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Norwood teacher presents at national conference

Social-emotional education in early years is critical

By Ellen Metrick, Editor

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Norwood has been getting brighter and brighter on the national educational map for the last few months, and it shined all the way over on the East Coast when Norwood Preschool teacher Robin Snyder presented at the seventh Training Institute on Effective Practices, a conference on supporting young children's social and emotional development.

"The greatest predictor of success in elementary school is the social emotional skill set a child already has when they enter kindergarten," said Virginia Kile, who coaches Snyder in the Colorado Center for Social Emotional Foundations in Early Childhood (CCSEFEL) practices.

Snyder, along with Kile and technical aide Johanna Wasser of the Colorado Pyramid Plus Center, demonstrated to the education audience how the technical assistant and coach support the preschool teacher in implementing the Pyramid Model in the Norwood Preschool classroom.

The Pyramid Model framework is a set of tools teachers can use to address the social and emotional development of children, including children with persistent challenging behavior.

Kile and Prime Time Center for Early and Continuing Education (PTCECE) director Heather Montonati are in the program, and Snyder is learning to be a trainer for the Pyramid Model. All of Norwood Preschool and Prime Time Preschool — are going or have gone to Pyramid training classes.

"The parents are in on this from day one, too," said Snyder, who will teach a parent class, "Positive Solutions for Parents" at PTCECE. While she and her aide Kelly Sutherlin teach the parents, Prime Time Preschool aide Jessi Mills will support the children of attending families, enabling everyone to go home with the same tools.

Snyder said that though it is a lot of work initially, "The best thing about using the Pyramid Model practices is that the children and parents are not the referees anymore because the children learn to work things out on their own."

Norwood Preschool and PTECE were one of the first of five sites in Colorado selected to be certified through the state Pyramid Plus program. In the next two to three years, once the Center and preschool are certified, people from all over the state and nation will visit Norwood to see the Pyramid Plus model in action.

"This really is about changing practice, and when we have an entire center that's willing to change practice, that's a big deal," said Kile.



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