

The Nova Scotia Early Learning Curriculum Framework and The Pyramid Model



A Crosswalk

Capable, Confident & Curious

Capable, Confident, and Curious: Nova Scotia's Early Learning Curriculum Framework is a comprehensive framework grounded in evidence-based practices, designed to support the holistic development of children from birth to age eight.

The framework provides educators with principles and practices that foster inclusive, play-based, and culturally responsive learning environments.

[Capable, Confident & Curious](#)

The Pyramid Model

The Pyramid Model is a professional development framework which uses practice-based coaching at the program and educator level to build systems and skills to support young children social emotional well-being and development.

The Pyramid Model builds upon a tiered approach to providing universal supports to all children to promote wellness, targeted services to those requiring more support and intensive services to those need them.

[The National Centre for Pyramid Model Innovations](#)



Shared Element: **Vision**

Capable, Confident & Curious

All children are joyfully engaged in spaces intentionally designed for early learning that support them to flourish as capable, confident and curious individuals.
(p. 9)

The Pyramid Model

All young children in Nova Scotia experience inclusive and culturally responsive environments that support their social emotional well-being.

[Together in Action](#)



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Resource:

[The Pyramid Model](#)



Shared Element: **Strength-Based**

Capable, Confident & Curious

Founded on a social pedagogy that takes a strength-based approach. (p. 16)

The Pyramid Model

Focuses on strength-based, capacity building of adults, children, programs and communities to support children's social emotional learning and development.

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Resource:
[Relationship Building with Families](#)

[Practice Based Coaching](#)



Shared Element: **Relationships**

Capable, Confident & Curious

Emphasizes diverse and responsive adult-child relationships and experiences that promote a sense of well-being, belonging, and acceptance. (p. 16)

The Pyramid Model

Focuses on building supportive, responsive relationships among adults and children to foster healthy social and emotional development and a sense of security and well-being.

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Resources:
[Building Positive Relationships with Children](#)

[I am a Super Friend](#)

[Backpack Series on Friendship Skills](#)



Shared Element: **Family and Community Collaboration**

Capable, Confident & Curious

Emphasizes a social pedagogy that represents, respects, and values all children, families, educators, and communities, affirms individual needs, identities, and distinct ways of knowing, being, and learning from their natural and cultural environments, and builds upon and bridges children's and adults' understanding and knowledge, respectful of individual linguistic and cultural identities. (p. 16).

The Pyramid Model

Emphasizes culturally and linguistically responsive practices and encouraging collaboration among all team members—including children, families, educators, administrators, and the broader community. Creating a supportive and inclusive environment for growth and learning.

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Resources:

[Authentically Partnering with Families as Valued Members](#)

[Culturally Responsive Practices](#)

[Communicating with Families](#)

[Collecting Demographic Information from Families](#)



Shared Element: **Learning Environments**

Capable, Confident & Curious

Emphasizes inclusive environments that support all aspects of children's learning and invite conversations between children, educators, families, and the broader community through guiding principles such as the environment as the third teacher and the Mi'kmaw guiding principle of Etuaptmunk or Two-Eyed Seeing (p. 54 & 56).

The Pyramid Model

Focuses on supporting educators to create high-quality learning environments that includes promotion of social and emotional well-being of **all children** as a starting point for learning.

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Resources:

[Infant Toddler Environment Planning](#)

[Inclusive Routines in Early Care & Learning](#)

[Using Visuals to Support Children](#)



Shared Element: Intentional Teaching

Capable, Confident & Curious

Capable, Confident & Curious emphasizes the importance of intentionality as a key practice in early learning. It highlights intentionality when educators design the layout of the learning environments, choose what types of materials are included, and decide how the materials are made available to the children.

Consider:

How can I extend children's learning? How will I balance child-initiated and educator-initiated experiences?

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The Pyramid Model

Focuses on coaching educators to provide developmentally appropriate, play-based, child-centered practice. Building educators practice to identify when individualized support for each child is needed and plan engagement opportunities on making learning intentional, purposeful, and effective in fostering social and emotional development for all children.

Resources:

[Practical Strategies](#)

[You Got It: Teaching Social Emotional Skills](#)

[Peer Mediated Skills](#)

[The Tucker Technique](#)

[Solutions Kit](#)



Shared Element: Reflection and Continuous Improvement

Capable, Confident & Curious

Critical reflection is a key educator practice that deepens insight, supports meaningful feedback, and maintains ongoing dialogue with families. Through the Reflective Planning Cycle—observing and listening, reflecting with others, planning, acting, and revisiting next steps—educators engage in an iterative process that strengthens relationships and drives continuous quality improvement within their early learning environments.

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The Pyramid Model

Practice-Based Coaching (PBC) is grounded in collaborative relationships between coach and educator, where feedback and reflection are essential to the coaching process. The Pyramid Model also encourages program-wide leadership teams to support systems-level development (i.e., Policy, administrative support, professional development planning, family engagement, data decision making, etc.). The teams guide educators, families and children through the process of continuous quality improvements using a data-informed decision-making cycle known as LOOK-THINK-ACT.

Pyramid Resources:

[Sample Family Survey for Pyramid Model Early Care & Education Programs](#)

[Look Think Act: Benchmarks of Quality](#)



Shared Element: Professional and Personal Development

Capable, Confident & Curious

Supported by a professional development model that includes 8 professional learning modules designed to help educators to implement Capable, Confident, and Curious: Nova Scotia's Early Learning Curriculum Framework.

These Professional Learning modules, along with several other sessions on various topics with links to the framework, are accessible to educators through the Nova Scotia Early Years Professional Development Committee

<https://eypdc.ca/>

The Pyramid Model

NSECDIS is funded by DEECD to provide professional development support for the implementation of the Pyramid Model in Nova Scotia.

This system building initiative is led by a Provincial Leadership Team whose mission is: To lead collaborative systemic change by building a sustainable professional development infrastructure; enhancing the capacity of early learning and child care programs, alongside families, to support the social emotional well-being of young children in Nova Scotia.

The professional development model includes module-based training (e.g., Birth-5 training, Trauma Informed Care, Culturally Responsive Practices, etc.) and individualized coaching for educators, Leadership Training and program-wide coaching for sites to support infrastructure development to ensure the sustainability of practices.

Resources:

[Families Let's Talk Expectations!](#)

[Developing Expectations: The Happiest Child](#)

[Events and Functions Associated with Behaviour Concerns](#)

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Shared Element: **Equity and Inclusion**

Capable, Confident & Curious

The Capable, Confident, and Curious Framework positions equity, diversity, inclusion, accessibility, and anti-racism as a core principle that shapes high-quality early learning environments.

It recognizes that children come with unique identities, cultural backgrounds, languages, abilities, and lived experiences.

Further, it also honours the critical influence that families, cultures, and communities have on each child's learning and development, underscoring the importance of creating early learning environments that respect and respond to this diversity.

The Pyramid Model

The Pyramid Model promotes equity and inclusion by providing a tiered framework for supporting children's social-emotional development, ensuring all children—regardless of background or ability—have access to high-quality care. It emphasizes culturally responsive practices, anti-bias approaches, and individualized interventions, with equity acting as a foundational lens to eliminate disparities in early childhood settings

Key Components of Equity in the Pyramid Model

- **Culturally Responsive Practices:** The model focuses on building partnerships with families, acknowledging home languages, and integrating family traditions into the classroom to create an inclusive environment.
- **Equity Coaching Guide:** A specific tool for coaches to help educators reflect on their practices, identify bias, and ensure equitable implementation of strategies.
- **Data-Driven Decision Making:** Using classroom data to identify disparities in how children are supported or disciplined, aiming for equitable outcomes.
- **Targeted Support & Intervention:** Ensuring that specialized supports are accessible and tailored to the individual needs of children, avoiding the over-representation of marginalized groups in disciplinary actions

Resources:

[Indicators of High Quality Inclusion](#)

[Equity Coaching Guide](#)

[BOQ Culturally Responsive Companion](#)

[Implementing the Pyramid Model to Address Inequities in Early Childhood Discipline](#)

[Addressing Exclusionary Discipline Practices Resource Collection](#)

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Shared Element: Evidence-Based Research Foundations

Capable, Confident & Curious

Uses an evidence-based approach to early learning intended to be flexible and applicable for all types of programs and for educators of all levels of experience. It is intended to encourage educators and others who use it to consider every aspect of their interactions with children. The quality of these exchanges profoundly influences each child's development, now and into the future.

The framework is meant to challenge and to inspire pedagogical practice and leadership. Educators are encouraged to use the framework in ways that work best for them as they plan for each child's optimal development. An educator may read the framework individually to reflect on their own professional practice, values, and beliefs, or share it with colleagues to inspire professional growth. A pedagogical leader may use the various sections of the framework as a reference point for discussion. An administrator may use the framework as a guide for developing a new policy or protocol. Educators are encouraged to use the framework in other ways that support them, the children they care for and their families and communities (p.5)

The Pyramid Model

The Pyramid Model focuses on promoting evidence-based practices for young children's social and emotional development. The Pyramid Model organizes these practices into a tiered approach:

- Tier 1 (Universal): Focuses on creating supportive environments and promoting social-emotional learning for all children.
- Tier 2 (Targeted): Provides additional support for children who need extra help with social and emotional skills.
- Tier 3 (Intensive): Offers individualized interventions for children with significant social, emotional, or behavioral challenges.

All aspects of support and intervention are delivered in the natural environment. The Pyramid Model is grounded in research and aims to improve outcomes for all children, including those with or at risk for developmental delays.

Program-wide implementation of the Pyramid Model adopts a system-level approach to positive behaviour support tailored to the developmental needs of young children. Leadership teams use the Benchmarks of Quality (BoQ) to assess progress and guide future actions toward full implementation of PM practices.

Observation tools (TPOT™ & TPITOS™) of evidence-based practices are used to support coaching and educator development to fidelity.

Together in Action

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Resources:

[Pyramid Model Research](#)

[Self-Care for Teachers](#)

[Behaviour Incident Report System](#)