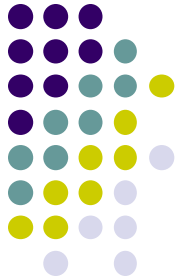
The Teaching Pyramid: A Classroom Based Model for Addressing Social Emotional Development and Challenging Behavior in Preschool Children

Mary Louise Hemmeter

ml.hemmeter@vanderbilt.edu

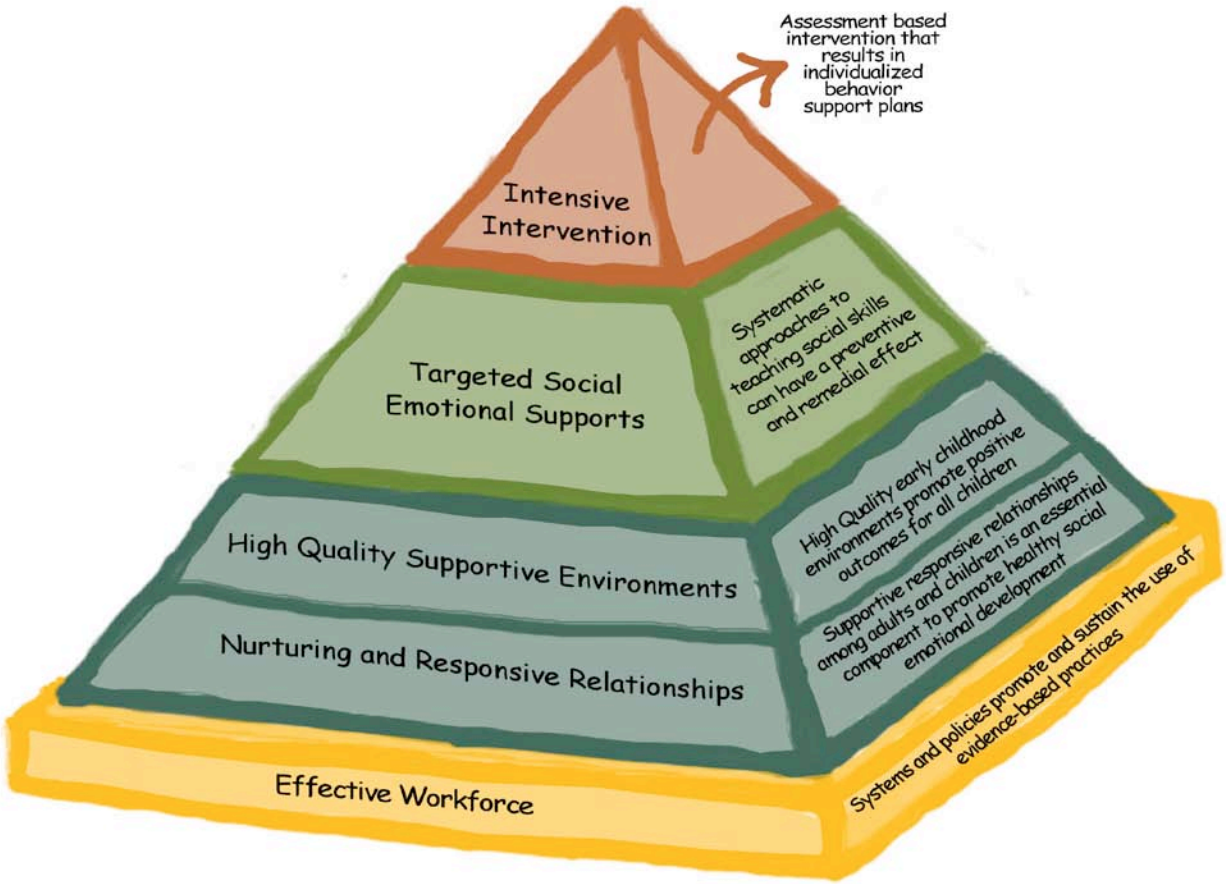
Work reported in this presentation was supported by the US Department of Education, National Center for Special Education Research, Institute of Education Sciences (Project Number R324A07212**).**

Setting the Context for Interventions in Preschool Classrooms

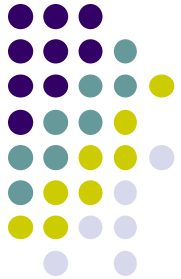


- Prevalence of challenging behavior in preschool children ranges from 5 – 33% depending on population
- Preschool children are three times more likely to be expelled than K-12 students
- Severe behavior issues in preschool predict later, more significant behavior problems
- Concerns about “pulling down” school wide approaches to preschool classrooms
- Teachers report:
  - Increases in challenging behavior in preschool classrooms
  - Challenging behavior as a significant training need
  - Challenging behavior negatively impacts their job satisfaction

The Teaching Pyramid Model



Nurturing and Responsive Relationships



- Foundation of the pyramid
- Essential to healthy social development
- Includes relationships with children, families and team members

High Quality Environments

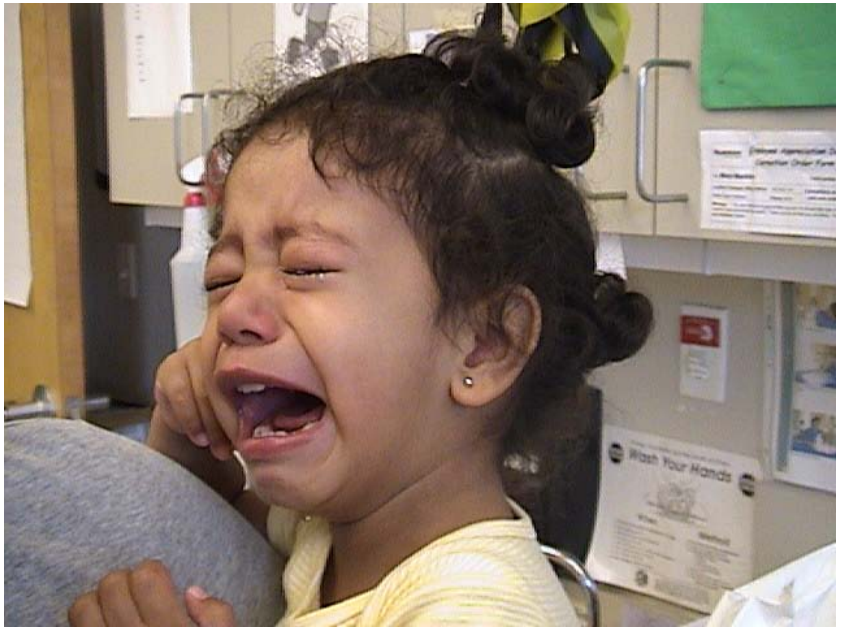
- Social and Physical Environments:
  - Well designed physical environments
  - Predictable schedules and routines (including transitions)
  - Engaging and developmentally appropriate activities
  - Visual cues
  - Positive guidance
    - Clear directions
    - Positive feedback
    - Redirection

Targeted Social Emotional Supports

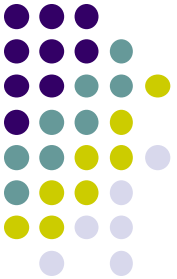
- Focus on:
  - Developing social relationships
  - Self-regulation
  - Expressing and understanding emotions
  - Problem solving
- Explicit instruction
- Increased opportunities for instruction, practice, feedback

Individualized Intensive Interventions

- Comprehensive interventions across all settings
- Assessment-based
- Collaborative team
- Development of a behavior support plan:
  - Prevention strategies
  - Teaching new skills
  - Adult responses

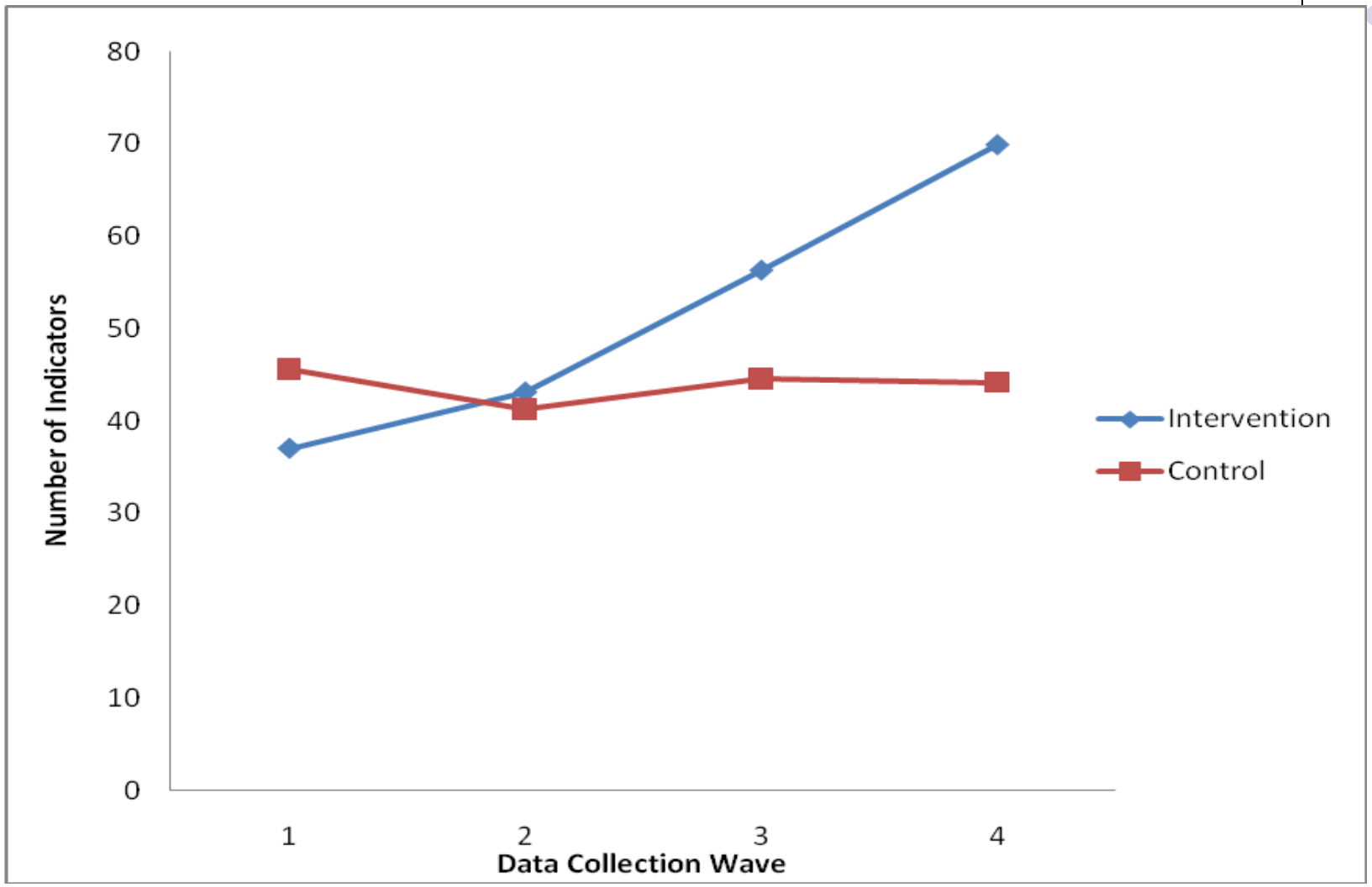


Status of Teaching Pyramid Practices in EC Classrooms



	TPOT Study n=50		Efficacy Study n=18		Distance Coaching n=33	
	Mean	**Range**	**Mean**	**Range**	**Mean**	**Range**
Env Items	6.0	3-7	5.05	3-6	6.34	4-7
Red Flags	3.0	0-11	3.75	1-10	2.13	0-7
Percent Indicators	39.1%	14% to 73%	39.56%	16% to 74%	39.87%	14% to 66%

Coaching Teachers to Use Pyramid Practices



Range for TPOT Indicators: 0 - 118

Conclusions

- Ongoing coaching is necessary for teachers to implement practices with fidelity
- Changes in children's challenging behavior and social skills are reported when Pyramid practices are implemented with fidelity
- Teachers report high levels of satisfaction with the intervention and outcomes