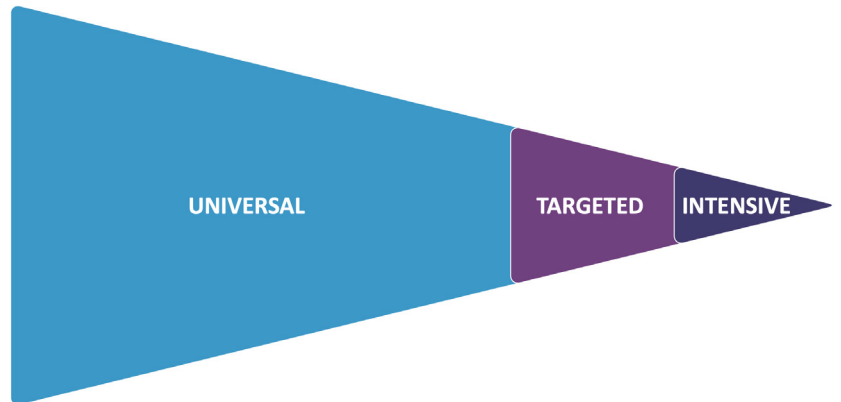


# Processes Within the Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) Framework

## Common Components

Supports in an MTSS framework flow from universal, to targeted, to intensive. The tiers are distinct but, as part of a system, share common components. A key component across all tiers is the use of evidence-based practices. These instructional techniques are supported by high-quality research demonstrating meaningful effects on student outcomes. It is important that any evidence-based practice is implemented with a high level of fidelity—that is, implemented as intended.



All tiers also use reliable and valid assessments. Screening is used in the universal tier, diagnostic assessments are used in the intensive tier, and progress monitoring is used in all tiers. Data from these assessments are collected and analyzed by a problem-solving team to evaluate student response to intervention and make informed data-based decisions.

MTSS involves universal intervention for **all**, targeted intervention for **some**, and intensive intervention for a **small number** of students.

## Universal Intervention

### UNIVERSAL

- Universal evidence-based practices
- Screening of all students
- Progress monitoring of at-risk students
- Data-based decision making

Universal intervention provides **all** students with effective and explicit instruction in the general education classroom. It includes evidence-based practices, research-based curricula, differentiation, scaffolded instruction, and universal design for learning.

At the universal level, teachers screen all students with reliable and valid screening measures to identify those who may be at risk for academic or behavioral difficulties. Screening may occur up to three times yearly. After screening, teachers provide intervention (e.g., differentiating lessons, scaffolding instruction) to better meet the needs of the students revealed to be at risk. Teachers should also promptly begin progress monitoring to track how those students respond to the instructional changes and adjust intervention as needed.

After a period of several weeks, when enough progress-monitoring data have been collected, teachers work together to make timely data-based decisions about whether universal intervention is meeting the needs of a student or whether the student requires additional support through targeted intervention. Most students, approximately 80%, make adequate progress with universal intervention alone when implemented as intended.

## Targeted Intervention

### TARGETED

- Targeted evidence-based practices
- Progress monitoring
- Data-based decision making

Targeted intervention is typically required for about 20% of students, those who are considered at risk for academic or behavioral difficulties. If many students need targeted intervention, the school needs to evaluate the universal intervention currently in place.

Teachers or other support specialists (e.g., interventionists, behavior or reading specialists) use evidence-based practices specific to targeted intervention and work with students in small groups. These intervention groups meet on a regular basis each week. It is important to note that targeted intervention is supplemental to, and should not replace, universal intervention.

Progress-monitoring measures are administered frequently—often weekly—so data about response can be collected and analyzed without waiting too long to make decisions. After a sufficient amount of data has been collected, the problem-solving team uses that data to determine whether the intervention is meeting the needs of each student.

Students with an adequate response to targeted intervention continue with targeted intervention or transition to receiving only universal intervention. Students who demonstrate a continued inadequate response to targeted intervention start to receive intensive intervention.

## Intensive Intervention

Intensive intervention is typically required for about 5% of students, those who demonstrate significant and persistent learning and/or behavior needs. At this level, interventions are more individualized, so diagnostic data are collected to determine a student's strengths and weaknesses and to inform which evidence-based practices to use or adapt.

The educator most highly qualified to deliver intensive intervention works with individual students or very small groups. Just as group size intensifies as compared to targeted intervention, so do the frequency and duration of the intervention.

Intervention providers use progress-monitoring measures frequently (e.g., once or twice a week) to determine student response and allow for timely decision making. When enough data have been collected, the problem-solving team determines whether intensive intervention is meeting the needs of a student or whether more adaptations need to be made.

**Note: The MTSS framework may not be used to delay or deny an evaluation of a child suspected of having a disability and needing special education services.**

### INTENSIVE

- Diagnostics
- Intensive evidence-based practices
- Progress monitoring
- Data-based decision making

MTSS is a comprehensive framework that, when implemented effectively, can provide students with the supports needed to progress toward instruction and intervention goals.

This document was created in collaboration with the TIER Network.  
For more information, visit <https://tier.tea.texas.gov>

