



Vermont Early MTSS PYRAMID MODEL

Promoting Social Emotional Competence
in Vermont's Young Children

FALL 2022- SPRING 2024

IMPACT REPORT

Vermont's Early Multi-tiered System of Supports (Early MTSS)

Vermont's Early Multi-tiered System of Support, or Early MTSS is an innovation neutral, data-based decision framework that wraps around the Pyramid Model framework to support each and every child's social, emotional and academic development birth through age 8, across all early childhood environments.

Early MTSS utilizes a two prong approach, not only focusing on fidelity of practice, but building key elements within a system to ensure scale up, sustainability and fidelity of the system.

Early MTSS promotes preventative universal, targeted and individualized equitable and inclusive high quality evidence based practices to promote social-emotional learning along with academic learning, and skill development. The Early MTSS framework proactively supports competency building in both adults and children, and integrates trauma informed and mental health practices, all which reduces the likelihood challenging behaviors in children.

Early MTSS aligns with state and federal recommendations and the Vermont Guiding Principles, the Vermont Early Learning Standards, and Act 173 and the VTmtss framework.

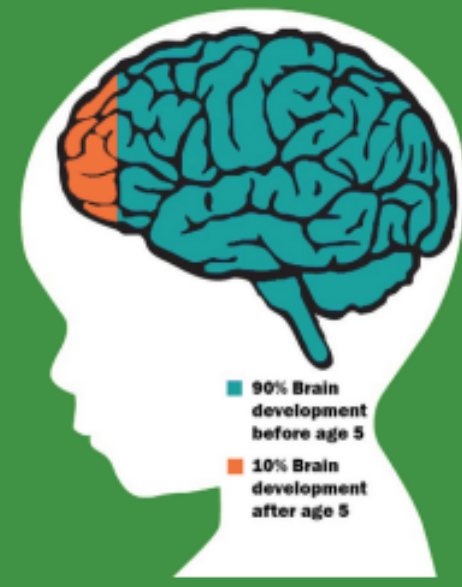
Early MTSS & Fidelity Measures



90%

of a child's brain development happens before age 5

Source: Harvard Center for the Developing Child



The framework includes tools that help ensure that programs have the support they need to actually apply what works with enough intention to realize impact.

The Early MTSS framework is unique because it utilizes Fidelity Measurement Tools at EVERY level of the framework.

State-wide Implementation:

- State Benchmarks of Quality

Program-wide Implementation:

- System Inventory/Benchmarks of Quality

Teacher/Practices level:

- Teaching Pyramid Observation Tool (TPOT/TPITOS)
- CLASS (HS) for sites who are a part of STARS
- Preliminary Pyramid Assessment

Child level:

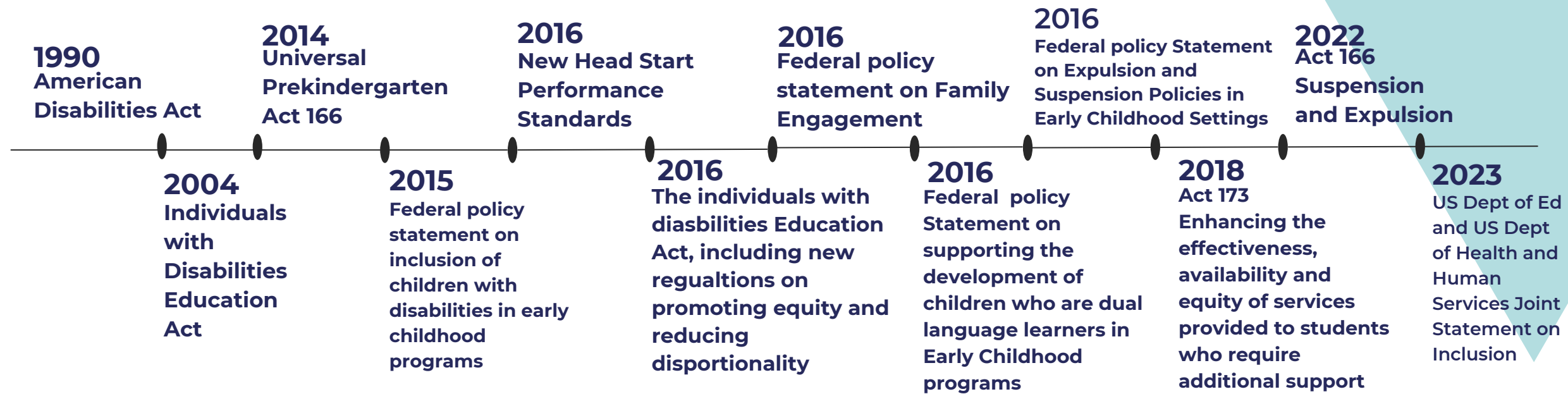
- Social Skills Improvement System
- Ages and Stages 3 and/or A&S Social and Emotional
- Behavior Incident Report System (BIRS)
- Early MTSS Functional Assessment
- On-going progress monitoring and assessment

Trainer and Coach level:

- Fidelity measures of training and coach effectiveness
- Early MTSS Coaching Logs

Federal & State Laws that INTERSECT with Early MTSS

On November 28, 2023 the U.S. Department of Education and U.S. Department of Health and Human Services published a updated Inclusion Policy Statement that emphasizes the importance of utilizing a proactive, preventative tiered approach to supporting each and every child and their family. Additionally, they recommend that states build capacity among programs in fostering young children's social and emotional development. Capacity building includes early childhood mental health, and proactive behavior intervention supports, identifying The Pyramid Model as a comprehensive framework to support each and every child's social and emotional development.



Aligns with K-12 MTSS, Vermont Early Learning Standards, and Vermont Guiding Principles for Full Participation

Ban on Suspension and Expulsion of Students under Age 8

S16 → Act 35 → Act 166

On June 1, 2022, the Governor signed Act 166 (S.283)Sec. 3. 16 V.S.A. § 1162

A student enrolled in a public school, approved independent school, or prequalified private prekindergarten program who is under eight years of age shall not be suspended or expelled from the school.

UNIVERSAL PREKINDERGARTEN (UPK)

Cohort 1
Before

12

Cohort 2
Before

41



Cohort 1
AFTER

6

Cohort 2
AFTER

1

A total of

13.7%
are children on IEPs.

182

Reported
Suspensions &
Expulsions

Fall 2022- Spring 2024



National Data Shows:

10x

Children who are suspended or expelled from preschool are as much as ten times more likely to drop out of high school.

Meek and Gilliam, 2016.

KINDERGARTEN-3RD GRADE

Studies show that frameworks like the Pyramid Model, which consist of staff capacity building paired with training and coaching support, reduce and prevent expulsion and suspension in early learning and school settings and support the inclusion of children with disabilities.



A total of
512
Reported
Suspensions &
Expulsions
2022



A total of
688
Reported
Suspensions &
Expulsions
2023



SNAPSHOT EARLY MTSS ACCOMPLISHMENTS FALL 2022- SPRING 2024



TEACHERS

Nearly **600** teacher surveys were submitted with positive feedback on the Pyramid Model trainings they received.



IMPLEMENTATION SITES

17 of the **18** implementation sites have successfully integrated the Pyramid Model concepts into their program with the support of System and Practice Based Coaches. Furthermore, **9** programs have successfully embedded the Pyramid Model into their practices with **FIDELITY**.



EARLY MTSS SLT

Established a Early MTSS State Leadership Team. Our SLT has been guided by the four **ESSENTIAL** structures within the states Benchmarks of Quality.

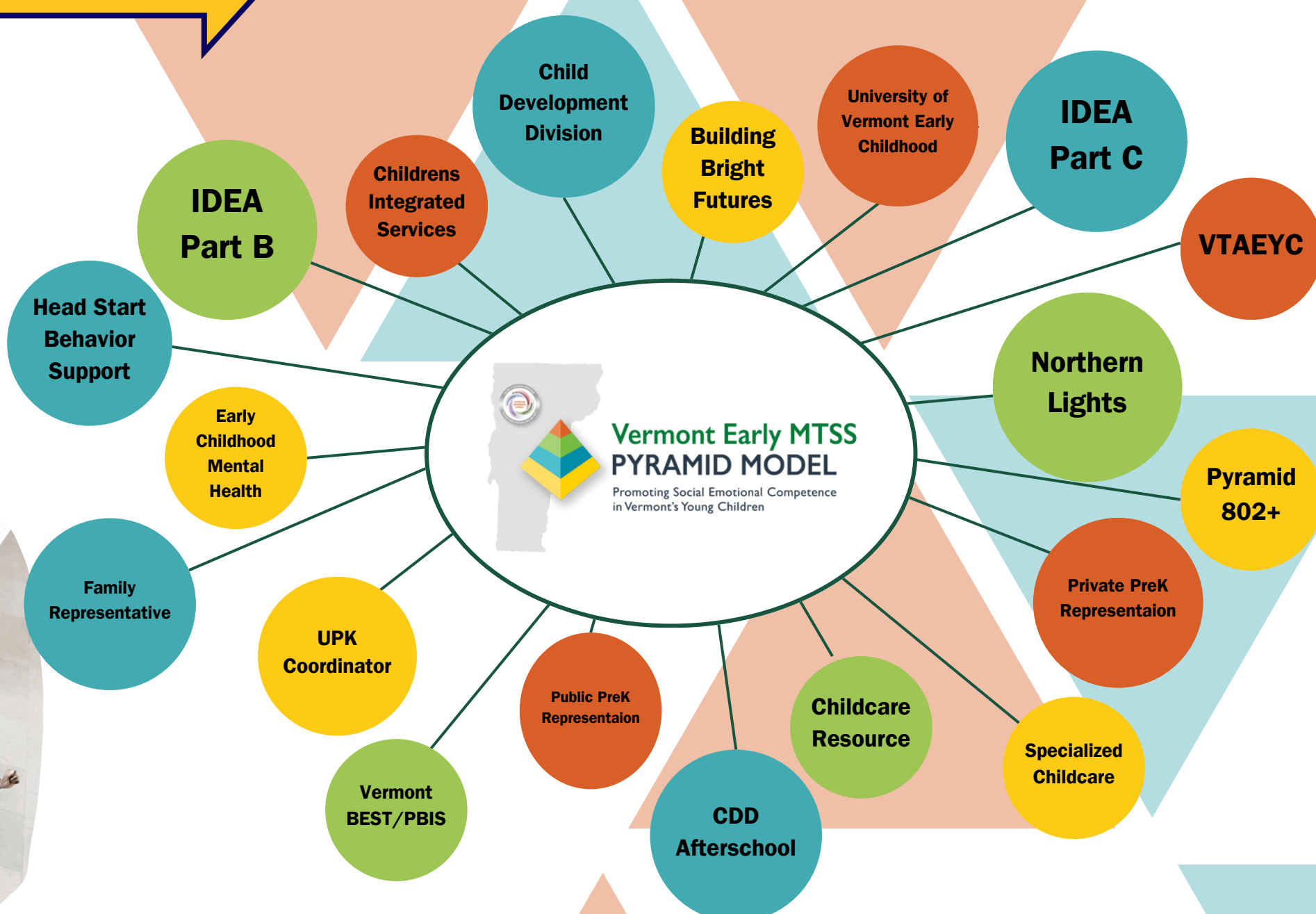


TRAININGS & COACHING

Participants submitted over **1,000** training surveys noting the benefits of the 12 professional development sessions offered between Fall 2022 and Spring 2024 to support each and every child's Social and Emotional Development. Additionally, coaches logged **21,697** minutes.

State Leadership Team

The State Leadership Team is a cross sector group responsible for planning and advising on Early MTSS including: funding support, policy initiatives, evaluation, data-based decision making, training and coaching, implementation sites, and public awareness. The primary purpose of the Vermont Early MTSS State Leadership Team is to ensure supports and resources are available to implementation sites so they can adopt and implement Early MTSS with **FIDELITY**.



Vermont's Vision & Mission

VISION STATEMENT

Each and **every** child and their family in Vermont will have access to equitable and inclusive early childhood environments statewide. Vermont's early childhood environments must be free of exclusionary practices (suspension, expulsion, restraint, and seclusion) and any other forms of harsh discipline, to ensure successful outcomes for each and every child.

MISSION STATEMENT

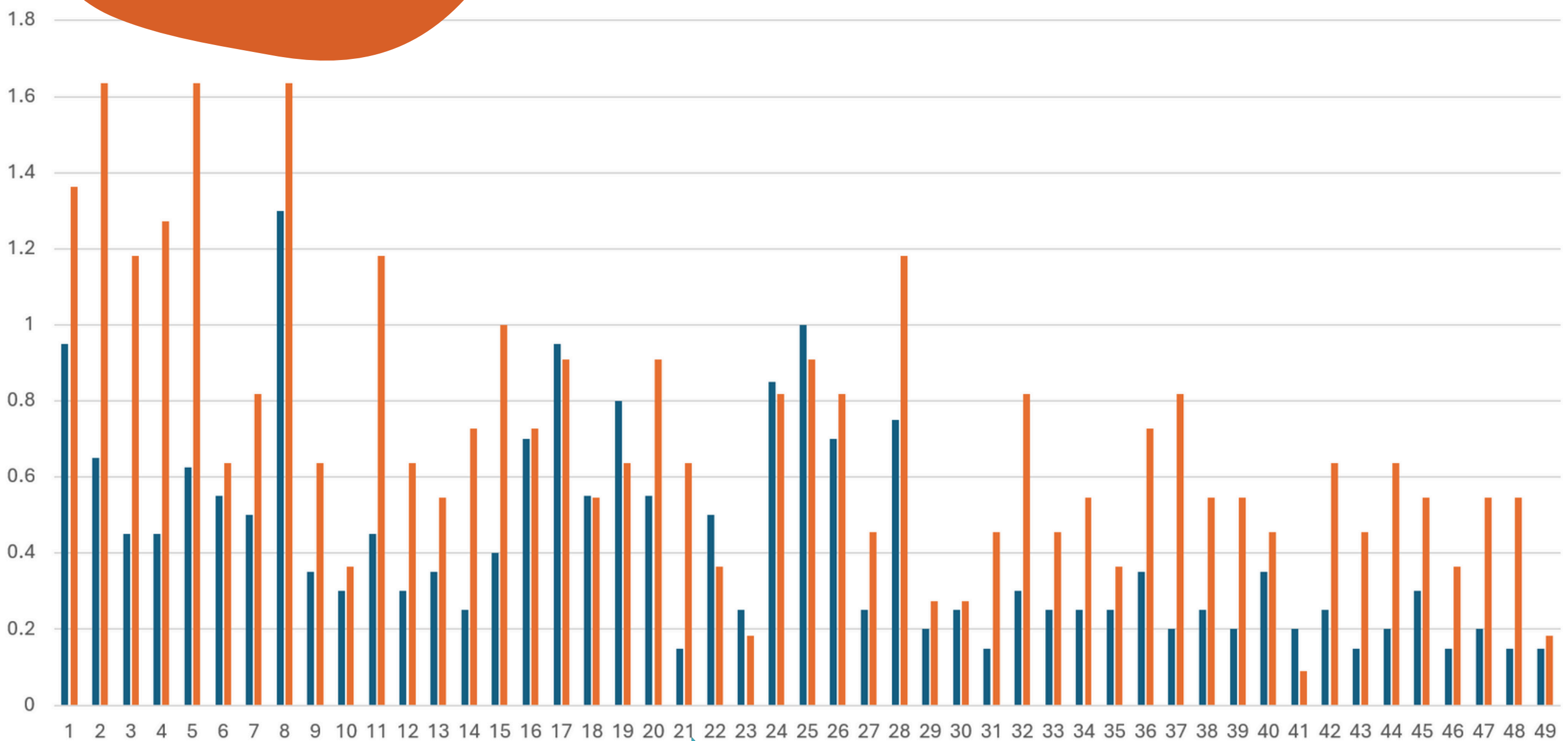
The Early MTSS SLT will build statewide capacity to implement and scale up Early MTSS with fidelity, to ultimate sustainability. The SLT will integrate family engagement and empowerment throughout scale up.



The graph below shows how the current SLT BOQ has grown in just a single year, broken down by each indicator!

State Leadership Team Benchmarks of Quality (BOQ)

Elements (0- Not in place, 1- Emerging/Needs improvement, 2- In place)



System Coach vs. Practice Based Coach

SYSTEM COACH

- Coaches and guides Program Leadership Team & Practitioner Coach
- Supports program-wide implementation
- Provides updates to the SLT about programs and their implementation needs/progress

PRACTICE BASED COACH

- Uses Practice Based Coaching (PBC) to support practitioners in their implementation of Pyramid Model practices
- Collaborates with practitioners to identify needs and set practice implementation goals

A total of **21,697** minutes of coaching have been completed from Fall 2022 Spring 2024.

Program Level Benchmarks of Quality/ System Inventory for Universal PreK Programs

The Early MTSS System Inventory is a fidelity tool that analyzes a program and allows leadership teams to identify areas of strengths and areas that need focus for continuous improvement. The System Inventory is grounded in implementation science, and bridges the gap between equitable and inclusive high quality evidence-based practice and high-fidelity implementation of that practice. Leadership Teams, with the support of an Early MTSS System Coach, tracked progress and created Action Plans based on the benchmark of quality indicators within the Inventory. Activities related to scale up an sustainability are embedded throughout the System Inventory to ensure fidelity of implementation.

Vermont Early Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) System Inventory

Program Name: _____
Supervisory Union/School District: _____
Date: _____
Team Members: _____
Completed by: _____

Purpose of Early MTSS System Inventory
 The Vermont Early MTSS System Inventory is to be used by Early Education programs* (see [Glossary](#) for definition) to:

- Assess readiness, and identify strengths and gaps, to promote program-wide adoption of the key components of Early MTSS, and the stages of implementation.
- Develop an implementation and action plan so that Early MTSS components and evidence-based practices are implemented to fidelity and sustainability over time.
- Benefit and promote positive outcomes for each and every child and their families.

The Early MTSS System Inventory is grounded in the science of implementation, which bridges the gap between evidence-based practice (EBP) and high-fidelity implementation of that practice. Early MTSS Leadership Teams, may with the support of an Early MTSS System Coach, track progress utilizing the stages of implementation (i.e., development or installation, implementation (initial and full) and sustainability). Activities related to sustainability are embedded throughout the System Inventory to ensure the implementation of evidence-based practices at the classroom and program-wide level.


Inventory Key Components and Critical Elements

I. Strong Systemic Support:

- Leadership Team Membership
- Leadership Team Functions
- Staff Commitment
- Supportive Systems

II. Effective Partnership and Collaboration:

- Family Partnership



What Early MTSS Implementers Have to Share About the Framework of the Pyramid Model

"The Twin Valley Elementary School has had a long-term commitment to our states MTSS work. We were excited to learn more about the Early MTSS model and how a focus on early childhood could enhance our current system. We really appreciated the development of a leadership team with the support of Kate Rogers to help us influence systems and Jancie Stockman who assisted us at the classroom level. Our participation has given us an infusion of energy and renewed commitment to continue our important work to build school community that is committed to equity, inclusion and belonging and meets the needs of all learners. We welcome partnership with the agency in future work to strengthen early learning across our state."

- Rebecca Fillion, Principal Twin Valley Elementary School and President of the Vermont Principal's Association

"Our Head Start classrooms that use EMTSS in conjunction with their chosen curriculum find that other children's learning domains have met or exceeded expectations due to the use of EMTSS preliminary checklist, observations (TPITOS and TPOT), and ongoing coaching. Teachers share that they have less stress and feel supported right from the start of the school year". **Shawn Lund Behavior Specialist, Champlain Valley Head Start**

"I was excited about the push to recognize the importance of teaching social skills to children. Many of the teachers in our program had education degrees but shared they did not know how to teach social-emotional skills to toddlers and preschoolers. Once we began the process, we noticed a shift in behavior in the classroom and teacher's confidence". **Shawn Lund Behavior Specialist, Champlain Valley Head Start**

The trainings and coaching is invaluable. I hope we find ways to continue funding the work so that all programs can meet fidelity.

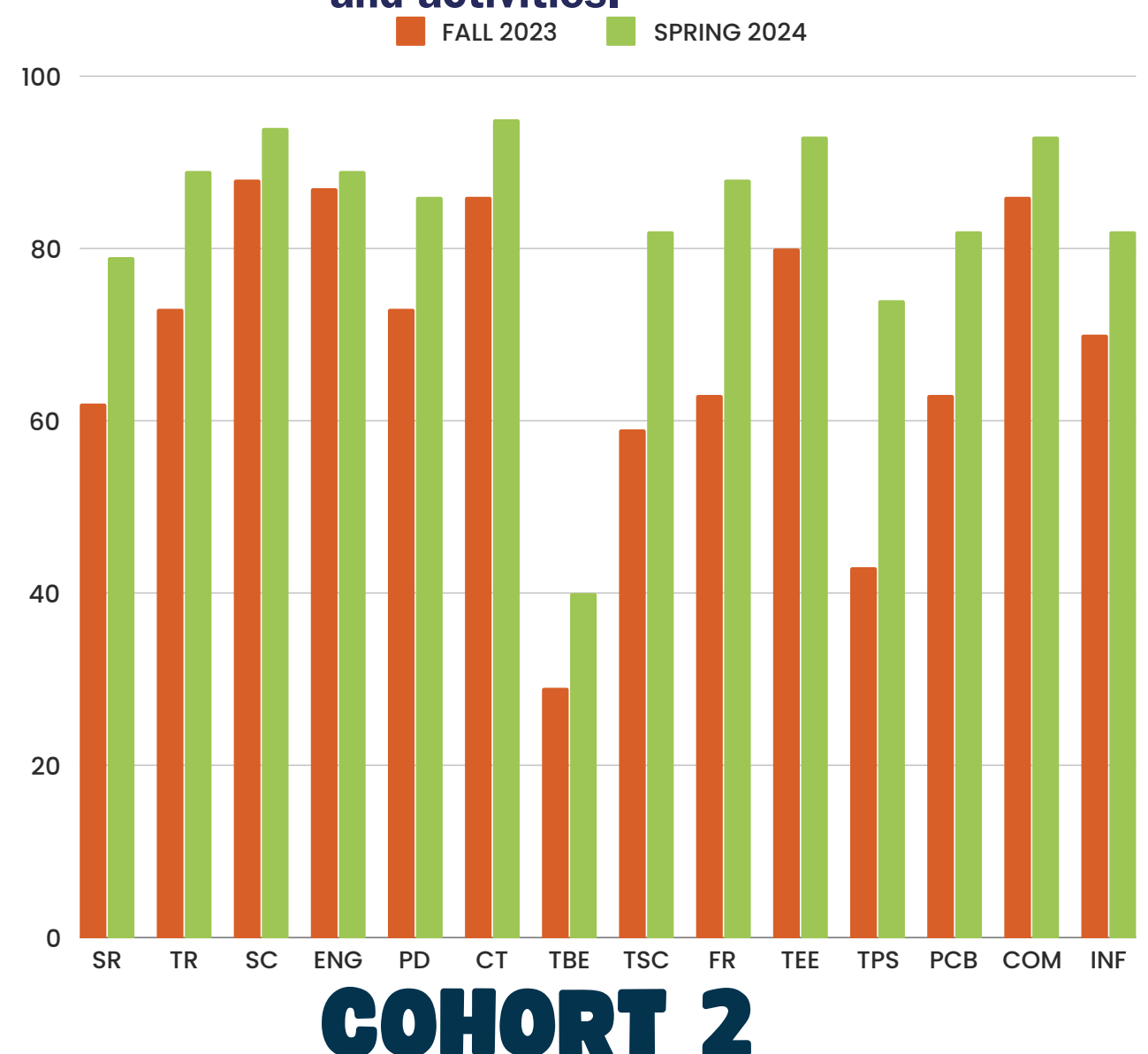
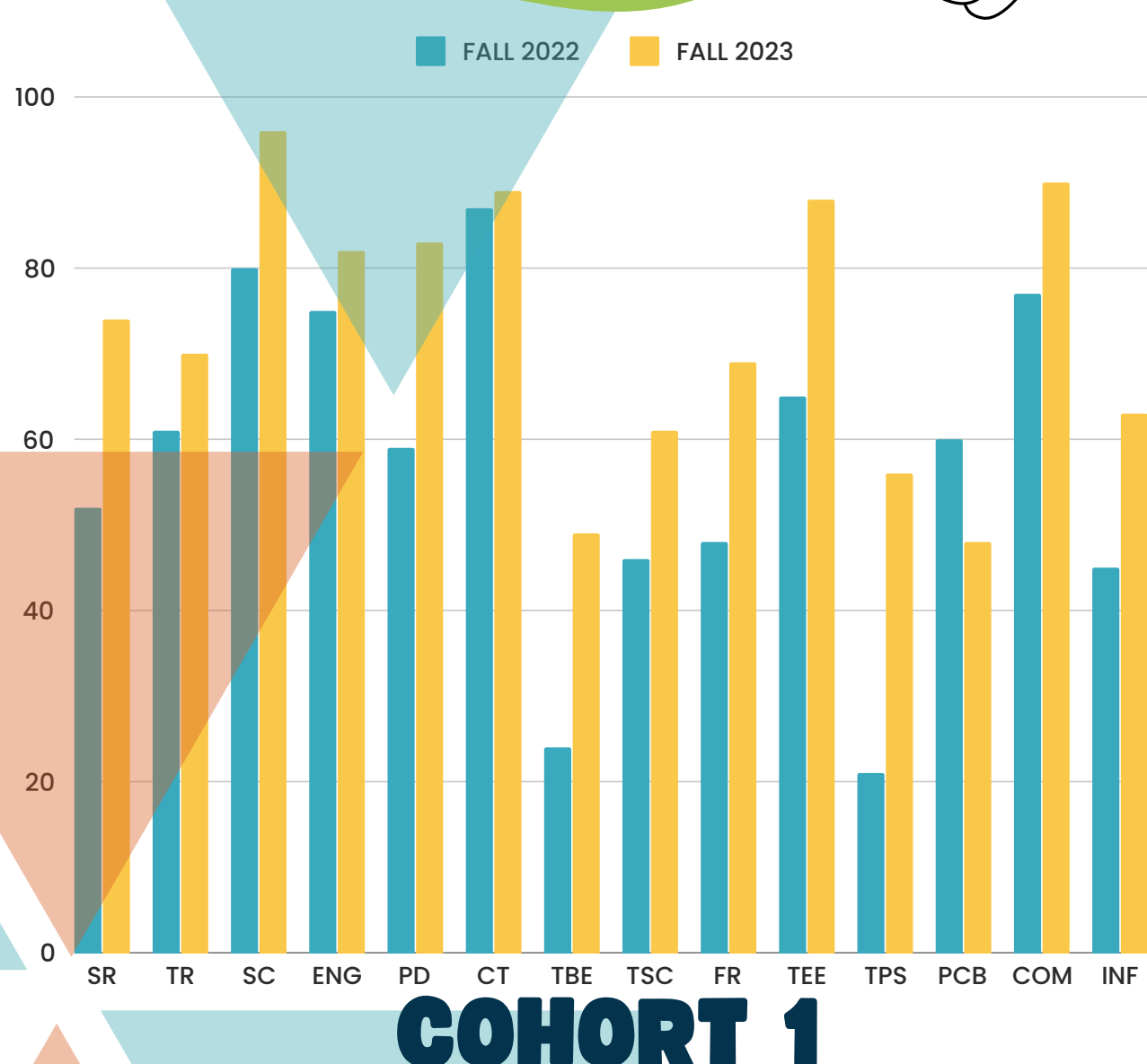
Elizabeth Brown Director of Early Education Barre Unified Union School District



The percentage of critical practices that were "In Place" for TPOT observations in classrooms belonging to Cohort 1 & 2 during the 2022-2023 & 2023-2024 academic year are depicted in the graphs below.

Teaching Pyramid Observational Tool (TPOT)

The Teaching Pyramid Observation Tool is a fidelity measure of how well adults are proactively implementing universal, targeted and individualized social and emotional competencies across all routines and activities.



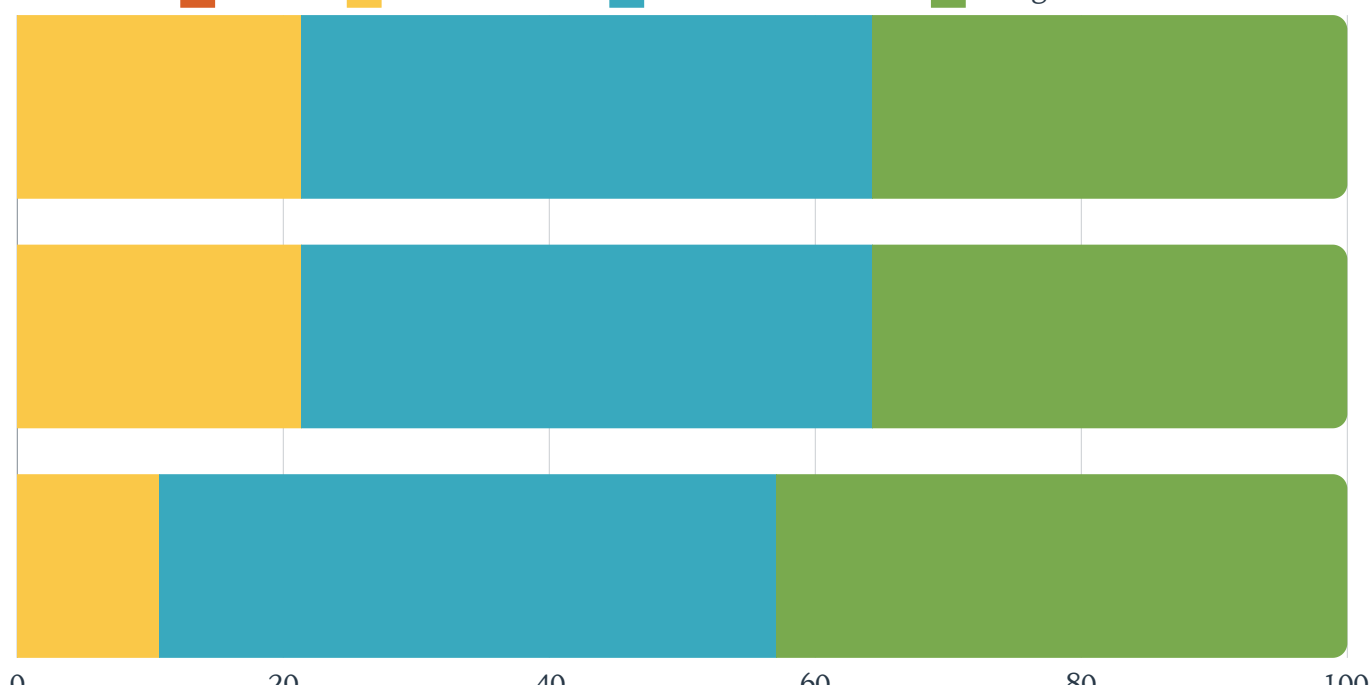
Early MTSS Survey Results

Helpful in building knowledge of effective practices to prevent challenging behavior

Sufficiently accessible (e.g., held at times staff can participate, staff have necessary coverage to participate)

Helpful in building knowledge of effective

Not at all To a small extent To a moderate extent To a great extent



Respondents rated the helpfulness and accessibility of the Early MTSS trainings that they had attended. This graph shows that most respondents indicated that the trainings helped build knowledge of effective practices and were sufficiently accessible to a “moderate” or “great extent”. Respondents were in the greatest agreement that the trainings were helpful in building knowledge of effective practices to promote social and emotional development.

Early MTSS Participant Survey Results on External Coaching Support...

Survey respondents were asked to share feedback about the support their program or school has received from their external coach. Exhibit 8 shows that respondents were largely satisfied with the external coaching support that they had received. For example, about 85% or more of respondents indicated that the external coach is effective in delivering support for Early MTSS, displays professionalism, and displays knowledge of Early MTSS “To a great extent”.

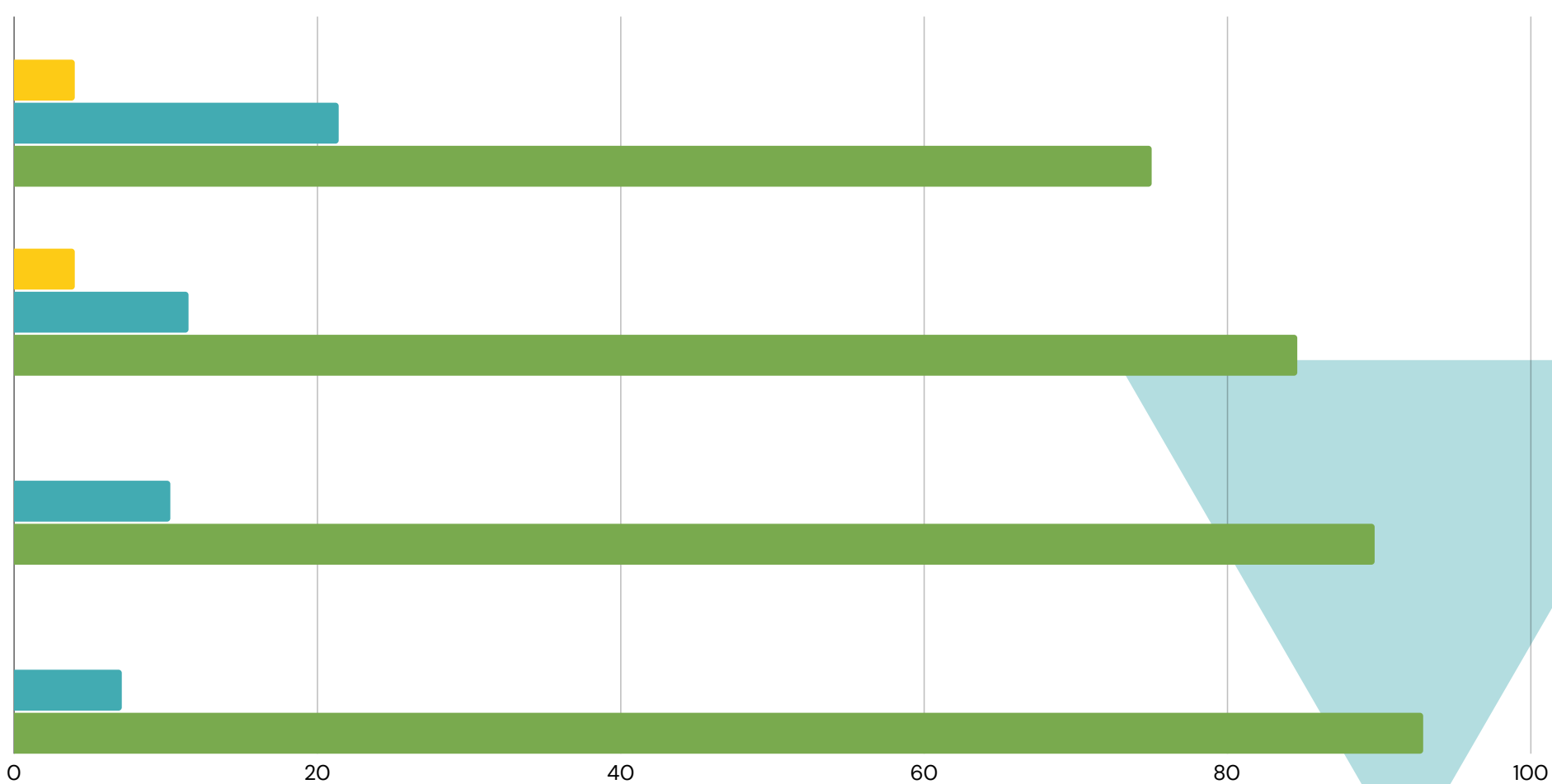
Not at all To a small extent To a moderate extent To a great extent

Understands our program's unique context

Is effective in delivering support for Early MTSS implementation, overall

Displays professionalism

Displays knowledge of Early MTSS



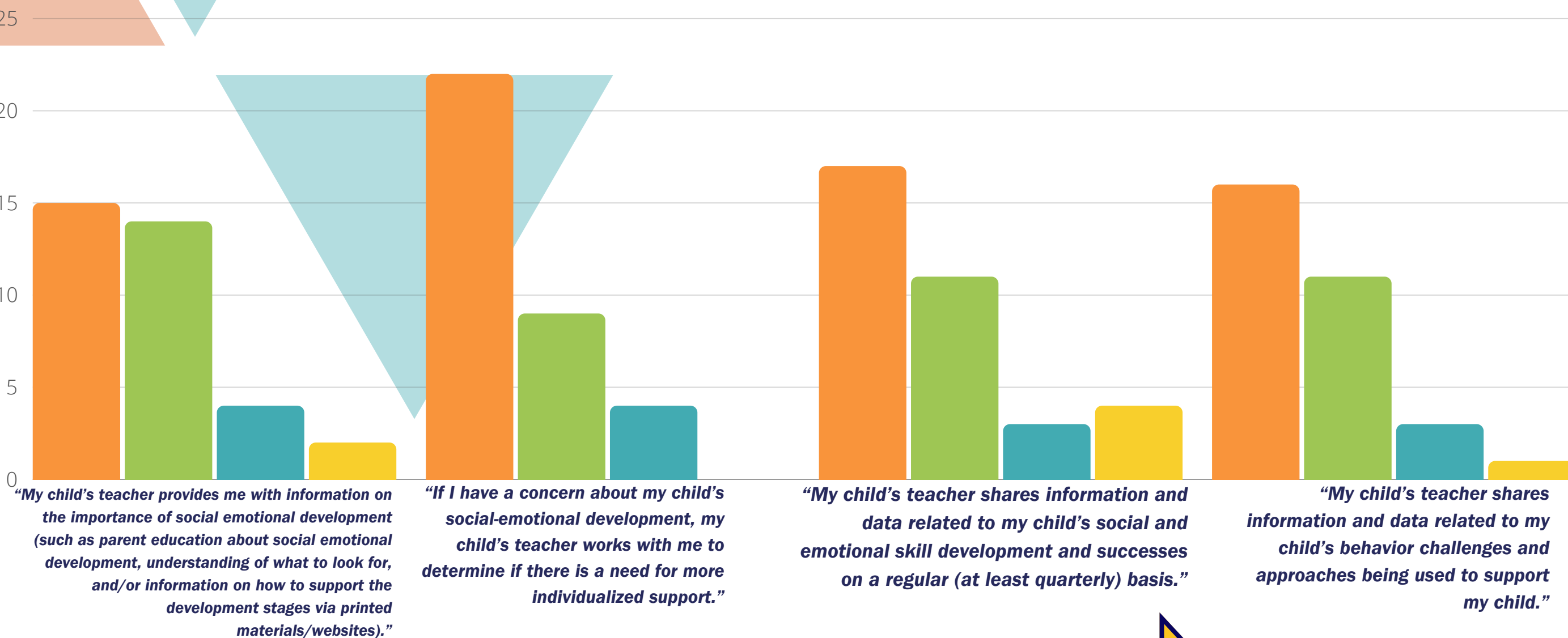
Family Engagement

At every tier of the Pyramid Model, practitioners and programs should consider what strategies might be used to welcome and support diverse families; how to create opportunities to learn from families; strategies for partnering with families to promote child outcomes; and providing the supports and services that families might need to promote their child’s skill development. The next two slides will demonstrate how families feel about the Pyramid Model's implementation in their children's programs based on the 34 families who answered this survey.



Family Engagement Survey Responses

■ Strongly Agree
 ■ Agree
 ■ Neither Disagree or Agree
 ■ Disagree



Family Reactions to the Pyramid Model's Implementation in Their Child's Program...

I appreciate the regular communication about classroom activities, updates with pictures of the kids, and regular postings about community activities as well.

My child is currently being evaluated for a IEP and has a safety plan in place. Everyone has been very helpful throughout the process. My only concern is how long the process takes. I wish we had started it earlier.

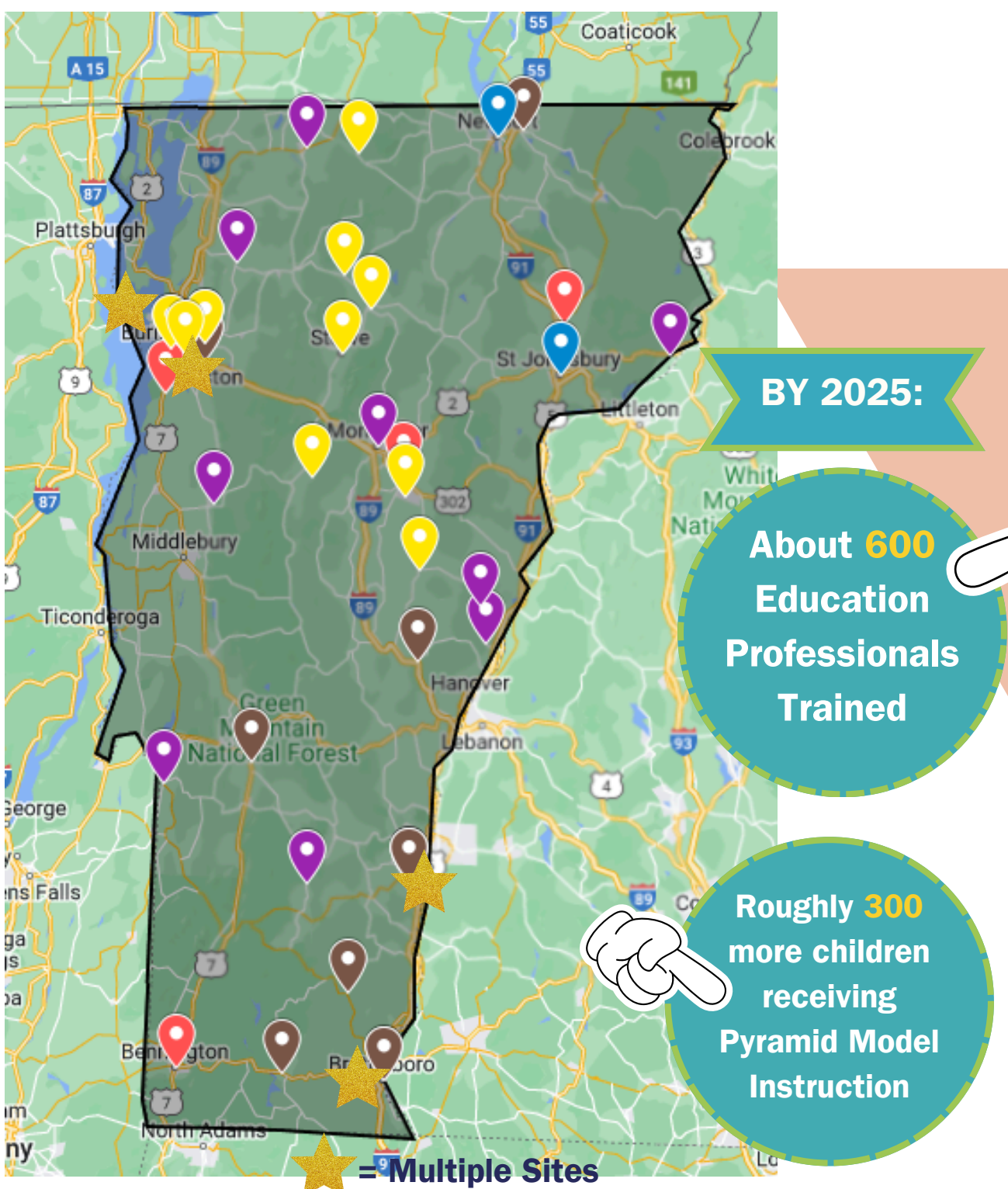
Great program and we have seen so much growth in our son.

We get daily class-wide updates each day, but get some time at drop-off/pick up to discuss the day to day of our child. We really like the individualized kid response to a class question from snack time!

Very happy with how the teachers address issues and ask for collaboration when an issue arises.

Looking Forward to 2024-2025

Implementation Sites:



Sustaining and scaling up within programs and throughout Vermont
 All active programs from Cohort 1 and Cohort 2 (2022-2023) will continue to receive funding for coaching in 2024-2025. Joining them will be Cohorts 3 and 4, with the Preschool Development Grant, making it a total of 39 early childhood programs across Vermont to implement Early MTSS and the Pyramid Model framework.

Ten new programs will begin Year 1 of the grant during the (2023-2024) school year, and ten more programs will begin Year 2 of the project (2024-2025). In order to be a System Coach or a Practice-based Coach for Cohorts 3 and 4, highly qualified participants submitted an unprecedented amount of coaching applications! After an equitable review, 20 applicants were accepted to participate in the Pyramid Model Trainings.



Participating Programs:

- 15 Private UPK
- 13 Public UPK
- 5 Child Care Centers
- 4 Family Child Care Home
- 3-4 CIS/Early Intervention Region

Conclusion

Since its inception in 2007, individuals have reported that Early MTSS has produced excellent results for their programs, classrooms, teachers, families, and their children. Unfortunately our work is far from being complete.

The knowledge, response and skill necessary to guide the social and emotional well-being of young children is greatly underacknowledged.

We will continue to expand implementation efforts across Vermont's mixed delivery system to support early care and education programs in partnership with mental health, public health, early intervention, special education, and community partners.

We will continue to showcase the impact program-wide implementation has as an important solution to address suspension and expulsion across our early childhood system.

Finally, we will continue to educate about the importance of providing funding for training, coaching, and program-wide implementation, as well as resources for families to help them understand and guide their children's social and emotional development.

Each and every Vermont child and their family can benefit from the strength of our collective collaboration within the Early MTSS framework.

We are grateful for your efforts to increase our impact across Vermont!

Contact Us

Amy Murphy, Inclusion Coordinator:

amy.murphy@vermont.gov

Thalia Garcia, Early MTSS Coordinator:

thalia.garcia@vermont.gov

Early Education Team:

aoe.upk@vermont.gov