

Building Colorado's Pyramid Network Hub

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Healthy Child Care Colorado

Introduction

There is a deep history of national, state, and local level Pyramid work that has occurred in our state over the past 20 years. Over these past two decades there has been tremendous learning, innovation, and implementation occurring at all levels.

In 2019, the philanthropy community started to become more involved in focusing on the sustainability and expansion of the state-level Pyramid work. To ensure sustainability, a determination was made to move the state-level work from the University of Colorado Denver to a community-based nonprofit. In 2020, a request for proposals was released by the Buell Foundation to identify a community-based nonprofit. Healthy Child Care Colorado (HCCC), a well-established statewide nonprofit with a focus on social and emotional well-being, was awarded this role.

Healthy Child Care Colorado's mission is to build safe, supportive, and healthy early childhood settings and systems where children and professionals learn and grow. HCCC has four priority areas they focus on:



As we embarked on transitioning Pyramid to HCCC, it was important for us to keep our core values at the center of our approach and process. These core values guide our work both internally and externally and serve as a "compass" for all our endeavors.

Our intention for the transition was to co-create an inclusive, collaborative structure that strengthens connections, resources, policies, and evidence-based practices to support social-emotional development. This work is an integral part of our shared vision in the Early Childhood Colorado Framework, that all children are valued, healthy and thriving.

To conduct this transition, we collaborated with our consultant, Heather Matthews, the University of Colorado Denver, the Colorado Department of Human Service's Office of Early Childhood, the Pyramid Transition Team, Early Childhood Councils, and numerous Pyramid practitioners across the state.

Objectives

1. Describe the approach, process, and methods used to effectively transition the state-level Pyramid work from a university to our nonprofit organization.
2. Recognize the importance of establishing foundational elements including purpose, guiding principles, values, desired results, and core functions for state-level Pyramid work.
3. Explain the concept and importance of a state-level Pyramid Network Hub that is focused on engagement and support, learning and implementation, and leadership and advocacy.

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Process & Methods

The process to develop the Network Hub was guided by a sustainability framework. This framework was initially developed by the consultant through a review of literature on program and organizational development and sustainability. It was then fine-tuned over time through use with many organizations, programs, networks, and other collaborative groups to ensure comprehensive and grounded planning processes. Dedicating sufficient time and resources to strong foundations that guide strategic planning and implementation is essential.

We conducted various inquiry and engagement efforts to inform our efforts including: a landscape analysis, needs assessment, engagement process, stakeholder interviews, and a collaborative process with the Transition Team.

An important element of building a strong Pyramid Model system and a Network Hub has been the cross-sector collaboration between government, nonprofit, higher education, and philanthropic organizations. We co-created the Network Hub by utilizing existing resources, collecting input from the field, and by collaborating with the Transition Team to develop key elements. The Foundations will serve as our guide for the next 5+ years and they include our purpose, guiding principles, desired outcomes, and core functions.



Results

Purpose

Support the social-emotional development and inclusion of all children ages birth through five by promoting and expanding evidence-based Pyramid approaches.

Guiding Principles

- Focus on promotion and implementation of evidence-based practices and data-informed decisions that lead to fidelity of the model
- Recognize connections, relationships, and partnerships as central to Pyramid efforts, emphasizing alignment and innovation between stakeholders at local, state, and national levels
- Ensure a lens of diversity, equity, and inclusion are at the center of our efforts, recognizing privilege and access to power, working to create inclusive systems and programs and dismantle a history of oppression
- Ensure responsible planning and stewardship of resources

Desired Outcomes



Year 1 & 2 Priorities

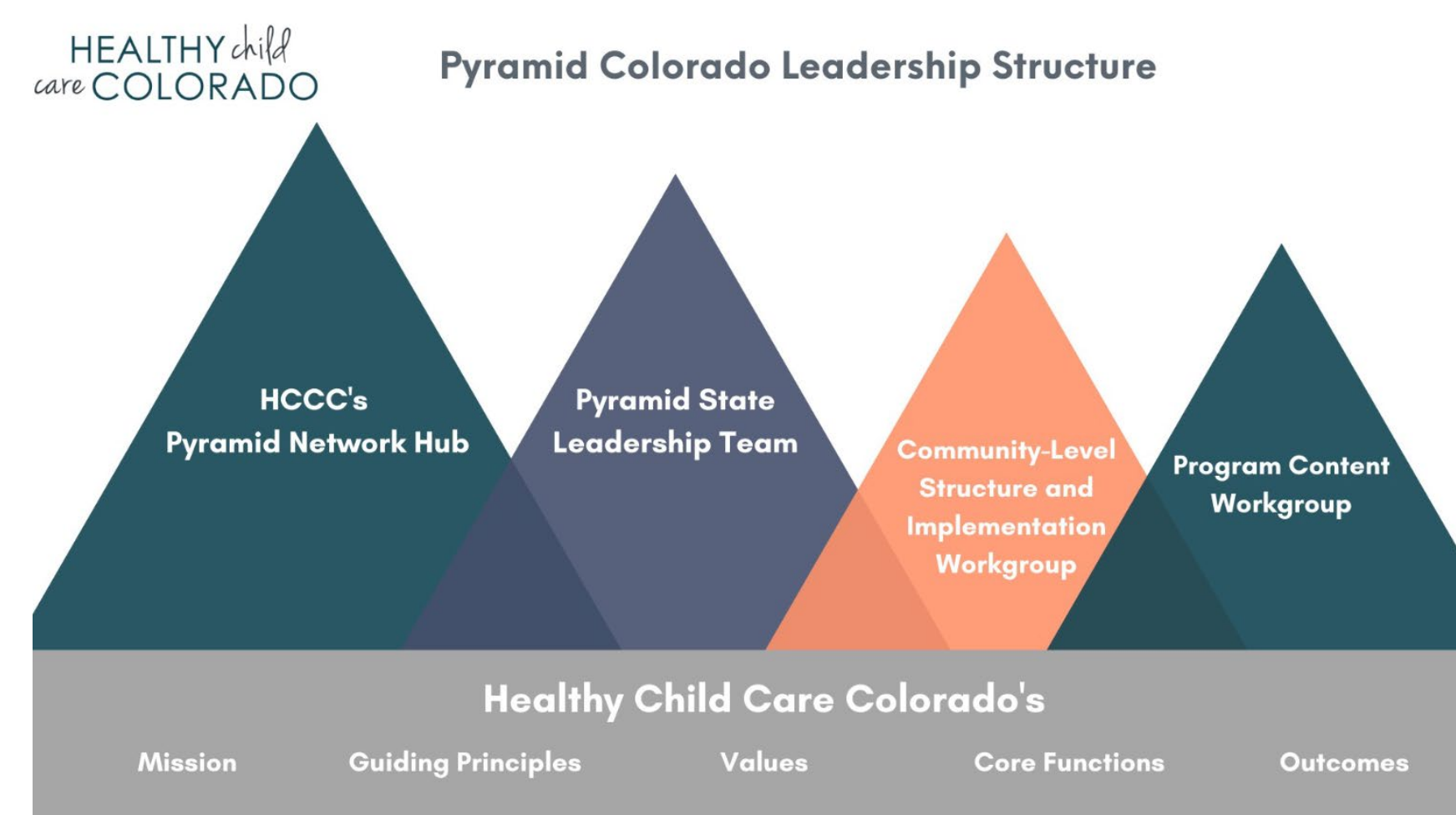
These priorities were identified as themes from the inquiry and engagement process and were formally established by the Transition Team.

- Sustainability.** Restructure the State Team; ensure sufficient involvement of implementers; foundations
- Unity & Inclusion.** Create unity by using the national Pyramid Modules and other resources while ensuring continued emphasis on inclusion
- Quality & Fidelity.** Maintain Colorado's certification process; revisit and refresh
- Partnership & Integration.** Create a nimble but strong structure of partnerships; alignment with early childhood workforce systems

Leadership Structure

The State Leadership Team collaborates to provide insight, context, expertise, and guidance to Healthy Child Care Colorado on matters of programming, research, opportunities, funding, and systems alignment. The team will ensure that Pyramid-related efforts maintain relevance, meaning, and utility in local, state, and national contexts. They will also support the creation of annual priorities, acting to ensure success.

Another key part of the leadership structure includes Workgroups, which are established on an annual and as-needed basis to align with the identified priorities and action plan. These groups are time limited and help HCCC and the State Leadership Team by looking closely at areas of opportunities or needs. They may also make recommendations to the State Leadership Team.



Lessons Learned

- **Organizational Alignment.** Honoring and leveraging HCCC's history, values, structure, and functions put us on the road to success integrating the Pyramid Network Hub into the organization. Additionally, we defined key functions of a Network Hub.
- **Clarity & Collaboration.** Ensuring clarity of process and infuse authentic engagement opportunities throughout. This created trust and meaning for all, particularly those closest to the work and communities. A cross-sector Transition Team was critical.
- **Trust the Process.** Investing time and resources in a high-quality process with expert facilitation and a guiding framework. Implementing with fidelity in real life environments.
- **Sustainability.** Establishing an ongoing leadership structure with representation from implementation and practice, as well as systems and policy perspectives to ensure the Network Hub's work is relevant, meaningful, responsive, and sustainable over time.
- **Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion.** Deep and intentional dialogue around DEI was required in our process to ensure clarity and commitment among the full Transition Team. It also set us up to ensure it is centered throughout the Pyramid Colorado Foundations.
- **Data Driven Decision-making.** Collecting quantitative and qualitative data in was essential for us to adequately assess and collectively make decisions. This was useful in the transition and will be crucial in sustainability and future decision-making.



Acknowledgements

Special thanks to the many stakeholders who helped ensure a stronger system and the establishment of our Pyramid Network Hub by engaging, stating your needs, and sharing your hopes.

The Transition Team, multiple Workgroups, and now our new State Leadership Team ensured and continue ensure, that we are building upon the relationships, partnerships, and systems efforts done over the past two decades with ongoing intention.