

Policy on Pyramid Model and Behavior Management Support

ADAPT Community Network utilizes a multi-tiered system of supports/Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) to address our students' social-emotional and behavioral needs. Our philosophy emphasizes positive, data driven approaches that contribute to the development of critical adaptive skills and preserve the dignity of the individual. Social-emotional lessons are incorporated into our curriculum, and our multi-disciplinary teams provide ongoing training and support to our classrooms with the following goals/expectations in mind for our students: *Preschool Students-Be Safe; Be Kind; and Be Helpful (Three ways to BEE)*. In addition, our Pre-Service Orientation offers evidence-based strategies for evaluating the function of challenging behaviors and determining alternative positive replacement behaviors. We strive to understand behavior through observation and analysis of situations and rely on data collection to support and guide our interventions. We view all behaviors as having meaning and fulfilling a communicative, social or other function.

Our primary focus is to respect, understand and encourage individuals to act in a manner that offers them the most opportunities to lead a socially productive life. We do this in collaboration with families, as we recognize the significant challenges and complexities involved in caregiving. Therefore, we partner with families and consider the specific needs and capacities of each family when addressing challenging behaviors in school and at home. We also provide parent counseling and training workshops scheduled at each school and offer free monthly webinars through Family Connect.

Purpose

This policy establishes a consistent, developmentally appropriate approach for ADAPT early childhood programs serving preschool children with disabilities. It aligns Pyramid Model practices with preschool special education supports, including IEP implementation, inclusive classroom practices, positive behavior supports, family partnership, CPSE coordination, related service collaboration, and data-informed decision-making.

Scope

This policy applies to all staff, classrooms, programs, consultants, volunteers, related service providers, special education itinerant teachers, contracted providers, and administrators who

support preschool children ages 3 to 5 in our schools including children with IEPs, children referred to or being evaluated by the Committee on Preschool Special Education, and children receiving general education, integrated, or special class services.

Philosophy

Providing regular and consistent staff training and support regarding classroom management, behavioral support, effective academic instruction, and standard-based curriculum adaptations for diverse learners

- Creating a safe learning environment
- Emphasizing quality of life
- Emphasizing positive approaches
- Building reinforcing and developmentally appropriate environments
- Designing behavior intervention plans (BIPs) to meet the needs of each student

Guiding Principles

- All children can learn social-emotional skills when adults provide consistent teaching, modeling, and support.
- Challenging behavior is addressed by understanding its purpose and teaching appropriate replacement skills.
- Positive relationships, predictable routines, practice opportunities, curriculum adaptation and inclusive environments are the foundation of effective behavior support.
- Behavior support practices must be culturally responsive, trauma-informed, developmentally appropriate, and free from bias.
- Families are essential partners in planning, implementing, and reviewing supports.
- Suspension, expulsion, removal, shortened schedules, or informal exclusion must not be used as routine responses to disability-related, developmental, or challenging behavior and may occur only in accordance with applicable NYC, New York State, federal special education, and program procedures.

NYC Early Childhood Special Education Alignment

The program will implement this policy in a manner consistent with preschool special education requirements for children ages 3 to 5 in New York City. Staff will collaborate with families, the Committee on Preschool Special Education, special education teachers, related service providers, evaluators, mental health consultants, and administrators to ensure that social-emotional and behavioral supports are coordinated, inclusive, and aligned with each child's individual needs.

- IEP services, accommodations, supports, goals, and behavior-related recommendations must be implemented consistently across daily routines and learning environments.
- Children should be supported in the least restrictive environment to the greatest extent appropriate, with access to typically developing peers and inclusive learning opportunities whenever possible.
- Program staff must communicate promptly with families and appropriate special education contacts when behavior concerns may affect access, participation, safety, or progress toward IEP goals.
- Behavior support strategies must be coordinated with related services such as speech-language therapy, occupational therapy, physical therapy, counseling, special education itinerant services, and classroom-based supports when applicable.

Pyramid Model Framework

Universal Supports

Staff will establish nurturing and responsive relationships with children and families, create predictable schedules and routines, teach expectations, and design inclusive environments that support communication, sensory regulation, engagement, independence, access to IEP goals, and positive peer interactions. Universal supports are provided to all children every day and adapted as needed for children with disabilities.

Targeted Social-Emotional Supports

When children need additional support, staff will provide targeted instruction in skills such as identifying emotions, requesting help, using communication supports, problem solving, turn taking, calming strategies, self-advocacy, and friendship skills. Supports may include visual cues, first-then boards, social stories, role play, small-group instruction, sensory supports, prompts, assistive communication tools, and positive reinforcement.

Individualized Intensive Intervention

For persistent, serious, or disability-related challenging behavior, the program will use an individualized positive behavior support process. This may include collecting information about the behavior, identifying triggers and possible functions, reviewing IEP goals and supports, consulting with the family and relevant providers, developing prevention strategies, teaching replacement skills, and creating or updating a written behavioral intervention plan (BIP) that is coordinated with the child’s special education classroom staff and multi-disciplinary team.

Behavior Management Support Procedures

1. Staff will respond to challenging behavior calmly, respectfully, and consistently.
2. Staff will prioritize safety while preserving the child’s dignity and participation in the learning environment.
3. Staff will use positive guidance strategies, including redirection, choices, modeling, visual supports, planned transitions, environmental adjustments, and reinforcement of expected behavior.
4. Staff will avoid punitive, humiliating, shaming, threatening, or physically harmful practices.
5. When behavior persists, staff will document patterns and consult with the supervisor, special education provider, related service providers, mental health consultant, behavior support team (multi-disciplinary team/child study), family, and CPSE contact when appropriate.
6. Behavior support plans will be reviewed regularly and adjusted based on child progress, family input, provider feedback, incident data, and the child’s IEP or referral status.

Family Engagement

Families will be informed about the program’s approach to social-emotional development, behavior support, and preschool special education collaboration. Staff will communicate with families in a timely, respectful, accessible, and culturally and linguistically responsive manner. Families will be invited to share information about the child’s strengths, routines, culture, communication, sensory needs, medical considerations, IEP goals, prior evaluations, related services, and effective support strategies used at home or in therapy settings.

Documentation and Data Use

The program will maintain appropriate documentation of behavior incidents, support strategies, family communication, provider consultation, referrals, CPSE-related communication, IEP implementation concerns, and behavior support plans. Data will be used to identify patterns, monitor progress, guide decision-making, support inclusive participation, inform team

meetings, evaluate the effectiveness of supports, and reduce disparities in discipline or exclusionary practices.

Staff Training and Coaching

Staff will receive orientation and ongoing professional development on the Pyramid Model, preschool special education collaboration, IEP implementation, inclusive classroom practices, positive behavior support, trauma-informed practices, culturally and linguistically responsive guidance, sensory and communication supports, de-escalation, documentation procedures, family partnership, and procedures for consulting with supervisors, related service providers, and CPSE contacts.

Prohibited Practices

The program prohibits corporal punishment, aversive interventions, seclusion, humiliation, verbal abuse, denial of basic needs, threats, intimidation, and exclusion from learning opportunities as a routine behavior management strategy. Physical restraint may be used only when necessary to prevent immediate serious physical harm, only by trained staff when required, and only in accordance with applicable law, regulation, and program procedures.

Review and Continuous Improvement

This policy will be reviewed at least annually or sooner if required by changes in NYC Public Schools guidance, New York State Education Department guidance, special education regulations, program needs, incident data, or best practice guidance. Leadership will use feedback from staff, families, CPSE partners, related service providers, consultants, and data reviews to strengthen implementation and ensure equitable, inclusive supports for all children.