

Preschool Intervention and Referral Specialist (PIRS) General Information

The PIRS is a coach, a single individual with preschool experience, who provides support to teachers in their implementation of the Pyramid Model for Promoting Social and Emotional Competence in Infants and Young Children. The primary role of the PIRS is to provide coaching for the teacher to enhance his/her use of the Pyramid Model practices in the classroom. The PIRS does not provide direct services to children. In addition, the PIRS should have a strong background and in-depth knowledge of early childhood education, child development, the district selected curriculum, and the four levels of the Pyramid Model.

As needed, the PIRS consults with a team of experts, the Preschool Intervention and Referral Team also referred to as the PIRT, to provide strategies and possible interventions for the teachers to implement in the classroom to promote the success of all young children. The PIRT is supervised by the school district preschool administrator and may include preschool teachers, special education teachers, behavior specialists, psychologists, learning disabilities teacher-consultants, school social workers, speech and language pathologists or other specialists. Fully state-funded preschool programs are required to hire a PIRS (singular **coach**) to support teachers in the implementation of the Pyramid Model. The recommended ratio is no more than 20 preschool classrooms for each full-time PIRS. The PIRS can be a combined position with the role of the Master Teacher (MT) in smaller programs. (Typically, 50% MT and 50% PIRS if the district has 10 or fewer classrooms.)

PIRS Responsibilities/Process

- Support classroom teachers by providing strategies to support children who are exhibiting difficulty in the classroom as indicated through the screening process or the observation of the classroom teacher and master teacher.
- Provide support including written strategies for classroom staff, modeling strategies in the classroom when appropriate, providing professional development and providing consultation to classroom staff, parents, administrators and master teachers.
- Provide ongoing professional development on the use of the Pyramid Model for administrators, teacher assistants, master teachers, and teachers.
- Support teachers in documenting children's social/emotional development using their performance-based assessment system.
- Coordinate data from the ESI-R screenings and follow-up with children who score a re-screen and refer.
- Facilitate the transition of all PIRT case files to other programs as necessary (i.e. Kindergarten).
- Establish a PIRT assistance protocol including a Request for Assistance (RFA) form.
- Consult with necessary professionals as applicable.
- Create and implement a PIRT intervention plan for each child with an RFA.
- Conduct classroom visits as necessary to implement the PIRT intervention plan. These visits may include observations, providing feedback regarding the child or support plan, providing recommendations and modeling strategies when appropriate.

- Modify and adapt the PIRT intervention plan as necessary throughout the year.
- Evaluate the progress of the student and, if necessary, facilitate a written referral to the school district Child Study Team (CST) as set forth in N.J.A.C. 6A:14.
- For children with persistent challenging behavior, develop and implement the PIRT behavior support plan:
 - Document several previously attempted PIRT intervention plans with modifications and follow through attempts
 - Works collaboratively with the team (as outlined in the Pyramid Model) and conduct the behavior support plan
 - Coordinate and conduct any necessary follow through related to the developed PIRT behavior support plan
 - Schedule and facilitate case review meetings
 - Track caseload and subsequent referrals to CST
 - Meet with families to obtain necessary support
- Conduct classroom observations using the Teaching Pyramid Observation Tool (TPOT) at least once per classroom per year.