

Progress



A Family Guide to Multi-Tier System of Supports (MTSS)

Support



Education



Learn





Schools are committed to helping all children succeed. They have many ways to help children learn and to ensure those who need additional supports are successful. The Multi-Tier System of Supports (MTSS) is one way schools provide those supports.

This booklet reviews the basic components of any MTSS process and includes questions you might want to ask your child's school to learn more about their MTSS process. Also included are ways you can get involved in the process and what to do and where to go if you have questions or concerns.

What is MTSS?

MTSS is a multi-step process of providing instruction and support to promote the academic and behavioral success of all children. Individual children's progress is monitored and results are used to make decisions about further instruction and intervention. MTSS is most commonly used in addressing reading, math and behavior, but it can also be used in other areas. The MTSS process is flexible and designed by school districts to meet the needs of their students.

What does the MTSS process look like?

The MTSS process typically has three tiers. Each tier provides differing levels of support.

Academics

- In Tier I, all students receive high quality curriculum and instruction in the general education classroom. The teacher assists all students.
- In Tier II, the school provides supplemental instructional support, usually in small groups, to students who need additional support to what they are receiving from the general curriculum.
- In Tier III, intense instructional support is provided to students with the greatest needs, with frequent progress monitoring.

Behavior

- In Tier I, all students are explicitly taught positive behavioral expectations. All teachers use a consistent approach to discipline.
- In Tier II, the school provides supplemental targeted behavioral skill interventions usually in small groups.
- In Tier III, student centered planning is used to develop customized interventions with frequent progress monitoring.

What are the key components to any MTSS process?

A key component to the MTSS process is that all children receive high quality curriculum and instruction in the general education classroom (Tier I).

Another component of the MTSS process is that the school conducts universal screenings. **Universal screenings review the progress of all students, these screenings are typically given three times a year.** Universal screenings help schools identify students who may need more support or other types of instruction.

As a result of universal screening, students may be identified as needing supplemental instruction (a Tier II level of support) in addition to the high quality instruction they are receiving in Tier I. Research based interventions are used to support students in the area of need. **Research based interventions are teaching strategies or methods that have been proven to be effective in helping children be more successful with academics or behavior.** There are many different kinds of interventions and instruction that can happen in the classroom, outside the classroom or in small groups.





Another key component to the MTSS process is progress monitoring. **Progress monitoring is a way for teachers to take a snapshot of how children are doing on a specific skill.** It shows how well the intervention is working. It includes observations, tests, and other formal and informal assessments. Progress monitoring helps determine whether an intervention is successful or needs to be adjusted.

Formal guidelines for progress monitoring should be developed by the school that detail how long a child will receive a particular intervention and how they will determine whether the intervention is helping the child.

When the child meets the goals developed by the school, the intervention is no longer needed and the child continues to receive support in the general education classroom. When progress monitoring shows that a child is not responding to the intervention another approach or intervention may be tried. However, when a higher level of support is needed, children are given individualized instruction which further focuses on supporting the skills they need to be successful learners (Tier III).



What if I think my child needs special education services?

If at any time parents believe their child has a disability/exceptionality and needs special education services, they have a right to request an evaluation for these services. In addition to the information gathered from assessments and interventions during the MTSS process, other forms of evaluation must occur to determine if a child is eligible to receive special education services. Parents must give prior written consent before this evaluation is conducted.

Request a formal evaluation for special education services if you suspect your child has a disability/exceptionality and needs these services.

For more information about special education services, your rights in the process, and how MTSS may be used to inform the process please contact Families Together, Inc., the Kansas Parent Training and Information Center (PTI) at 1-800-264-6343, the Kansas Parent Information Resource Center (KPIRC) at 1-866-711-6711 or the Kansas State Department of Education, Special Education Services at 1-800-203-9462.

What questions can parents ask to learn more about how MTSS works in their child's school?

- What curriculum is being taught in my child's classroom?
- What are the targeted interventions that my child's school is using if he/she is struggling in the classroom?
- What are the formal guidelines my child's school is using for progress monitoring?
- How will I be informed of the progress my child is making?
- What happens if an intervention is not working?

Parents play a critical role in supporting what their children are learning in school. Research shows that the more parents are involved in student learning, the higher the student achievement.

There are many ways parents can support what their child is doing in school. Here are a few:

- Make reading an everyday habit at home
- Communicate with your child's teacher
- Monitor and assist with homework assignments
- Ask for regular monitoring reports
- Share your child's successes
- Learn more about the curricula and interventions being used in your child's school
- Attend parent/teacher conferences and other school meetings about your child

Where can I find out more information on MTSS?

Kansas Parent Information Resource Center (KPIRC)

1-866-711-6711

www.kpirc.org

Families Together, Inc. (PTI)

1-800-264-6343

www.familiestogetherinc.org

Kansas State Department of Education (KSDE)

1-800-203-9462

www.ksde.org

Kansas MTSS website

www.kansasmtss.org



Talk to your child's teacher or principal for more information about how MTSS is being implemented in your child's school.

Reference: A Parent Advocacy Brief written by the National Center for Learning Disabilities (NCLD).

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