

Positive Guidance Policy

Policy ID: NENCAP HS-PO3

Board Approval Date: 07/___/25

Policy Council Approval Date: ___/___/25

Effective Date: ___/___/25

Performance Standard: 1302.17

Purpose:

Our Head Start program uses the Pyramid Model to promote social-emotional competence and prevent challenging behaviors. We provide universal, targeted, and intensive supports tailored to each child's needs. Positive guidance strategies, respectful communication, and family partnership are central to our approach. It is our goal to provide a safe and nurturing environment for all participants to benefit from a positive and successful learning experience in our program.



Key Elements of our Positive Guidance Policy:

Effective Workforce: The model is supported at the foundation by an effective workforce. The foundation for all of the practices in the Pyramid Model are the **systems and policies** necessary to ensure a workforce able to adopt and sustain these evidence-based practices.

Tier 1 - Universal Promotion:

Universal supports for **ALL** children through nurturing and responsive relationships and high-quality environments. At the universal level we include the practices needed to ensure the promotion of the social/emotional development of **ALL** Children.

- *Nurturing and Responsive Relationships:*

- Includes relationships with children, families, and team members
- Greet each child and parent by name and warmth at arrival
- Provide positive descriptive feedback throughout the day
- Engage in regular, supportive conversations during play and routines
- Promote social-emotional skills through daily activities and modeling

- ***High Quality Supportive Environments:***

- Design engaging, supportive environments that encourage positive behavior and emotional safety
- Implementation of the Creative Curriculum and developmentally and culturally appropriate activities
- Establish predictable schedules and routines
- Create clear, positively stated classroom rules and expectations

Tier 2 - Secondary Prevention:

Prevention which represents practices that are targeted social emotional strategies to prevent problems. This includes intentional instruction in social skills and emotional regulation, helping students to learn how to express their emotions appropriately, play cooperatively with peers, and use social problem-solving strategies. Families will also be provided with guidance and information on how to promote and support their child's development of social/emotional skills.

- ***Targeted Emotional Supports:***

- Provide small group or individualized interventions for children who need extra help
- Teach specific skills such as emotion regulation, problem-solving, and friendship building
- Use social stories or visual supports to teach expected behaviors
- Practice deep breathing or 'calm down' techniques with children who struggle with self-regulation
- Partner with families to ensure consistency between home and school

Tier 3 - Tertiary Interventions:

Intervention which is comprised of practices related to individualized intensive interventions. This level of the Pyramid Model describes the need to provide individualized and intensive interventions to the very small number of children with persistent challenges. At this level a child exhibits persistent challenging behavior that has not been responsive to interventions at the previous levels.

- ***Intensive Intervention:***

- Develop highly individualized behavior support plans for children with persistent challenges
- Use functional behavior assessments to understand the reasons behind behaviors
- Collaborate with specialists, educators and families to monitor progress and adjust plans
- Provide coaching and modeling for staff working with the child

Positive Guidance Practices:

- Use positive reinforcement and encouragement
- Redirect challenging behaviors and teach alternative skills
- Communicate respectfully at the child's eye level
- Set secure, age-appropriate limits and remind children of rules
- Model and teach language for expressing emotions and solving problems

Prohibited Practices:

- No corporal punishment, emotional or physical abuse, humiliation, or isolation
- Never use food as a punishment or reward, or deny basic needs

Families:

- Involve families as partners in guiding children's behavior
- Provide resources and support for parents to reinforce positive guidance at home

Resources: The Pyramid Model and related resources are available to all families free of charge through two federally funded research and training centers:

- Center on the Social and Emotional Foundations for Early Learning (<http://csefel.vanderbilt.edu/>)
- National Center for Pyramid Model Innovations ([Basics - National Center for Pyramid Model Innovations](#))

Head Start Standard: Head Start programs are strongly reminded that staff, consultants, and volunteers are prohibited from engaging in corporal punishment, emotional or physical abuse, or humiliation of children at any time. Head Start children should feel safe in the program setting at all times. Disciplinary action towards children **cannot** involve isolation, the use of food as punishment or reward, or the denial of basic needs. Programs must prohibit or severely limit the use of suspension due to a child's behavior. Such suspensions may only be temporary in nature.