Bal Swan Children's Center
Patti Willardson, Director of Education
Pyramid Plus Tour Policy
March, 2013

Bal Swan Children's Center is happy to provide tours to everyone who makes a request. Requests can be made by phone, e-mail, or placed on our website.

Once requested, you will be contacted by Patti or Stacey, who will work with you to plan a tour that will accommodate your needs.

You will be sent a “Tour Menu” on which you will be able to identify the ages of the children you wish to observe as well as your areas of interest. Areas of interest include observing child-led times of the day as well as more structured daily routines. We also have a variety of topics that we can discuss with you listed on the menu.

We can accommodate a maximum of 10 visitors at a time who, will be broken into groups of two for observations. Groups will have a Bal Swan staff facilitator if the purpose of the tour is to observe Pyramid Plus practices in action.
Bal Swan Children's Center
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Pyramid Plus Tour Menu
March, 2013

We're glad that you've chosen to observe Pyramid Plus Practices at Bal Swan! So that we can better plan the time you have to spend with us, please take a moment to designate your level of interest in the following areas by indicating the specific things you would like to observe.

☐ Tour of the school (20 minutes)

☐ Video by Nobel Laureate Winner, Gene Heckman, PhD, Professor of Economics in Human Development. This brief video is a powerful statement on the importance of social skill development in preschoolers for lifetime success (5 minutes).

☐ Classroom Observations. We can offer your team members a visit into the classroom (2-4 people per class) to observe Pyramid Practices in action. Each group will have a Bal Swan facilitator to explain the intentionality of the teacher's practices. We can plan for visitors to observe circle-time, center-time, transitions, snack, indoor or outdoor play. (up to an hour).

☐ Time to debrief. We will answer visitor questions and listen to your feedback (30- minutes to an hour).

Please circle the age groups of interest to you: Toddler Class (2-3 years old), Preschool Class (2 ½ to 3 ½), Pre-Kindergarten Class (3 ½ - 5), Kindergarten

Please list any specific practices you would like to observe:

Please list what you are particularly interested in hearing about: (each topic might take up to 30 additional minutes)

☐ to success stories from a teacher who presents the Positive Solutions for Families module

☐ parent of a typical child whose family has been positively impacted by Pyramid Plus practices

☐ parent whose child has a Positive Behavior Support Plan

☐ how we have set up data systems to drive the PBS plan

☐ how coaches and trainers have impacted teacher practices

☐ how our Leadership Team has used the Benchmarks of Quality to drive our program-wide fidelity work

☐ lessons learned about program-wide implementation

☐ administration strategies that have supported the high fidelity work at our center.
Bal Swan Observation Survey

If you are unable to turn this form in before you leave the building, please send it to:
Patti Willardson
Bal Swan Children’s Center
1145 E. 13th Ave.
Broomfield, Co 80020 Thank You for your feedback!

Name:__________________________Date:____________________
Organization:____________________
Position/Title:____________________
Age group(s) I work with:____________________
Purpose for tour:____________________

Please answer the following questions using the key below:

NA = not applicable; SD = strongly disagree; D = disagree; U = uncertain; A = agree; SA = strongly agree

___ 1. This experience was practical for a person in my position.
___ 2. The children in my classroom could potentially benefit from some of these strategies.
___ 3. I would recommend this experience to others.
___ 4. This program demonstrates fidelity to the Pyramid Plus model.
___ 5. I have gained information I will share with others.
___ 6. I will utilize something I saw today in my program or setting.
___ 7. This experience will impact my current practices.
___ 8. I was able to observe social emotional teaching strategies.

What aspects of this program were particularly appealing to you?

What were major strengths observed in the classrooms?

Are there changes to this tour that would have improved your experience?

Thank you for taking time to visit!!
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Please answer the following questions using the key below:

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____ 3. This program demonstrates fidelity to the Pyramid Plus model.
____ 4. I have gained information I will share with others.
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What were major strengths observed in the classrooms?

Are there changes to this tour that would have improved your experience?
Bal Swan Observation Survey

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Purpose for tour:________________________________________________

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**NA** = not applicable; **SD** = strongly disagree; **D** = disagree; **U** = uncertain; **A** = agree; **SA** = strongly agree

____ 1. This experience was practical for a person in my position.
____ 2. The material presented was applicable to my needs.
____ 3. This experience will impact my current practices.
____ 4. I learned about how teachers can use Pyramid Plus strategies to support children's social-emotional development.

What aspects of this program were particularly appealing to you?

Is there anything you observed that you would like to try in your position?

Would you like to receive more information on any of the practices you heard about tonight?

Do you have any suggestions for changes that would have improved this experience for you?
Bal Swan Observation Survey

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Broomfield, Co 80020

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Address: ___________________________
Organization: ___________________________
Position/Title: ___________________________
Age group(s) I work with: ___________________________
Purpose for tour: ___________________________

Please answer the following questions using the key below:

NA = not applicable; SD = strongly disagree; D = disagree; U = uncertain; A = agree; SA = strongly agree

1. This experience was practical for a person in my position.
2. I would recommend this experience to others.
3. Attending this program was worth the time and expense.
4. The material presented was applicable to my needs or the needs of my organization.
5. I have gained information I will share with others.
6. I will adopt or utilize something I saw today in my classroom, program, or setting.
7. The model classrooms showed me something I didn’t know.
8. The children in my classroom, program, or setting could potentially benefit from my use of some of the materials/adaptations/strategies I saw today.
9. This experience will impact my current practices.
10. I was able to observe social emotional teaching strategies.
What aspects of this program were particularly appealing to you?

What were major strengths observed in the classrooms?

What will you implement from what you saw?

Are there changes to this tour that would have improved the experience for you?

Thank you for taking time to visit!!
Depending on the day, the children present, and the length of time of your tour, you will be able to observe these exemplary TIPITOS practices in the Toddler Classroom.

Teacher's primary goal for toddlers is to form a relationship of trust with both the parents and the children. Therefore, they will

- Welcome, comfort, and nurture each child, be responsive to their needs, provide support for this time of separation from their parents, encourage and teach parents who have difficulty letting go of their children into the care of another adult.
- Provide home visits and parent education about the goals of a toddler program, including beginning to follow routines, sit for a while listening to a story, share “Teacher-Time”, feel comfortable exploring the classroom, feel comfortable with transitions in and out of the classroom.
- Begin to TEACH children what to do, rather than telling them what NOT TO DO in the classroom environment.
- Provide regular face-face communication with parents regarding their child’s strengths and needs.
- Be sensitive to children’s verbal and non-verbal cues and communication attempts.
- Scaffold toddler’s language learning including modeling and verbal expansion attempts.
- Follow each child’s lead during play, providing scaffolding support to move each child from individual sensory exploration into parallel play.
- Give individual children extra support in preparation for activities using cues (visuals, verbal) at the beginning of an activity.
- Structure routines so that there is a clear beginning, middle, and end.
- Support toddlers with visual strategies and schedules during routines and transitions, so that they begin to have an understanding of their need to know...
  1. What am I supposed to do?
  2. How do I know I am progressing?
  3. How do I know when I am finished?
  4. How do I know what comes next?
- Provide purposeful placement of individual children to reduce distraction during routines.
- Provide supported seating when needed, so that all toddlers can engage in “large group time”.
- All children actively engaged during transitions
- Explicit teaching of steps during transitions and routines
- Embedded learning opportunities provided for children who need practice with specific IFSP or IEP goals
- Individual assistance when needed prior to transitions
- Toddlers provided with multiple opportunities to make meaningful choices
- Assistance provided for children who are having a difficult time engaging in activities
- Throughout the day, teachers provide verbal and non-verbal feedback for children who are engaging in pro-social behavior.
- Directions are individualized for children who need more support.
- Challenging behavior is used as an opportunity to TEACH an acceptable alternative.
- All Toddler Teachers specifically and intentionally teach an age-appropriate social skill daily...the social skill being taught is written into their lesson plan and opportunities for practice and reinforcement during other routines of the day are intentionally planned.
- Children’s feelings are labeled and validated.
- Toddlers are encouraged to express their feelings. Reasons are attached to their feelings (ex: “Cara is sad because she misses her mom.”)
- Social-emotional teaching is embedded throughout the day in the context of daily routines.
- Teachers actively teach and reinforce problem solving at a Toddler-Specific appropriate level.
Bal Swan Children’s Center
Pyramid Plus Pre-kindergarten Practices
September, 2012

Depending on the day, the children present and the amount of
time you have to visit, you will be able to observe these exemplary T-POT practices in the preschool classroom.

- Individual children who need extra support in preparation for transitions are provided with visual cues.
- Structured routines so that there is a clear beginning, middle, end
- Children being able to answer 4 questions during routines and activities
  1. What am I supposed TO DO?
  2. How do I know that we are progressing?
  3. How do I know when I am finished?
  4. How do I know what comes next?
- Purposeful placement of individual children to reduce distraction during routines
- All materials ready before children arrive for activity
- All children actively engaged during transitions
- Explicit teaching of steps during transitions and routines
- Embedded learning opportunities provided for children who need practice with specific IFSP or IEP goals.
- Children provided with multiple opportunities to make meaningful choices
- Assistance provided for children who are having a difficult time engaging in activities
- Throughout the day, teachers provide positive, specific, descriptive feedback to children who are following posted rules, following directions, using positive social skills, or expressing their emotions in appropriate ways.
- Teachers facilitate discussions where children are involved in critically thinking about the importance of rules and expectations in class.
- Directions are individualized for children who need more support.
- Challenging behavior is used as a chance to teach an acceptable alternative.
- All teachers intentionally and specifically teach a social skill every day. The skill is written into their lesson plans.
- Opportunities are planned during other daily routines to practice and reinforce the social skill taught during circle.
- Children’s feelings are labeled and validated.
- Teachers actively teach and reinforce problem solving, teaching children specific strategies to recognize
  their feelings and those of their peers.
- Teachers participate in the functional behavior assessment process and positive behavior support plan
  with families and other staff members.
- Teachers keep data to monitor the success of the PBS implementation plan and regularly report back to families.
Researched based practices being used with fidelity center-wide.... teachers are proud of our work together

Teaching children life-long social skills...learn HOW to recognize and verbalize their feelings, ask for needs and desires, that they have a voice when a peer hurts them physically or emotionally, negotiate, solve problems, HOW to play and WORK with others, how to care and support others

Classroom “mini teams”

Children’s growth in “self-actualization” ...personal mastery...freer to follow their own interests creativity and curiosity

Children’s growth in competence and confidence... more joyful

Teacher’s growth in competence and confidence...pace slows down and teachers are not intimidated by a child

Embracing children with behavioral challenges...have a toolkit of strategies, leadership, support, policies

Sense of calm throughout the Center

Building a “shared vision of childhood” with families..begin to learn how rewarding it is to be “present” with their children, relationships become richer and more fulfilling. Comments from a parent... “Before learning how to be with my children by using the practices we learned in the Posi Solutions for Families classes, I believed my main jobs as a parent were to keep my child safe, make sure they were fed and had clean clothes, shared with their friend, were nice, listened to adults, did what they were told, used manners, and did not talk back. We came to this class with one goal...stop the yelling in our home. We walked away understanding that children yearn to be a relationship with us. We understand that socialization is a collaborative process with the child, rather than a coercive one. We understand that children are “predisposed to acquire the DESIRE to be cooperative and pro social as a result of sensitive and responsive care (Watson, 2003, Learning to Trust”). Now we listen to our children more, validate their feelings, give them space to solve their own problems, encourage them more, respect them more. As a result in this shift in our parenting, our children are more willing to talk to us, they are asking for what they need, they understand their own emotions better and have solutions for their own “strong emotions”. There IS less yelling and less blaming. We think they take the responsibility for their actions, rather than blaming, because they know they are SAFE, both physically and emotionally.”
Norwood Demonstration Site
Observation Guidelines

Welcome to the Prime Time Early Learning Center/Norwood Preschool Pyramid Plus Implementation Site!!

We appreciate your interest in the program. The following guidelines will help make your visit to the classroom more productive and less disruptive to the classroom routine:

- Procedure of confidentiality should always be followed. These include
  - Please do not ask personal information about a child or their diagnosis. Staff members are expected to respect the confidentiality of all of the children and families with whom we work with. Personnel are instructed not to answer these types of questions.
  - We hope you will discuss information and strategies you have observed at our Center. However, please respect staff and child confidentiality by refraining from using names.

- We ask if you have questions while observing, that you please write them down. The Director/tour guide will answer them when children are not present. This will limit the amount of talking while teaching is taking place and prevent the children from unnecessarily hearing something about one of their classmates.

- During observation we ask you to make yourself feel comfortable, we want you to see all of the tools that we are using, and feel free to walk around the classroom during center time. Our goal is for this to be a typical preschool day for our students, please minimize your interactions with students.

- If you need to talk with another observer, please leave the room to do so. There are many activities and people involved in the room simultaneously. We try to
prevent any additional, unnecessary noise that will compete with the staff’s ability to teach.

- Only classroom personnel should interact with the children unless you are specifically asked to do so.

- Please do not bring coffee, food, or other drinks in the classroom while observing. Silence cell phones prior to entering classes.

- Since the needs of each child are different, and on any given day children may be absent, you may not get to see or observe all teaching strategies or a child using a specific strategy. If you have questions about something you did not see please write down your question and ask your consultant at the appropriate time.

- If you have questions for one of the classroom teachers or special education staff, your tour guide can arrange time for you to meet with them. Please do not ask them questions while they are trying to work with the children.

Thank you very much for joining us today. If you have additional questions after today’s visit please do not hesitate to call us @ 970.327.0555 x17 Heather Montonati, Director of Prime Time or by email: primetimedirector@hotmail.com.
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History of Bal Swan Children’s Center 1963-2012

Bal Swan Children’s Center was created as a private, non-profit school in 1963 by five Broomfield families whose children could not be educated in public school due to their severe disabilities. These families asked our Director Emeritus, Marlene Politzer, to become their teacher. Within a few years, Marlene discovered that inviting the children’s siblings into class provided benefits for both the children with and without special needs. When Marlene applied to the State to become an Inclusive Pilot Program in 1972, Bal Swan became one of the first early childhood programs in the country that was committed to inclusive practices for young children with special needs and their families.

Curriculum

Today, Bal Swan serves approximately 350 children from two to six years old in inclusive classrooms. Approximately one-third of our children have special needs. A full therapy Department includes Speech, Occupational, Physical, and Aquatic Therapy to support those children with special needs. We currently use the Teaching Strategies Creative Curriculum along with the Teaching Strategies Gold Assessment. This integrated assessment and curriculum approach supports teachers in designing experiences to promote children’s skill development in learning domains and content areas. Learning domains include social, language, motor, and cognitive. The content areas include literacy, math, arts, social studies, science, and technology. Teachers use the “K-W-L” (what children Know, Want to learn, and have Learned) to intentionally plan for individual children’s interests and specific needs.

Child-Family Individual Learning Plans

Prior to the beginning of each school year, parents are invited to complete “Pathways, A Child and Family Journey” (Child Learning Center – SLHS, University of Colorado at Boulder) and the Ages and Stages-Social Emotional Questionnaire (Brookes Publishing Co.). These measures are used to assist the teacher in seeing each child through the parents’ eyes. During fall conferences, families partner with teachers to create an Individual Learning Plan for each child. Individual progress toward goals identified on the ILP is tracked through observations, entered into each child’s Assessment Portfolio, and reported back to families during our Spring conferences.

Colorado “Pyramid Plus” Partner

In January, 2009, Bal Swan Children’s Center became a Certified Implementation Site for Colorado’s “Pyramid Plus”. We are committed to program-wide implementation of Pyramid teaching skills and strategies to “fidelity”. Our primary goal is to implement practices and strategies with 90% accuracy. Program-Wide Implementation of the Pyramid Model (PWIPM) facilitates the development of children’s social-emotional competence as well as decreases challenging behavior. During our work we have discovered an inverse correlation...as social-emotional competence increases, challenging behavior decreases. Our additional goals are to provide sustainability and “scale-up”. New teachers are trained, have many opportunities to observe other teachers, and are coached in their classrooms. We recently offered Pyramid training to the Broomfield Home Care Providers Association. 50 providers were trained on the Pyramid Plus model. We are hoping for a grant to provide coaching to these providers in their homes.

Positive Solutions For Families
Bal Swan Children’s Center is committed to Pyramid Plus sustainability within our program. We offer the “Positive Solutions for Families” class six times during each school year, so that families will be using the same language and strategies at home that are used at school. These classes have been extremely successful, as parents begin to see positive changes in their children’s behavior. This past summer, we wrote a grant with the Broomfield Library to offer “Positive Solutions for Families” to the community. Families sign up through the library, the classes are free, child care and dinner are included. The first class was a tremendous success and we are looking forward to continuing this intentional outreach to Broomfield families.

Pyramid Plus Leadership Team

We also recognize that leadership may change. We do not want a change in leadership to eliminate all that we have learned for children. In order to assure that this work is sustainable, we created a “Leadership Team” in March, 2009. We chose our Leadership Team to represent the range of programs in our Center which include Toddler, Preschool, Therapy, and Administration. The staff members who volunteered are highly motivated by the intensive training we have received during the past four years. In addition to attending multiple State-Wide Pyramid trainings, five staff members travelled to Florida in March, 2009, to attend the National Training Institute for Challenging Behavior in Young Children. During the summer of 2010, nine staff members attended the Pyramid Plus Leadership Training in Breckenridge, Co. During that time of extensive training, we birthed our mission and purposes!

Leadership Team’s Mission:

To support the implementation of the Pyramid Plus model Program-Wide with fidelity and sustainability.

Leadership Team’s Purposes:

- To provide representation by the Leadership Team for every Staff Member, insuring that everyone has a “voice” as we move forward.
- To focus on continuous improvement through professional development.
- To use data-driven decisions to assure teacher competencies in S-E skills (T-POT, TPITOS, Inventory of Practices, and Professional Development Plans).
- To use the Program-Wide Benchmarks of Quality and Critical Elements Team Implementation Plan as a guideline for action planning
- To monitor implementation and outcomes
- To act as positive role models implementing the Pyramid practices with fidelity.
- To report our progress to the Pyramid Plus State Team by submitting our monthly Leadership Team agendas, minutes, and evaluations.

Program Philosophy

We are happy that you have chosen to visit our site. Many people who visit tell us that they can feel the warmth and love for children throughout our facility. We believe one of the reasons is that we are all committed to our Core Values, to The Four Agreements (written by Miguel Angel Ruiz), and to continually work on forming positive relationships among our staff, children, and families.

Core Values

- Provide a caring and nurturing environment
- Strive for unequivocal excellence
- Pioneer services that meet the needs of our community
- Embrace children with all abilities
Four Agreements

- Ask rather than make an assumption.
- Be impeccable with our word.
- Always do our best, understanding that our “best” will change from time to time.
- We will seek to understand, rather than taking things “personally”.

Thank You for Visiting!
It Takes Time
Patti attended first two days of the 2nd series of CSEFEL Pyramid Train the Trainer in Spring of 2005 and got "HOOKED!"

It Takes Leadership and Resources
Patti talked to Brian about trying to become a demonstration site...Brian gave 100% support
Patti returned to the second two days of the TOT and asked Phil what we needed to do to become a demo site. Phil referred me to Tom Patton
Patti asked Tom Patton what we needed to do to become a demo site. Tom referred me to our local Early Childhood Council
Patti came back to Bal Swan and talked to Brian. Brian said that he thought the BECC was just in its infancy, but “let’s check it out.”
Brian and Patti attended the next BECC meeting. They were “seating members”, and electing the Board of Directors.
That summer, Patti became a “Seated Member” and Brian became the President.

It Takes Training
During the following 2 school years we hired Johanna Wasser-Berry, a Pyramid Coach, to train our staff and begin coaching. We used each of our 5 training days/year to work through the Pyramid modules.
We began by focusing on our “declarative language” with modeling, expanding children’s thoughts and ideas, teaching emotional literacy, and working on our S/E deposits vs. withdrawals in a child’s piggybank. Also thinking about TEACHING children what TO DO, rather than telling them what NOT TO DO.
One of our Teachers became so addicted to the practices, she asked if she could begin training the Parent Module. Her mantra became, “We can change the World, one family at a time”.
Parent trainings started 4 times/year, six sessions each. We offered child care and dinner.

It Takes All-Staff “Buy-In”
With success, all teachers “buy-in” was increased. We began to see some very positive changes.
4 staff members attended the NTI conference in Florida.
Laurie Beckel, a state Pyramid Trainer, called to ask for a tour.
After the tour, she invited us to complete a “Demo Site” application...YEAH!
Patti applies to be a “Coach” in the initial cadre of Colorado Pyramid Plus. Katherine Bucca applies to be a “Trainer” in the initial cadre.
Dee Gilmore and Diane Kirkwood apply to be “coaches” in the second Pyramid Plus cadre.

It Takes Coaching
Kelly Wilson became our own “Pyramid Plus Coach” with regular times coaching Patti, and our other three trainers and coaches-in-training.
Once all this was put together, the outcomes became accelerated! The ball was picking up steam.
After being accepted as a demo site, many more staff members wanted to get involved with more training.
Nine staff members attended Pyramid Institute Trainings.
Nine staff members attended the Leadership Training in Breckenridge during the summer of 2010.
Kelly trained Patti to create fidelity in scoring T-POTS and TIPITOMES.
Patti begins working on TPOTS/TIPITOMES for all staff members.
Professional Development Plans are created with each staff member from the results of these measures.

It Takes a Leadership Team
We formed our Leadership Team and began having monthly meetings.
We wrote School-Wide Expectations and posted them around the school.
Leadership agendas, minutes and evaluation data is faxed to the Pyramid Plus Center monthly.

It Takes Families
We had a “Pyramid-Plus Kick-Off” during our Back To School Open Houses to educate and extend family involvement.

It Takes Written Policies and Procedures
Our leadership Team completed the Benchmarks of Quality and Critical Elements of Implementation.
We created our mission and goals.
We wrote policies about our procedure for responding to challenging behavior and responding to a crisis situation involving challenging behavior.

It Takes Data
In the Fall of 2010, parents and teachers completed ASQ questionnaires. Patti and teachers worked together for children whose scores were above the cut-off to include embedded learning opportunities for S/E growth.
We began to keep school-wide BIR data.
We began to partner with families whose children had challenging behavior.
Our Leadership Team is currently working on developing our Implementation Plan, so that we can move forward with goal-centered work with the outcome being Program-Wide Fidelity and Sustainability.
1. How do you structure your classrooms?
   We have 10 classrooms at Bal Swan. Three are classrooms for young children. These children range in age from 2-3 and 2.5 to 3.5. We have eight children with two teachers in each class. Two-year olds (toddlers) meet on MWF or TTh for 2 hours... from 8:30-10:30 or 11-1. The older children (preschool) meet on MWF or TTh for 3 hours from 8:30-11:30 or 12:30-3:30.

   We have four pre-kindergarten half-day classrooms. These children range in age from 3.5-5. There are fourteen children and two teachers in each classroom. These children have a variety of schedules, MWF or TTh from 8:30-11:30 or 12:30-3:30. We also have two afternoon classes who meet four or five afternoons/week.

   We have two full day pre-k classrooms. These children meet MWF, TTh, or M-F 8:00-3:30. We have an extended hour for these children from 3:30-4:30, if needed.

   This year, we have added a kindergarten classroom. There are three options. Full day meets from 8:00-3:30. Morning meets from 8:00-11:30. Afternoon meets from 12:30-3:30. All classes meet M-F. We have a maximum of 16 children with two teachers in each class.

   "Lunch Bunch" is an additional program between 11:30 and 12:30. This is a highly social, interactive hour between AM and PM programs.

   We offer three therapeutic groups...Speech/Motor which is facilitated by an SLP and an OT, Sensory-Motor, facilitated by an OT, and several Parent-Tot groups facilitated by an SLP and an OT. Many currently enrolled children attend the Speech-Motor and Sensory-Motor groups. The Parent-Tot groups serve toddlers who are not yet able to independently participate in a toddler classroom. Most of these children will move into a toddler classroom.

2. How are children with special needs enrolled?
   That has changed often during the years. We have depended on Community Center Boards and School Districts to contract with us for preschool and therapy services during the past 15 years. We used to serve toddlers with special needs in classrooms of 7 children, four with identified special needs, and three without those identified needs. We staffed those classrooms with an ECSE, a SLP and an OT. The last year we had financial support for those classes through our local Community Center Board was 2003. The school districts have also chosen not to contract with community preschools, due to the rising cost of educating children outside the district. Previously, we enrolled children from Boulder Valley to provide preschool and therapy as indicated on IEP's. Beginning in the Fall of 2010, Boulder Valley no longer contracted with us. We offered many of the children who were caught in the middle of the transition (3 year olds with another year of preschool) scholarships if they chose to remain at BS until their Kindergarten year, yet were careful to communicate the value of their partnership with the school district which would continue when their children entered KND.
Things continue to change. We currently have families who choose to decline their school district IEPs and pay privately for preschool at BS. We agree to include these children in preschool, only if they continue to receive their therapy services. Some choose to continue with their children in the school district and also come to BS. Some pay for therapy at other facilities. Some pay for therapy here. We accept out-of-network insurance and Medicaid to help parents pay for these services. We also fund about $60,000.00 annually for scholarships.

3. How are ratios determined?
   We begin re-enrollment yearly between Dec. 15 and Jan 15. We place currently enrolled children first, then fill requested spots by the family's original enrollment date. Some families put their child on the wait list as soon as the child is born. We have a team who work together during this enrollment process. Our goal is to balance multi-age classrooms, boys and girls, with a maximum of three-to-five children with special needs. The first children placed in classrooms are those currently enrolled children with special needs. After those children have been placed we will save a few spots for other children with special needs. We have learned how to include children with special needs, so that each child will have the attention they deserve. We can include more children with speech needs, than those with behavioral challenges. We include children who have intense medical needs (seizures), or if the child is non-mobile, when the family will also send an adult...this adult has been a CNA, a family member, or a committed trained friend of the family. Occasionally, we work with the family to hire a para-professional. We also place returning children in their same classroom, unless a different choice has been made by the family. After currently enrolled children are placed, we begin to place children on the wait list. Since we also provide a 10-week summer session, the process is never really completed until after school begins again in the Fall.

4. How are ratios determined and maintained?
   This is based on the Executive Director's business model combined with what we know as "best practice". Teachers are never sent home, nor moved to a different class, if they have fewer children than the ratio. We have started preschool classes with as few as 5 children, but continue to maintain 2 teachers in the room. We have hired many wonderful subs, who love being here and love children. They are trained on the Pyramid Model before they begin. Many are parents whose children attend Bal Swan. Teachers are expected to call their own subs, unless they are very sick and need help. Full-time staff receive 12 days/year as personal or sick days, with an additional 5 days as professional or education days.

5. What training/education is offered?
   BS offers two weeks between summer and fall sessions and one week between spring and summer sessions for planning, cleaning classrooms, and training. In addition, we have two-three additional training days during the year. Staff receive a minimum of $300.00/year for education beyond what is offered at Bal Swan. During the past 5 years, all staff training has involved some aspect of CSEFEL or Pyramid Plus strategies. Teachers who desire to formally continue their education can also apply for additional stipend support.

6. How is tuition determined?
   The Executive Director does a yearly cost analysis to determine tuition rates. We offer "sibling discounts" in addition to scholarship funding. The scholarship money is raised by our
Developmental Director. The Development Team raises over $550,000 each year to fund Bal Swan programs. This is about 35% of our annual budget.

7. What did Bal Swan “look like” before embracing the Pyramid?

I have worked at BS for 20 years! I raised my children as a single parent while working here. Our Center has always been a very flexible and caring environment for children, families, and staff. However, each teacher was her own “island”. Each teacher was given the independence to structure her classroom as she wanted. We did not have Professional Development Plans. Reviews occurred yearly and were always positive; however, we were not observed in the classroom with the intent of designing individual professional development plans. Lesson plans were not required, nor were individual child observations. Training was without long-term focused goals. If a teacher had a child with challenging behavior, she did not receive much support. At that time we did not know what to do to help. Staff “hot buttons” were often pushed. Staff who tried to deal with challenging behaviors felt incompetent and frustrated. Parents often heard the teacher’s frustration, rather than their successes with their children. Everyone who worked with that child felt so unsuccessful, that children with challenging behaviors became unwanted in the classrooms.

With the advent of the Pyramid, many things began to change. We had a 5-year plan...with systematic goals for training. We began to grow and work together. Our positive focus on language became consistent. We began to see successes in our classrooms and began to applaud each other. We focused on our own relationships, our communication with each other, began sharing and encouraging, each other. We began to take time to observe and learn from each other. Staff who had been through the module training began training new staff. Staff also trained our substitutes on the Pyramid Model. We initiated monthly “planning days” where the entire team could plan together. We initiated “therapy consults” for each room. Therapists observed, when asked, and met with teachers to consult about those children. We began to collect data...BIR’s, T-POTS and TIPITOS, ASQ’s. Goals are now data-driven. We developed professional plans together, initiated by collecting the Inventory of Practices, T-POT and TIPITO data. Each teacher had goals that they helped to create and were invested in meeting. We began seeing successes in decreasing challenging behaviors. All children were beginning to be heard using similar language. All staff members began reinforcing children whom they observed using positive S-E skills. Families began using the same language. We have become a Team, with unified goals and purposes. Staff confidence and competence has increased. We understand that our children with the most challenging behaviors are our Best Teachers. We learn more from them, than they do us. We are determined to work as a Team with staff and families to change the downward trajectory of a child’s challenging behavior. We are determined to do everything we can to help each child be successful at Bal Swan.

We now have a Leadership Team comprised of representatives among all school programs. Each staff member on this Team is responsible for communicating with a few others (his/her “peeps”), so that everyone’s voice will be heard when it relates to our work creating and carrying out our Annual Implementation Plan. This will improve our sustainability because our fidelity is not due to one “leader”. It is all a Team Effort and will continue, even if staff members have a change in their life, and need to move away from Bal Swan.
Bal Swan has created systems and policies to promote and sustain the use of Pyramid Model evidence-based practices. Our staff members are trained in the use of Pyramid strategies and expected to infuse these practices throughout the classroom day.

The Pyramid is based on a public health model of promotion, prevention, and intervention. The goal of the first level includes a provision of primary importance for collaborative teaming. Team strategies include training on reflective listening and personal commitment from each colleague to abide by our four Core Values and Four Agreements. Our Core Values include creating a nurturing, caring environment, embracing children of all abilities, providing pioneering services identified as community needs, and seeking excellence. Our Four Agreements based on the book by include asking questions rather than making assumptions, seeking to reflectively listen to other’s criticism rather than “taking things personally”, being impeccable with our word, and seeking excellence. Forming nurturing and responsive relationships with children and families is also at the foundation for all other Pyramid practices. Strategies include actively responding to children’s needs, supporting children’s play, supporting and responding to children’s communication, providing positive feedback and encouragement for appropriate behavior, and partnering with families.

The second level of the Pyramid describes the creation of high quality supportive environments. Practices include designing the classroom for safety and predictability. Planning a rich, exciting developmentally-appropriate curriculum, providing adequate, motivating materials, creating well-defined play centers, a balanced schedule for large and small groups and teacher-led/child-led times of instruction, teaching classroom rules, and providing clear directions are expectations for promoting social-emotional competence and preventing challenging behavior at this level of the Pyramid. Teachers are expected to provide a clear beginning, middle, and ending to each activity of the day. Teachers are also expected to support children in knowing the answers to four questions for each activity they plan for the child… What am I supposed to do? How do I know if I am progressing? How do I know when I finished with the task? What comes next? This is most often accomplished through creating and using a variety of visual schedules.

The third level focuses on the explicit instruction of social emotional skills. We use the Second Step Curriculum in all classrooms, as an adjunct to our social-emotional instruction. We also use the Pyramid Solution Kit, the Tucker Turtle strategy for anger management, individualized social stories, role plays and puppets to help children learn how to get attention appropriately, request and give an object to a peer, identify and express their emotions, play cooperatively with peers, use problem-solving skills, make friends, initiate and maintain play, and strategies to handle disappointment and delay gratification. Instruction to teach these social-emotional skills must be systematic and focused.

Skills at the top of the Pyramid include becoming proficient in offering intensive, individualized interventions through the creation of a Positive Behavior Support Plan, along with family members, for children with persistent, challenging behavior.

Twice yearly, staff will be observed using the “Teaching Pyramid Observation Tool for Preschool Classrooms” (TPOK) or the “Pyramid Infant-Toddler Observation Scale” (PITOS). At the beginning of the year, each staff member completes the Inventory of Practices. Strengths and needs will be identified. Staff will choose individual professional development goals from these measures. Staff will also be responsible to keep behavioral data and administer a social skills inventory checklist to each child at the beginning and end of the school year, in order to document progress in the social-emotional development of each child who attends Bal Swan Children’s Center.
Bal Swan implements the Special Quest (Hilton/Early Head Start Training Program) and Building Blocks for Teaching Preschoolers with Special Needs (Susan Sandall and Ilene Schwartz) approaches to inclusion. Teachers, therapists and family members collaborate to provide high-quality, inclusive services for young children with disabilities. The relationship- and team-based approach enhances and sustains inclusive services, family leadership skills, and integrated, collaborative service delivery.

We embed the Special Quest and Building Blocks approaches, materials, and resources into our Professional Development and service systems. Approximately one-third of the children who attend Bal Swan have special needs. All children are taught in fully-inclusive classrooms. Each class has a consulting Speech Therapist and an Occupational Therapist who collaborate monthly with teachers about all children in the class. This year, we have added a part-time Inclusion Specialist to our services. Our Inclusion Specialist is one of our teachers who has recently graduated from UCD with a Master’s Degree in ECSE. Her primary job responsibility is to coordinate the support services with the classroom teaching. She is also supporting each teacher to embed modifications into her curriculum for differentiated teaching for all children.

Each child who attends Bal Swan has an Individual Learning Plan (ILP). This plan is created by the teacher with the family members early in the school year. We invite families to complete two tools prior to their initial Parent Conference in the Fall. Pathways: A Child and Family Journey, (Child Learning Center at CSU, Boulder) and the Ages and Stages Social-Emotional Questionnaire (Squires, Bricker, Twombly, 2003) are used as a child-centered framework for planning with the family. The Teaching Strategies Gold Assessment along with the Ages and Stages Social-Emotional Questionnaire are used as a baseline for each child’s yearly goals. These will be the goals that the teacher targets during the year. Throughout the year, the teacher will record observations on her IPAD on the targeted goals to send home, so that families will gain information on how their children are progressing throughout the year. The teacher and family will review the goals for the year, make plans for carryover during the summer, and plan next steps during our Spring conferences.

In addition, the teacher will observe all children on each checkpoint on the TS Gold Assessment. Checkpoints are collected before Christmas and in the Spring. This data is entered and can be viewed by teachers and administration. The data is used as part of our continuing education and training plan for the following year.
Bal Swan Children's Center
Patti Willardson, Director of Education
Crisis Intervention Policy
September, 2012

Policy for Responding to Challenging Behavior in a Crisis Situation

When a child has an identified challenging behavior, the Team-Based Process for Responding to Challenging Behavior will be implemented.

Behaviors that can be ignored or redirected will be identified and communicated to all adults who are important in the child’s life.

In the event of a crisis in which the child is being hurtful to himself or others, or if the child is destroying classroom materials, the following plan will be implemented.

1. REMAIN CALM! TAKE DEEP BREATHS! SUPPORT EACH OTHER!
2. Immediately call Director of Education to assist.
3. If DE is not available, call any administration staff member.
4. One Teacher will remove all other children from classroom. Teacher can ask for assistance from admin team if needed.
5. Other Teacher will remain with child in classroom while child calms down. DE will remain in classroom with teacher and child.
6. If child is destroying classroom materials, Teacher and DE will remove the materials from the child.
7. Continue to ignore or redirect child.
8. When child is calm, consequences will be identified. If materials have been thrown on the floor, child will be expected to replace them, with assistance from adult if needed. If teacher-made materials have been destroyed, the child will be expected to help repair materials. Give minimal eye contact and verbal interaction, to decrease chance of reinforcing the behavior.
9. Other children will return to the room.

After crisis has passed, the child’s behavior support Team will
• Initiate a Positive Behavior Support Plan.
• Evaluate and modify existing Behavior Support Plan as needed.
A Team-Based Process for Responding to Challenging Behavior

In a young child, challenging behavior is defined as being hurtful to self or others, persistent, disruptive, destructive, or interfering with child's or peer's learning.

Staff will respond to challenging behavior at each level of Pyramid practices.

RELATIONSHIPS

- Review child's Ages and Stages Questionnaire with parents. Reflectively listen to any concerns. Be honest about child's behavior in class, while remembering to validate parent's care and love, as well as child's strengths. Let parents know you will be trying some strategies to help child learn to get needs met more appropriately.
- Discuss with Director of Education the option of making a home visit.
- Check the ratio of 5:1 "deposits-to-withdrawal" statements to child by all staff who work with the child.
- Inform/Invite families about Bal Swan’s Positive Solutions for Families class.

ENVIRONMENT

- Staff will review classroom environment organization and structure to determine if all Pyramid practices are in place.
- Staff will discuss what methods are being used to help children answer four questions:
  1. What am I supposed to do?
  2. How do I know if I am progressing?
  3. How do I know that I am finished?
  4. What comes next?
- Staff will review all routines to see if there is a clear beginning, middle, and end.
- Staff will consider creating additional individual visual strategies...social story, first-then picture schedule, transition schedule, or center choice schedules.

INTENTIONAL TEACHING STRATEGIES

Staff will self-reflect on the following practices.

- Are expectations and rules posted in the classroom in a way that is meaningful for all children?
- Are rules (general rules and rules for specific routines, such as circle time) being intentionally taught and reviewed daily?
Are a variety of teaching strategies being implemented to teach rules, appropriate attention seeking, requesting and giving an object, friendship skills, problem solving, self-calming skills, and emotional literacy? These strategies will include teaching the concept in large and small groups, modeling "wise" and "unwise" choices relating to the skill being taught, creating daily activities for practice, providing descriptive praise which links positive behavior with specific expectation, and verbally modeling adult's emotions and solutions when Teachers are feeling frustrated as well as supported. (powerful strategy)

**POSITIVE BEHAVIOR SUPPORT PLANS**

If challenging behaviors have not decreased after self-reflection and coaching with Classroom Coach (CC) or Director of Education (DE) on the above practices, staff will initiate the Positive Behavior Support Plan with family. The Team will consist of each staff member who works with the child at school and all family members and/or care givers whom the parents want to include.

2. Team will meet together. This meeting will begin by listing all the child’s strengths. Family members will be asked to describe their hopes and dreams for their child. Behaviors of concern will be discussed and how they are interfering with learning. All staff members (SM) who work with the child, C and/or DE, and family members will review observations.
3. The Team will begin collaborating on the Prevent, Teach, Reinforce (PTR) Child Assessment. The Team will brainstorm a hypothesis of the function of the behavior and identify antecedents and consequences which surround the behavior. The Team will collaborate to create strategies which will assist in preventing the challenging behavior, identify replacement skills which need to be taught, and discuss reinforcements for appropriate behavior, both at home and school.
4. Team will create materials and data sheets needed for plan implementation.
5. SM will begin implementing plan and collect data for a minimum of six sessions.
6. Team will review data after six sessions and choose to continue or modify plan.
7. Follow up meetings with the family will occur in a timely manner.
Bal Swan: Benchmarks of Quality
Program TPOT Scores

Bal Swan Program-wide 2010-2011
Child Outcomes

Bal Swan ASQ:SE Post

- At or above cut-off: 15%
- Below cut-off: 85%

Bal Swan ASQ:SE Pre

- At or above cut-off: 27%
- Below cut-off: 73%
Prevalence Data and Outcomes

Risk Factors Affecting Children in the US and Colorado
- A child is abused or neglected every 44 minutes.
- Among all children, 1 in 6 (16.3% or 191,725) is poor.
- In 2007, an estimated 172,000 children (13.7%) were uninsured in Colorado.
- In 2006, 6,317 babies (8.9%) were born at low birth weight.
- A child dies before his or her first birthday every 20 hours. Children's Defense Fund (Jan, 2011)
- In 2009, in Colorado, 36 children died because of abuse, up from 27 in 2007. Kempe Center (Denver Post.com)

Non Permanent Connections
- Children left with no permanent family connections or are absent of a caring adult have no one to whom they can turn for social, emotional or financial support and face numerous barriers as they struggle to become self-sufficient adults.
  - In 2006, there were 8,139 children in foster care in Colorado.
- Children in foster care are 16 times more likely to receive mental health services and 8 times more likely to experience inpatient psychiatric hospitalization than children living in poverty not in the foster care system.
  - In 2006, there were 10,862 victims of child maltreatment in Colorado. Children's Defense Fund (January 2011)

Parental / Maternal Depression
- Children of depressed parents are at increased risk for cognitive and language problems, insecure attachments, difficulties with emotional regulation, social competences, and behavioral problems. (Gladstone and Beardslee, 2002)
- Women from low-income circumstances experience clinical depression at twice the rate of other women.
- 50% of Early Head Start mothers reported experiencing signs of depression. (2003)
- A mother's mental health has important implications for the social emotional well being of her children. (Landy, 2002)
Children with Challenging Behavior commonly experience...

- Peer rejection
- Frequent failure experiences
- Unpleasant interactions with family members and teachers
- Predictable and consistent school failure
- Lack of community integration


Correlations

- The correlation between preschool-age aggression and aggression at age 10 is higher than that for IQ. Kazdin, (1995)
- Early appearing aggressive behaviors are the best predictor of juvenile gang membership and violence. Reid, (1993)
- When aggressive and antisocial behavior has persisted to age 9, further intervention has a poor chance of success. Dodge, (1993)

Juvenile Detention

- A Congressional study found 15,000 children in juvenile detention facilities, some as young as 7 years old, solely because community mental health services were unavailable.
- Studies have reported that as many as three fourths of incarcerated youth have mental health disorders and about 1 in 5 has a severe disorder. Children's Defense Fund (January 2011)

Fiscal

- One billion dollars spent annually to incarcerate youth. Patterson, G. R., and Bank, L. (1989)

Benefits of Evidence Based Intervention to Challenging Behaviors

- Increase rates of high school completion
- Decrease rates of juvenile arrest
- Reduce arrests due to violent crimes
- Reduce special education placements
- Decrease grade retention
- Reduce abuse and maltreatment
- Increase higher education attainment, which equals higher earning capacity
Children with Disabilities

- Children with disabilities have more than three times the number of serious misconduct incidents per 1000 children than do typically developing children. Fox, L. and Smith, B. J. (2007)

- Over 15% of all students with disabilities (6-21) are taking psychotropic medications USDOE, (2005)

- About 1/3 of all adolescent students with disabilities have been suspended or expelled USDOE, (2005)

Pre-School Age Children

- The proportion of preschool children meeting the criteria for the clinical diagnosis of ODD (Oppositional Defiant Disorder) ranges from 7% to 25% of children in the United States, depending on the population surveyed. Webster-Stratton, (1997)

- Campbell (1995), estimated that approximately 10-15% of all typically developing preschool children have chronic mild to moderate levels of behavior problems.

- Children who are poor are much more likely to develop behavior problems with prevalence rates that approach 30%. Qi and Kaiser, (2003)

Early Childhood

- Preschool children are three times more likely to be “expelled” than children in grades K-12. Gilliam, (2005)

- Faculty in higher education early childhood programs report that their graduates are least likely to be prepared to work with children with persistently challenging behavior. Hemmeter, Santos, and Ostrosky, (2004)

- Studies reveal that those enrolled in high quality early childhood education programs are more likely to complete higher levels of education, have higher earnings, be in better health and be in stable relationships, and are less likely to commit a crime or be incarcerated.

- In the 2006-2007 school year, 12% of 3-year-olds and 28.7% of 4-year-olds were enrolled in state-funded preschool programs in Colorado. Children’s Defense Fund (January 2011)

Elementary Years

- An estimated 9 to 13% of American children and adolescents between ages nine to seventeen have serious diagnosable emotional or behavioral health disorders resulting in substantial to extreme impairment. Friedman, (2002)

High School Years

- More than half of students with SED drop out of grades 9-12, the highest rate for all disability categories. U.S. Department of Education, (2002; 2006)

- At 2 years post high school, 58% of youth have been arrested at least once and 42% are on probation or parole. NLTS2, (2005)

- Students with ED reported use of alcohol (54%), illegal drug use (36%), marijuana use (33%), and smoking (53%) at rates higher than all other disability categories. NLTS2, (2008)
- Reduce long term monetary costs to society, government, and the general public

**POSITIVE OUTCOMES when addressing challenging behaviors**


- Treatment impact on fears, phobias, depression, anxiety, hyperactivity, conduct, and obsessive-compulsive disorders.

- Positive peer relationships including understanding of friendship, cooperation, and sharing, *Denham and Burton*, (1996).

