Concept Paper: Action Plan to Train Front Line Child Care Staff in the Center on the Social Emotional Foundations in Early Learning (CSEFEL) Pyramid Model

**Background**
Massachusetts has been selected to participate in a unique early childhood professional development opportunity designed to build the skills of early childhood educators to nurture young children’s social-emotional development. The Center on the Social and Emotional Foundations for Early Learning (CSEFEL) is a national center focused on promoting the social emotional development and school readiness of young children birth to age 5, and a national organization that has funding from the Office of Head Start and the Child Care Bureau, Administration for Children and Families, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services to provide training and technical assistance to selected states. The broad goal of the intensive training and technical assistance (T/TA) activities is to foster professional development of the early care and education workforce that:

- enhances knowledge and skills;
- supports the implementation and sustainability of evidence-based practices; and
- increases the size of the workforce skilled in supporting the social emotional development of young children (birth – 5 years old).

CSEFEL has developed a conceptual model of evidence-based practices for promoting young children’s social and emotional competence and for preventing and addressing challenging behavior known as the Pyramid Model. The Pyramid Model builds upon a tiered public health approach by providing universal supports to all children to promote wellness, targeted services to children who need more support, and intensive services to those who need them. The CSEFEL model is now in action in the following states: California, Colorado, Maryland, Iowa, Tennessee, Vermont, Hawaii, North Carolina, Nebraska and Wisconsin. Each state is adopting the Pyramid Model by fitting it into its existing states’ framework of child care.

Data from the first five years of implementing the Pyramid Model in several states indicates that the model is a sound framework for early care and education systems. CSEFEL has also developed extensive, user-friendly training materials, videos, and print resources to help communities and programs implement the model. CSEFEL’s Pyramid Model has already been implemented in a number of Massachusetts programs, including the Together for Kids Coalition in Worcester County, which has experienced positive changes in supporting children’s social-emotional development and in supporting children with challenging behaviors.

The CSEFEL model paradigm has undergone extensive peer review and is proven, evidence based practice for teaching developing children social emotional competency. In the “What Works” section on the CSEFEL website, there are “What Works Briefs” that highlight many effective research based best practices for supporting children's social-emotional development and preventing challenging behaviors.

1 [http://www.vanderbilt.edu/csefel/resources/what_works.html](http://www.vanderbilt.edu/csefel/resources/what_works.html)
In its literature, CSEFEL states that if quality child care program that makes the long term commitment to support the implementation of the CSEFEL model by investing the needed resources over a period of time (usually a two year period), will likely experience the following positive outcomes:

- Reductions in child challenging behavior
- Increases in children’s social skills
- Increased satisfaction of program staff and families
- Reduced turnover in the program
- Increases in teachers competence and confidence in the support of children
- Changes in classroom and program climate
- Sustained implementation of the Pyramid Model

Proposal

EEC Proposes to augment the Massachusetts CSEFEL initiative by seeking to fund new CSEFEL training opportunities to train up to 2000 child care staff in the social emotional pyramid model across the Commonwealth. EEC seeks to invest up to $300,000 dollars to provide high quality 15 hour intensive training sessions to licensed child care programs, their staff, licensed family child care providers and systems and other professionals in the early education and care field who work directly with children. These trainings will allow front-line staff and others to have an extraordinary training opportunity at a very affordable cost to participants. Training participants will learn, firsthand, how this model works to:

- Support young children’s social and emotional development to prevent challenging behaviors in the classroom;
- Use individual child interventions to meet children’s and families’ unique interests, strengths, and needs;
- Promote skill building with enough intensity to affect change;
- Teach how to Implement strategies in the context of naturally occurring routines and environments; and
- Teach how to modify strategies to meet the cultural and linguistic diversity of families and children.

These intensive trainings will expose many child care staff and others to the CSEFEL Pyramid Model and the concepts of social emotional competency for young children. From many of these concepts, participants can take away practical strategies and interventions and immediately apply them to their own work with children. While making an entire program a CSEFEL certified site requires a larger, more systemic investment and full program support, there is high confidence that once people see the model in practice, they will be encouraged to make systemic changes in their own programs to fully develop this model.

Implementation

EEC proposes to issue an RFR during the first quarter of 2010 for the provision of professional development training in the CSEFEL Pyramid model. The chosen vendor would begin to offer training sessions across the state in summer 2010 which will continue to September 2011. The vendor would be
expected to develop - or identify an existing - 15 hour course (1.5 CEUs) in CSEFEL. This training curriculum would focus on social emotional competency to enhance educators’ knowledge and skills for helping children develop social literacy and lessening challenging behaviors. The trainings will focus on intentional instruction for addressing the needs of infants, toddlers and preschoolers in both center-based settings and family child care homes. The training sessions will occur in across the state for educators working in those programs, as well as family child care system staff, DPH Regional Consultation Teams, 262 grantees, public schools teachers and administrators, mental health grantees, resource and referral agencies and UPK grantees.

Training sessions will be followed up by mentoring and coaching support to assist participants in imbedding CSEFEL practices in their programs. This support would be offered by regionally based teams across the state.

Some of the topic areas to be covered:
- Promoting Children's Success: Building Relationships
- Creating Supportive Environments (Understanding the Pyramid)
- Social Emotional Teaching Strategies: Identifying the Importance of Teaching Social Emotional Skills (Why, When, How, and What)
- Identifying Teachable Moments: Stages of Learning; Setting the Stage for Friendships
- Individualized Intensive Interventions: Observations; Positive Behavioral Support
- Understanding Emotional Literacy
- Understanding Functional Assessments: Prevention Strategies
- Understanding the Use of and the Design of a Behavioral Support Plan for Children with Challenging Behaviors
- Maternal Depression and the Effects on Social, Emotional Development.
- Reflective Practice and Group Interaction and Exercises.

Training Sessions and Follow up
- 15 hour (1.5 CEU) training sessions to be offered in several formats such as:
  - 6 evening sessions of 2.5 hrs. each
  - 3 Saturday sessions of 5 hrs. each (Family Child Care programs often prefer Saturdays)
- Cohort size for each training series between 20-30 participants (up to 100 trainings @ 20 participants each). There should be at least two staff from each program, preferably up to four, including teachers, supervisors and administrators.
- Each participant will receive a binder of materials on all the topics that are covered in the training including reflective exercises, research-based articles, and information on these topics.
- Follow up mentoring and coaching to be provided on a regional basis by designated teams (needed to support programs as they develop and modify their practices to incorporate this model). This should include up to two on-site visits with follow up telephonic consultation thereafter.
- Establish a community of practice where front line staff can share best practices and highlight successful programs.
• Evaluation of the training sessions and resulting changes the participants have made in their practice as a result.