



# The ASaP Continuum Project

## Access, Support and Participation

(2018-2019)

Understanding How  
'Navigational Supports'  
are Experienced by  
Coaches, Educators,  
Families and  
Centre Leadership Teams



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## Project Overview

The GRIT Program in Edmonton, has led the Implementation of the ASaP Project (Access, Supports and Participation) since 2012. ASaP adopted the evidence-based Pyramid Model (Fox, Hemmeter, Snyder 2011) from the Center for Social and Emotional Foundations for Early Learning (CSEFEL).

The authors of the model recognize that early learning centres differ from location to location and prevention and intervention efforts must adapt to these varying conditions. Therefore, the model is described as a framework, rather than a curriculum. In addition, the demographic characteristics

ASaP's mission is to provide access to the right supports at the right time to build upon the skills, knowledge and confidence of early childhood educators to ensure the meaningful participation and inclusion of all children.

### ASaP's Intended Outcomes:

1. Capacity building of early childhood educators
2. Navigation of cross-ministerial systems supports
3. Sustainability through leadership and inclusive policies

The PM is comprised of three tiers to help educators build skills for supporting nurturing and responsive caregiving, create high quality learning environments, provide targeted social-emotional skills, and support children with challenging behavior. The bottom (yellow) tier represents the need for the PM to be grounded

with an **effective workforce**, that is well educated, compensated and supported.

The '**Universal**' tier (blue) identifies practices that would be implemented with all children in a classroom to ensure responsive relationships and high-quality environments.



The '**Targeted**' tier (green) identifies practices related to responding to the social-emotional needs of children at risk for, or who have delays in their social and emotional development.

The top tier (orange) '**Intensive interventions**' identifies practices and processes needed to support individualized interventions for children with severe and persistent challenging behaviour.

ASaP's accomplishments will be celebrated within this report. As Alberta leads in the scaling and implementation of ASaP, 2018 – 19 was a period of rapid growth from 70 to 142 participating centres. In the sixth year of implementation, continuous project improvements have been made. This report will capture prominent project outcomes and enhancements to project activities as it shift's into "full" implementation.

**Outcome #1 - Capacity building of early childhood educators**

ASaP continues to build on primary project activities to maintain a commitment for capacity building of early childhood educators.

**Professional Learning**

ASaP’s core professional learning modules reflect professional practices identified within the Pyramid Model and enhanced by local Alberta initiatives (e.g. FLIGHT, mental health and leadership etc.):

- Nurturing Responsive Relationships & High-Quality Supportive Environments
- Targeted Social & Emotional Supports
- Intensive Behavior Supports
- Strengthening Your Leadership Team Actions for Program Wide Implementation (PWI)

In addition to professional learning modules, participation in regional Reflective Practice meetings occur six times per year. These meetings target pyramid practices and allow for educators to engage in collaborative learning, sharing of what is working and what is challenging in a safe and supportive setting.

**What’s new?**

- Distance Delivery - Provincial access to all professional learning sessions through Go-To-Training.
- E- Learning Modules – 15 min refresher to support three of the most frequently identified goal areas: Emotional Literacy, Routines and Visuals, and Shared Expectations

“Access to excellent training, accountability and goal setting. Great ideas, strategies, and resources for staff and parents” (Educator)

With 142 participating centres across Alberta, ASaP presented a total of 23 face to face learning session and 5 online sessions using technology to meet the needs of rural sites. offer distance delivery in the evening.

**TYPES OF LEARNING**

**23 SESSIONS**



**Face to Face**

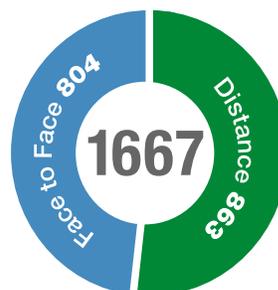
**5 SESSIONS**



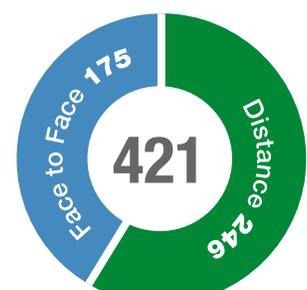
**Distance Delivery**

The following images capture the number of participants, by session, for 2018 -19

Universal and Targeted Practices



Intensive Supports and Leadership



## Reflective Practice Sessions

Reflective Practice sessions were hosted face to face in Edmonton, Calgary and Central regions and through distance delivery. Each learning platform offered six sessions. On average, approximately 20-25 participants attended each face to face session, and approximately 10 participants attended each distance delivery session. Sessions focussed on:

- Considering Culture in our Relationships
- The Power of Visuals
- Leadership Development
- Social and Emotional Supports for Families
- Infant and Toddler
- Celebration of Learning

In addition to formal professional learning, 762 participants attended regional reflective practice groups.



## Practice Based Coaching

Practice-based coaching (PBC) is a core project activity. As an evidence-based framework, PBC processes actively support the transfer of knowledge from professional learning to the educator's daily practices with children and families.

Consistent with previous years, the top three Teaching Pyramid goals across the centres were:

1. Schedules, routines, and activities (universal)
2. Teaching behaviour expectations (universal)
3. Teaching children to express emotions (targeted)

A review of coaching logs indicates 2492 coaching visits were completed.

2492  
Coaching  
Visits  
Completed

ASaP focussed on supporting ASaP Supervisors confidence in the use of Swivl technology to record and upload videos. In turn, consistent processes have been developed for providing feedback to Site Leads, accessing **distance coaching**.

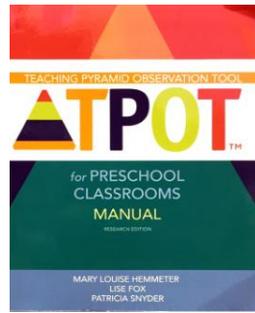
## Evidence of Change – Monitoring Educator Use of Pyramid Model Practices Over Time

ASaP uses the Teaching Pyramid Observation Tool (TPOT) to better understand the effect ASaP activities had on outcomes for adopting Pyramid Model practices to support participation and inclusion.

With consistent capacity building support, outcomes in educator's use of practices shows promising results. Provincial and regional analyses were conducted for the TPOT and TIPTOS™ data and have been summarized by Policywise for Children and Families.

Because change in educator practice requires a significant investment of time and consistency of practice-based coaching, this summary only includes the analyses for the TPOT data as observations with the TIPTOS are still minimal at this time.

TPOT observations at the end of approximately 18 months of intervention, marked by the TPOT 4, was used as a benchmark for examining trends towards mastery (75%) in the ASaP program.



**Provincial Outcomes** - The results demonstrate that after 18 months of intervention, primarily grounded in professional development and practice-based coaching, site leads across the province are above the 75% benchmark for Universal practices (78.2%) and are moving toward the benchmark for Intensive practices (70.3%). Although Targeted practices are below the benchmark, at 59% after approximately 18 months, these practices were initially observed to be substantially lower at baseline. An increase in use of Targeted practices of nearly 25% from baseline is noted at the 18-month observation point.

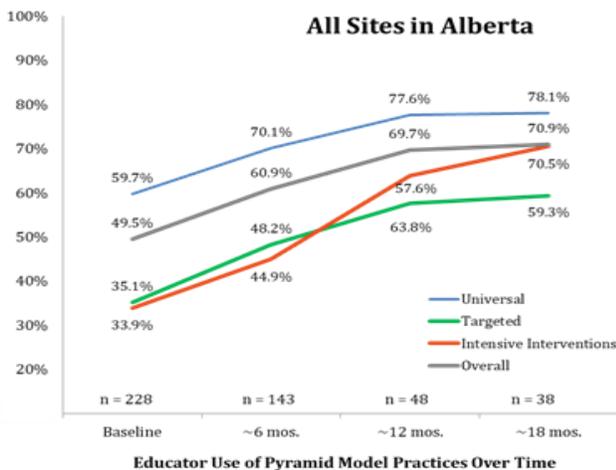


Figure 1. Educator use of Pyramid Model Practices Over Time (142 ASaP sites provincially, TPOT only).

### Change of Educator Practices for ELCC Sites

Finally, trends in educator use of pyramid model practices for the Early Learning and Child Care Centres (ELCCs) are shown in Figure 2.

Upon visual inspection, these results look similar to the provincial results (shown in Figure 1). The only marked differences is in Intensive practices which were near the benchmark provincially at 70.3% but only at 60.3% for the ELCCs.

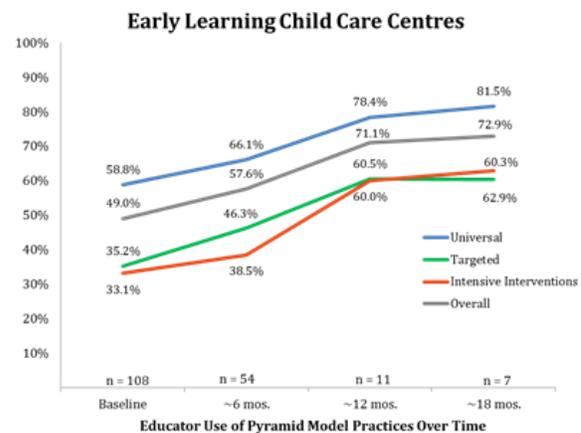


Figure 2. Change in Educator use of Pyramid Model Practices Over Time (ELCC only, TPOT).

Additional results from 6 educators at this time, two-and-a-half years out (marked by observations at TPOT 6), confirm that gains made in practices are sustained and supported above the 75% benchmark. These results demonstrate that sustained participation in the ASaP program is important because it allows for time to engage in leadership development within a centre and to successfully shift from the practices of one site lead towards larger vision of program-wide implementation across a full centre.

**Regional Outcomes** – Results by region reveals some important differences provincially. Regional data is shared with each region annually and is available upon request.

In Calgary, by the end of 18 months of participation, site leads are at, or above, the 75% benchmark for “overall” use of practices. Edmonton shows a similar pattern of increases with Universal practices (77.1%) exceeding the benchmark, and Intensive practices (71.8%) near the benchmark. In the Edmonton region, the Targeted practices are below the benchmark but again, over time, there is a substantive 28% increase in applying new learning for use of these practices.

Across the remaining regions, South, Central, Northwest, North Central and Northeast, the upward trends confirm that professional practices are improving over time. Although not quite meeting the 75% benchmarks, the gains in practice range from about 13% (Universal and Targeted) to just over 30% for Intensive practices.

### **Outcome #2- Navigation of cross-ministerial systems supports**

ASaP’s mission to provide **access** to the right **supports** at the right time links directly to ASaP’s navigational support and coaching processes to respond to child specific needs. In partnership with the University of Alberta, understanding the impact of these processes was ASaP’s research focus the past two years. The **full research report** is available upon request.

### **Research questions include:**

1. When child specific concerns are identified, how are ‘Navigational Supports’ provided by ASaP Coaches received by educators and Centre Leadership Teams?
2. How are the Navigational Supports experienced by families?

The scope of this project required a holistic approach that involved combining of a range of research techniques, both ‘qualitative’ and ‘quantitative.’ Calculations were made to sum, average, or find proportions (i.e., percentages) across various quantitative variables. Qualitative data is summarized and relevant themes extracted. Evaluation data were collected from ASaP monitoring databases (coaching logs etc.), and interviews with coaches, educators, and families.

### **Responding to Child Specific Needs**

Often, ASaP coaches are asked to support educators in how best to respond to the need for additional supports for individual children.

Currently, the coaches use a ‘Navigational Flowchart’ to guide how they address centre child specific concerns (appendix 1). The flowchart captures three distinct processes for coaches and educators to guide decisions:

1. **‘Gathering’ information phase** – as information is gathered from the centre, educator, and family, the coach/ team begins to better understand the presenting child specific concerns. While sustaining a focus on **Universal practices**, information is gathered from child observations or by taking data on specific child

behaviours within routines identified by the educator. Other data is gathered from developmental screeners, such as the Ages and Stages Questionnaire (ASQ - 3; Squires, & Bricker, 2009) or the Ages and Stages, Social and Emotional (ASQ: SE - 2; Squires, Bricker, & Twombly, 2015), the Nipissing District Developmental Screen (NDDS; Author, 2007) or other screening tools used by the centres.

2. **‘Responding’ phase** –the gathered information guides potential individualized supports that are discussed in collaboration with the educator, coach and family. These individualized supports are drawn from **‘universal’ and ‘targeted’ practices**.

During this phase, the ‘Routines Based Supports Guide’ (Lentini, Vaughn, Fox, & Blair, 2009) is used to assist the coaches in problem-solving with educators to explore and understand what messages children might be communicating through their behaviour and the variety of additional supports they might require within their daily routines.



3. **‘Collaborating’ phase** - If/ when persistent and challenging behaviours occur, **educators** and coaches may feel that they need to

implement additional supports beyond universal and targeted practices/ The centre’s leadership team then aims to bring a team together to understand the purpose or meaning of the behaviour and begin to select strategies to teach new social skills or new behaviours. As well, they consider how the educator might change her response to the child’s behaviour in an effort to be more responsive to the individual child’s need for support and learning.

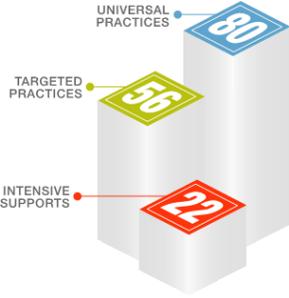
At this time, collaboration with all individuals involved and potentially additional supports from a multi-disciplinary team member and/ or an inclusive child care program is critical to guide the leadership team’s support to individual children and families. Consent for this consultation is obtained from the parent and an ‘Additional Services Request’ form is completed to facilitate this request.

#### Research Findings - Child Specific Concerns

Across the seven regions, and 142 centres, Coaches recorded discussions with educators for **80 children** with child specific concerns. The children were distributed across the regions, with the largest number of children in the two regions serving the greatest number of centres, Edmonton and Calgary.

Children presented with diverse developmental concerns; issues with **emotion regulation, challenging behavior and peer interactions**, with many concerns often in combination. While the majority of the concerns were addressed with universal supports, 56 children (70%), we further supported with targeted

practices, 22 children (28%) led to coach's requests for additional support (e.g. observation by OT/ SLP, use of the Routines Based Supports Guide or exploration of Prevent Teach Reinforce (positive behavior support) process (Dunlap, Wilson, Strain, & Lee, 2013).



Of significance, our data indicate that only one child was referred for a formal assessment.

**Research Themes: Strengths and Challenges of Navigational Process (interviews)**

To explore the strengths and challenges of the navigational supports, interviews were conducted in each region of the province with each a Regional Supervisor, a Coach, a Site Leads and/or Leadership Team member to capture the impact of the navigational support experienced by the team as well as interviews with two families to better understand their experience.

Themes from Interviews
<b>Strengths - ASaP Navigational Support</b>
A systematic approach makes sense
Navigational Support process is easy to follow
Leadership is key
Teaching Pyramid serves as a framework to re-inspire colleagues
<b>Challenges - ASaP Navigational Support</b>
Process can be overwhelming and take time to understand

Some regions experienced barriers to accessing multi-disciplinary teams
Data collection on social and emotional behaviours is a new skill set for centres
Families are not always willing to consent for additional supports

**Outcome #3 - Sustainability through leadership and inclusive policies**

When you invest in a new system of support for early childhood programs, you enhance development in our future leaders. Leadership development encompasses centres' progress in actions taken towards 'indicators of success' in four primary activities:

1. Navigation to access supports
2. Family Engagement
3. Program-Wide Implementation (PWI)
4. Development of Inclusive Policy

This report highlights efforts to monitor each centre's leadership team's improvements to support PWI.

**Actions for Leadership Development**

As ASaP strategically shifts to support Program Wide Implementation, new direction was given to leadership teams including: the development of a "benchmarks of quality" checklist (appendix 2), overview of roles and responsibility of leadership team members and the completion of an action plan. Each component is significant if teams are to progress toward PWI.

ASaP Coaches engaged centre leadership teams, who have been involved in the project for three years or more, in an annual conversation. This conversation aimed to

review project data and better understand their centre's progress to PWI. Overall, two pathways became evident in how centres were progressing:

**Pathway of Progress-** Recognizes the leadership team's commitment to project activities and actions taken towards PWI.

**Pathway of Barriers-** Recognizes when leadership teams are facing more challenges in their ability to commit to project activities e.g. consistent staff turnover as they work towards program wide implementation. are struggling in their commitment to project activities. Centres facing barriers were than supported in the development of a 3-month action plan to respond to the identified barriers.

### Celebrating Success

- 21 new rooms at demonstration status
- 17 centres shifted coaching towards continued leadership development
- 47% of coaching visits included leadership
- 5 centres facing barriers develop a 3-month action plan.



### Summary and Looking Ahead:

As further implementation of the Pyramid Model framework is experienced, we see how the innovation of ASaP continues to exemplify how working differently is achieving the intended project outcomes of enhancing the skills, knowledge and confidence of early childhood educators and creating quality, inclusive environments

The 'stories' or findings in this annual report will further guide continuous changes to ASaP activities. Furthermore, the findings may inform and potentially provide clarity to the shared roles and responsibility across the province.

Looking forward, a few priorities include:



- Increase coach capacity in mental health
- Monitor fidelity of coaching via video
- Additional E-learning- full modules of Universal and Targeted practices
- Increase family involvement in their child's social and emotional development
- Reflective Practice for Leadership Team



For more information.

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