work

by Meredith Cathcart, Special Education Division
California Department of Education

Supporting Early Education Delivery Systems (SEEDS) is a project of the California Department of Education's Special Education Division and the Sacramento County Office of Education. The SEEDS project offers training and technical assistance to administrators, staff, and families involved in early childhood special education programs. Assistance is provided to programs that serve children from birth to age five in local educational agencies (LEAs) throughout California. On behalf of the California Department of Education, SEEDS has provided support and training at no cost to LEAs since 1994.

SEEDS is involved in the CA CSEFEL in two ways:

- **Staff participation**—Meredith Cathcart, contract monitor from the California Department of Education, serves on the State Leadership Team, providing information on state activities. SEEDS sends a representative to the State Leadership Team meetings.
- **Funding supports**—For two years, SEEDS provided funding for 51 visitation site representatives (consultants) to attend the CA CSEFEL training-of-trainers events.

So far, SEEDS has provided local program support to Sacramento County and Santa Barbara County. Also, many SEEDS trainers are becoming authorized trainers and coaches for the CA CSEFEL Teaching Pyramid.

In March 2012, SEEDS conducted a Webinar on early childhood special education topics, including information about the CA CSEFEL and the CA CSEFEL Teaching Pyramid framework. One of the speakers was Linda Brault, a co-director of the State Leadership Team.

SEEDS envisions that, in the future, visitation site representatives will incorporate CA CSEFEL principles while focusing on requests for inclusion in the least restrictive environment and natural environment. ■



WestEd Center for Prevention and Early Intervention: *Integration of CSEFEL Materials*

by Sue Bollig, Project Associate
WestEd Center for Prevention and Early Intervention

The WestEd Center for Prevention and Early Intervention (CPEI) has participated on the California CSEFEL leadership team since it originally convened in 2009. CPEI represents early intervention and preschool under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act in coordination with the California Department of Developmental Services and the CDE Special Education Division. The CPEI's approach includes providing support to agencies and programs, personnel, and families that promote positive developmental outcomes—including social and emotional development—for children, families, and systems. The three primary CPEI programs—the Early Start Comprehensive System of Personnel Development, Community College Personnel Preparation Project, and the California Inclusion and Behavior Consultation Network—participate on the leadership team and work to integrate CA CSEFEL information into their work.

The CA CSEFEL leadership team focuses on promoting the social and emotional development of young children by building the skills of personnel in early care and education programs. The CA CSEFEL leadership team provides guidance to meet the goals agreed upon by the interagency team, working to overcome state-level barriers, conduct training for various professional development systems based on a common model, and facilitate access to local-level interventions. ■

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... CCLD views
CA CSEFEL
as a helpful
resource ...

The Role of Community Care Licensing on the CA CSEFEL Leadership Team

by Cagle Moore, Southern California Assistant Program Administrator
Community Care Licensing Division, California Department of Social Services

As a member of the California CSEFEL leadership team, the Community Care Licensing Division (CCLD) of the California Department of Social Services has attended meetings from the beginning, learning about the CA CSEFEL mission and the Teaching Pyramid framework.

To increase visibility of CSEFEL in the state, the CCLD produces a quarterly publication with articles about the collaborative. The newsletter is sent to employees in the 13 regional offices and those California child care providers who have chosen to receive the newsletter.

Additionally, the CCLD contributes to the CA CSEFEL leadership team by devising customized training for licensing program analysts who have face-to-face contact with child care licensees. I presented a training session on the CA CSEFEL and its mission for all supervisors and administrators in child care. The CCLD views CA CSEFEL as a helpful resource that can be recommended to providers who handle children with special needs, especially if a "plan of correction" has to be issued. Our goal is to assess how the CSEFEL applies to Community Care Licensing and facilitate awareness and increased use of CSEFEL resources. ■

The Role of the Child Care Initiative Project on the CA CSEFEL Leadership Team

by Ana Fernandez Leon, Child Care Initiative Project Manager
California Child Care Resource & Referral Network

The Child Care Initiative Project (CCIP) is a statewide quality improvement project that offers training, technical assistance, support, and other services to prospective and existing family child care providers. The local Resource & Referral (R&R) agencies plan, tailor, and deliver these services in each county in California to meet communities' needs. As a statewide organization, the California Child Care Resource & Referral Network (the Network) oversees the implementation of local CCIP activities and provides training, technical assistance, and resources to support local CCIP teams.

The Network has two roles on the CA CSEFEL leadership team. First, as a representative of the R&Rs, the Network brings the family child care perspective into the group discussions, raises awareness of the work that the R&Rs do through the CCIP, and explores how the Teaching Pyramid conceptual framework relates to this work. Second, as a liaison between the leadership team and the R&Rs, the Network learns about the CSEFEL, the conceptual framework, and the resources; disseminates relevant information in a timely manner; and provides technical assistance to the R&Rs.

As a result, representatives of at least 28 R&Rs throughout the state, as well as representatives from the Network's CCIP team, have experienced the CSEFEL training and learned the approach to use. They also have become familiar with the CSEFEL Web site and the vast amount of resources it offers. Furthermore, at least 13 R&Rs now include CSEFEL concepts and information from the Teaching Pyramid into their training sessions: Nurturing Responsive Relationships and High-Quality Supportive Environments. These topics resonate with the R&Rs and family child care providers because they have been a focus of CCIP trainings for many years. In addition, the Network routinely incorporates CA CSEFEL concepts and resources into its CCIP training sessions and materials.

The CA CSEFEL approach is center-based, so high-fidelity implementation by individual family child care providers may not take place immediately. The road to implementation is long. However, exposure to the model and infusion of the concepts are good initial steps for getting the word out and making the connections. ■



This edition of the Bridges e-journal is dedicated to Mike Zito, retired California Head Start–State Collaboration Coordinator.

Mike, thank you for your commitment to the children and families of California. Your dedication and collaborative efforts over the years have been remarkable. As you embark on your retirement, your colleagues and friends wish you the best as you enjoy time with your family.

Using State Publications with the CA CSEFEL Teaching Pyramid Framework

by Jenna Bilmes and Melinda Brookshire, Senior Program Associates

Desired Results Training and Technical Assistance Project, WestEd Center for Child and Family Studies

For more than a decade, California has been systematically improving early care and education support for young children with the assistance of researchers, early care and education teachers, and administrators. The goal is to improve outcomes for children and reduce California's school-readiness gap by improving the quality of the state's early learning and education programs.

California's extensive professional development system and resources based on research studies are important components of its Early Learning and Development System. Many state resources, including the following, may be used hand in hand with the CA CSEFEL Teaching Pyramid framework:

- The *California Infant/Toddler Learning and Development Foundations* describe the learning and development that infants and toddlers typically demonstrate with appropriate support.
- The *California Preschool Learning Foundations* outline key knowledge and skills that most preschoolers can achieve when provided with appropriate support. The first volume of the Preschool Learning Foundations covers the domains of social–emotional development, language and literacy, English-language development, and mathematics. Volume 2 discusses the domains of visual and performing arts, physical development, and health, and Volume 3 covers history–social science and science.
- The *California Infant/Toddler Curriculum Framework* and *California Preschool Curriculum Framework* offer guidance on how programs and teachers can support the learning and development that are described in the Foundations. They also describe environments, adult–child relationships, and experiences that are linguistically and developmentally appropriate, as well as individually and culturally meaningful and connected.
- The Desired Results Developmental Profile® (DRDP®) is an observation assessment instrument that enables teachers to document children's learning and developmental progress along a developmental continuum. DRDP results are used in reflective practice for classroom planning and program improvement.

Because of its overarching importance in a child's development, social and emotional development is the first domain addressed in all of these resources. Additional state resources that can be used to supplement the CSEFEL Pyramid Model are:

- The *Infant/Toddler Learning and Development Guidelines* bring together information that program administrators and teaching staff can use to prepare appropriate learning environments for children.
- *Preschool English Learners: Principles and Practices to Promote Language, Literacy, and Learning*, and the accompanying DVD, *A World Full of Language*, are available in English and Spanish; provide information on how young children acquire English as a second language; and feature research-based strategies for teachers to support English learners. The DVD is closed-captioned and formatted so that viewers can see it in its entirety or in sections.
- *Inclusion Works!* provides guidance to child care programs on proven strategies that promote belonging and inclusion for all children, including those with disabilities. ■

Family Child Care and the CA CSEFEL Teaching Pyramid

by Diane Harkins, Program Director
Center for Excellence in Child Development, UC Davis

Family child care providers have an exciting opportunity to apply the CA CSEFEL Teaching Pyramid in their family child care pro-grams. Funded through the California Department of Education, the Family Child Care at Its Best program now includes curriculum from the CA CSEFEL Teaching Pyramid. Modules 1 and 2 have been adapted to meet the specific needs of home child care settings.

For Module 1 (Building Relationships and Creating Supportive Environments), providers attend three sessions within six to eight weeks. Using the CA CSEFEL Teaching Pyramid's Inventory of Practice (<http://www.cainclusion.org/teachingpyramid/>), the providers identify one to two activities or pro-gram modifications to attempt before the next class session. The instructor then calls or e-mails each participant between sessions to offer guided support in the implementation of the action plan.

Participant feedback from Module 1 trainings has been positive. In one class, a family child care provider talked about changes she witnessed in one child who exhibited challenging behavior. After attending the first training session, the provider focused on building relationships with that child; she began to offer the child opportunities to be a helper each day—to take on special tasks such as setting the snack table or ringing the bell at the end of outdoor play. “[The child] still has some difficult days,” the provider said, “but I’ve seen a change in him. He’s more positive.” Needless to say, the family child care provider is feeling more encouraged, too!

In Module 1, providers also take time to consider the setup of their program. Group care in a home-based setting has unique advantages and challenges in terms of the environment. On one hand, the environment can be cozy and comfortable. On the other hand, providers may have limited options for arranging furniture and materials to meet the needs of children of various ages and capabilities. In class, providers reconsider their environment, keeping in mind the goal of engaging children in meaningful experiences. Then they meet in small groups and brainstorm options for adapting their indoor and outdoor spaces.

After completing Module 1, family child care providers are ready for Module 2, which focuses on teaching strategies for children's social-emotional development. Providers learn a variety of ways to help children manage emotions, increase empathy, and address typical conflicts that arise in group-care situations. Because family child care providers often work with mixed age groups, the module presents scenarios and case examples that address developmental differences found among young children.



The Role of the Department of Developmental Services on the CA CSEFEL Leadership Team

by Elise Parnes, R.N., M.S.N.; Nurse Consultant
Early Start Program, Children and Family Services Branch
California Department of Developmental Services

Under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), Part C, the California Department of Developmental Services (DDS) is the lead agency responsible for providing early intervention services to qualifying infants and toddlers (birth to three years of age) and their families.

The DDS, which is a partner with the California Department of Education in responsibilities involving very young children, has participated in the CA CSEFEL leadership team to represent the needs of infants and toddlers with developmental delays and disabilities. Early Start encourages collaboration with state and local agencies to promote early identification, access to services, and full inclusion of children with disabilities and their families into existing community resources. Agencies and programs that use the CSEFEL model can successfully address the social-emotional development of infant and toddler populations. ■

Reflections of a Preschool Teacher: Implementing the CA CSEFEL Teaching Pyramid to Promote Children's Pro-Social Behavior and Using the Solution Kit

by Isauro Michael Escamilla, M.A., Teacher
Las Americas Early Education School, San Francisco Unified School District

The school where I teach is located in the heart of the Mission District of San Francisco, an area of the city where acts of violence occur more frequently than I would like to admit. This is our home, and it saddens me to see our young children witness street violence as a common occurrence in their lives.

I have always believed that in order to achieve a big goal, it is imperative to begin with small steps—which is why I became excited when our school district offered our teaching staff the opportunity to learn about the CA CSEFEL Teaching Pyramid strategies to instill in children the habit of peaceful conflict resolution. I believe that one way to stop the violence in the streets of our neighborhood is by teaching our very youngest inhabitants to label their feelings, acknowledge the feelings of others, and—I hope—develop empathy for those around them.

So many methods and programs come and go with each new administration. I was rather skeptical about the promised outcomes of the Teaching Pyramid approach to resolving classroom conflicts. However, I was encouraged by the fact that we were working in collaboration with the Department of Education at San Francisco State University and that Dr. Daniel Meier was our facilitator, so I decided to give it a try. I hoped, to a certain extent, to test the efficacy of the Teaching Pyramid strategies as a springboard for improving the children's skills at becoming competent social beings, capable of resolving conflicts on their own and forming meaningful relationships with their peers on their own initiative.



Educational Framework

Las Americas Early Education School provides a nurturing educational program inspired by the Project Approach (Helm and Katz 2011), an educational philosophy that embraces children's interests as the starting point for engaging in an in-depth study of a specific topic. With Dr. Meier facilitating our monthly professional development meetings, our staff was able to provide an on-site pedagogical forum to further our understanding of our role as educators in supporting children's acquisition of pro-social skills and improving our own skills as critical thinkers and teacher researchers. The success of our teacher-researcher

group, which focused on the children's pro-social building skills, is, in great measure, the result of a staff-driven idea rather than a top-down mandate. In a way, as with children, we are creators of our own knowledge.

Besides ensuring the safety and social-emotional well-being of the children, we believe that one of the most important roles of teachers is to use conflicts as teachable moments, which is quite different from viewing conflicts as problems that need to be solved by adults. Denying children the chance to resolve conflicts with peers on their own—with appropriate adult support—invalidates their right to be co-constructors of their own knowledge. Only by practicing new ways of looking at conflicts can children (and teachers) become more proficient at expanding their analytical thinking. When problematic behaviors are reframed as a skill-instruction issue, teachers need to include activities and strategies in their curriculum so children can acquire and practice those skills (Fox and Lentini 2006).

Initial Classroom Changes

One of the changes we immediately enacted was the elimination of "time-outs" as a form of classroom discipline. Somewhere along the way in my teaching career, I learned that it was appropriate to place a child in "time-out" as long as the time-out was commensurate with the child's age. For example, a four-year-old child would get four minutes away from the rest of the children or from the activity where he or she "misbehaved" (e.g., grabbed a toy from another child and ignored that child's distress). Now, looking at conflicts from a pro-social perspective, we consider them teachable moments and seize the opportunity to speak with children about possible options for resolving a conflict. In this process, we build up the children's ability to acknowledge their feelings and the feelings of others, problem-solve, and show how to get what they want in a respectful manner. This pro-social way of looking



at conflicts has become a part of our classroom culture, a part of our school's philosophy, and a districtwide policy.

When speaking with children about possible options to obtain what they want, we routinely use the "Solution Kit," a series of 10 cards with pictures and words that give children options to problem-solve when they encounter a conflict. For example, some of the children's options are to ask nicely, trade toys, take turns, use a timer (their favorite), or find another activity. We have made these solution cards available to the children, who wear them as necklaces or carry them around on key rings to be incorporated into their daily play whenever they need them. On their own initiative, some children have taken the Solution Kit cards on field trips, and some have even asked to borrow them to take home.

School-Home Connections

When children started taking the Solution Kit cards to their homes, we realized that we needed to speak with parents about our new approach to resolving children's conflicts. We planned a series of evening family workshops to share our vision and our students' stories, and to give parents and teachers the opportunity to share their own childhood stories. When teachers and parents had dinner together and felt comfortable to talk openly about the hardships and delights of their own childhood experiences, we saw each other as human beings working in unity to make our children's early years better and safer than ours. By engaging families in a conversation to create a more inclusive, healthier, and safer school environment, we opened the door to a dialogue about our personal beliefs on discipline and children's rights and feelings. More importantly, we shared our own stories of how we were brought up as children, discussed how we wanted our children to be raised, and talked about each child's inherent right to have a safe environment at home, at school, and in his or her neighborhood.

By implementing some of the Teaching Pyramid strategies for the classroom and by encouraging families to look at children's conflicts as teachable moments in which children can reach agreement without hurting each other, either physically or emotionally, we might be able to change our community—to make it a safer place for everyone, one step at a time.

To hear more stories from Isauro Michael Escamilla, visit <http://www.cainclusion.org/teachingpyramid/> (accessed December 3, 2013). ■

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MAP to Inclusion and Belonging: Making Access Possible Through the California CSEFEL

by Cindy Arstein-Kerslake, MAP Coordinator
WestEd Center for Child and Family Studies

The California MAP to Inclusion and Belonging: Making Access Possible is a project of the WestEd Center for Child and Family Studies funded by the Child Development Division of the California Department of Education (CDD-CDE) with a federal quality improvement allocation.

The MAP project is committed to fostering a vision for improving access to quality child care for children with disabilities or other special needs and their families. The project includes support, education, and training for providers and the families they serve. It also develops materials and serves as a clearinghouse of resources and information about inclusive practices, including current information on successful state and local initiatives.

In addition, the MAP project leads, in partnership with the CDD-CDE, the California Collaborative on the Social and Emotional Foundations for Early Learning (CA CSEFEL). As co-lead of the CA CSEFEL, the MAP project has had a key role in guiding and coordinating the activities of the CA CSEFEL leadership team. The MAP Web site (<http://www.cainclusion.org/camap/cacsefel.html>) houses the CA CSEFEL Web pages and promotes CA CSEFEL activities and materials in MAP newsletters. WestEd staff members have been providing training, technical assistance, and coaching to support all components of the CSEFEL Teaching Pyramid approach since national CSEFEL trainers first came to California in 2006. ■