MTSS Frameworks: Successfully Educating Young Children with Disabilities in ECE/ECSE Blended Programs

Presented by
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Pre-Conference Workshop
Tuesday, October 1, 2019
8:30 AM to 11:30 AM
What is your current role? What is your current knowledge and/or past experience with MTSS?
PARTICIPANT OBJECTIVES:

1. Describe how an MTSS framework supports meeting the needs of children with disabilities at the system, classroom and individual-child level.

2. Articulate how collaborative teams can use data-based, problem-solving to meet children’s instructional needs in blended settings.

3. Explain with specific scenarios how MTSS and blended practices may be used to identify and meet children’s and families’ needs.
Michael’s Story: The Beginning

• Received EI, then transitioned into a preschool providing services in an MTSS Framework.
• He is a member of a blended ECE/ECSE classroom; so, the teacher has ECE/ECSE license. There are 14 other children; 10 do not have identified delays and 4 have IEPs.
• Michael receives ECSE and Speech Therapy to address expressive language goals.
• How can Michael’s strengths and needs be met in this program?
Sofia’s Story: The Beginning

• Enrolls at age 4 as a “Tuition-paying student” in a blended classroom in an MTSS program.
• Teacher and teammates notice significant delays in socialization and pragmatic communication skills; parents agree to meet.
• Team (parents, teachers, and teammates) agree to conduct Case Study Evaluation (CSE) to determine if Sofia is a child with a disability. As a result, she is found to be eligible for ECSE.
• How can Sofia’s strengths and needs be met in this program?
Henry’s Story: The Beginning

• Enrolls at age 4 as a “Tuition-paying student” in a community preschool, operating in an MTSS Framework.

• He is a member of a blended ECE/ECSE classroom.

• He scores in the lowest 10% of all the children his age on a Universal Screener of Vocabulary skills.

• How can Henry’s strengths and needs be met in this program?
MTSS Service Delivery Framework and Blended Practices

How can we build on these children’s strengths, and meet their needs, in blended ECE/ECSE programs operating within MTSS frameworks?

Michael                         Sofia                        Henry
What is MTSS?

A whole-school data-driven framework for improving learning outcomes for ALL students delivered through a continuum of evidence-based practices and systems.
What is MTSS?

• Goal: to **identify** children who may be struggling to learn and **intervene early** so they can catch up to their peers.

• It can be designed to identify children who are struggling in **academic or behavioral** areas.
MTSS Service Delivery System is designed to:

- PROMOTE development of essential skills known to correlate with later school success.
- PREVENT delays and performance challenges by targeting critical foundation skills.
- PROVIDE timely evidence-based interventions of the proper dosage to ameliorate delays or challenges.
MTSS is not:

- The responsibility of just a few specialists — general educators are key!
- An excuse for delaying a special education
How is MTSS different from typical practice in early education?

In typical practice in early education…

• We don’t usually **systematically** address the range of individual differences that exist across children.

• We **often wait** for significant delays before we provide additional support (and then it is a referral to special education).
How is MTSS different from typical practice in early education?

• MTSS identifies who needs the additional support and provides a continuum of evidence-based practices within the general education settings.

• The focus of MTSS is prevention—providing additional support as soon as it’s needed for success.

• The aim of MTSS is to use proven instructional strategies.
Core Principles of MTSS

1. **All** children can learn and achieve....when they are provided with high quality supports to match their needs.

2. Instruction should focus on **both** early academic and social-behavioral goals.

3. Children showing signs of delay should be **identified as early as possible** and should be provided with a level of instructional **intensity** to match their needs.
Core Principles of MTSS

4. Interventions to address children’s needs should be designed by collaborative teams.

5. All interventions should be based on evidence-based practices and implemented with fidelity.

6. Children’s responses to intervention should be continuously monitored.

7. Interventions should be informed by student data.
Seven Core Components / Defining Features

- Evidence-Based Practices
- Emphasis on Fidelity
- Universal Screening and Progress Monitoring
- Data-Based Decision Making
- Family, School, and Community Partnerships
- Shared Leadership
- Layered Continuum of Support
Layered Continuum of Supports

Tier 1:
Core or universal outcomes and teaching/caregiving strategies

Tier 2:
Targeted outcomes and teaching/caregiving strategies

Tier 3:
Highly individualized outcomes and teaching/caregiving strategies

Increased individualization, intensity, and frequency of instruction

Decreased individualization, intensity, and frequency of instruction

STRONG CORE / TIER 1!

- Multiple tiers
- Tiers are additive
- Seamless boundaries
- Movement through tiers
- Tiers for different skills and/or domains
What is High Quality Tier 1?

• How does a program know whether it has a strong Tier 1?
• Factors to consider when evaluating Tier 1:
  ○ How strong is the curriculum?
  ○ How effective is the instruction?
  ○ Does child data show adequate growth?
  ○ Are teachers getting adequate professional development and coaching?
• What happens when Tier 1 is not strong?
Essential Ingredients in Tier 1 Early Literacy

4 Key Content Areas

• Oral language/Vocabulary
• Comprehension
• Phonemic Awareness
• Alphabet Knowledge

Examples of Evidence-Based Practices

• Dialogic Reading (Whitehurst)
• World of Words (Neuman)
• Guided practice: I do, We do, You do
The Pyramid Model: Promoting Social and Emotional Competence and Addressing Challenging Behavior

Systems and policies promote and sustain the use of evidence-based practices

http://challengingbehavior.cbcis.usf.edu
The Pyramid Model: Promoting Social and Emotional Competence and Addressing Challenging Behavior

High Quality early childhood environments promote positive outcomes for all children

Supportive responsive relationships among adults and children is an essential component to promote healthy social emotional development

http://challengingbehavior.cbcns.usf.edu
Seven Core Components / Defining Features

- Evidence-Based Practices
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- Shared Leadership
Evidence-Based Practices

What are they and why are they the best starting point?
Evidence-based practices are the foundation

• “Proven techniques” based on multiple studies
• Few practices in EC meet the strict definition of EBP
• Even practices with strong evidence may not work for all children.
• Practitioners can provide own evidence through progress monitoring data: Practice-based evidence
Randomized trial showed that:

- Children in Pyramid Model classrooms had better social skills and less problem behavior
- Teachers receiving training and practice-based coaching were better implementers of Pyramid Model Practices than those who were not trained or coached.

Hemmeter, M. L., Snyder, P. A., Fox, L., & Algina, J. (2016). Evaluating the implementation of the Pyramid Model for promoting social emotional competence in early childhood classrooms. Topics in Early Childhood Special Education, 36, 133-146
Seven Core Components / Defining Features

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Interventions implemented with low or inconsistent fidelity are less likely to work—children won’t show change.

Without measurement of fidelity, you don’t know if the child needs a different intervention, a more intensive intervention, or the same intervention with better implementation.

LESSON: Make sure an intervention is being implemented correctly before recommending changes to it.
Layered Continuum of Supports

Tier 1: Core or universal outcomes and teaching/caregiving strategies

Tier 2: Targeted outcomes and teaching/caregiving strategies

Tier 3: Highly individualized outcomes and teaching/caregiving strategies

Increased individualization, intensity, and frequency of instruction

Decreased individualization, intensity, and frequency of instruction

Tier 1 is the foundation
One of the most critical aspects of MTSS is data-based decision-making.

- What data are used?
- What decisions are made?
- Who makes them?

Seven Core Components:
- Data-Based Decision-Making
- Evidence-Based Practices
- Emphasis on Fidelity
- Layered Continuum of Supports
- Universal Screening and Progress Monitoring
- Family, School, and Community Partnerships
- Shared Leadership

Emphasis on Fidelity
Steps of the Problem-Solving Model

**Problem Identification**
Is there a difference between current performance and expected or desired performance?

**Plan Evaluation**
How is/are the student(s) responding?

**Intervention Implementation**
What can be done to reduce the difference between current and expected/desired performance?

**Problem Analysis**
Why does the problem exist?

Figure 4.1. Steps of the problem-solving model. Source: Batsche, G. et al., 2005.
Seven Core Components: Universal Screening and Progress Monitoring

- Evidence-Based Practices
- Emphasis on Fidelity
- Layered Continuum of Supports
- Universal Screening and Progress Monitoring
- Data-Based Decision Making
- Family, School, and Community Partnerships
- Shared Leadership
Universal Screening and Progress Monitoring

Universal Screening

Does Child Need Greater Instructional Support?

Tier 1

Tier 2

Tier 3

Progress Monitoring

Progress Monitoring

YES

YES

NO
Universal Screening

• **PURPOSE**: determines how well core curriculum is working for the majority of students

• **TOOLS**: very brief assessments on key elements of the curriculum; these are NOT the same as developmental screening tools

• **FOCUS**: all students

• **TIMEFRAME**: students usually assessed three times a year
Tier 2—how to provide additional support

• Determine % of children needing extra instructional support
• Determine model for providing Tier 2 support from these two approaches:
  1. Problem solving approach: Individualized approach; team and family identify ways to meet child’s instructional needs (more explicit instruction, more opportunities)
2. **Standard protocol**: Standard evidence-based approaches that target a specific area of need for groups of students

Examples in early literacy/language:

*Story Friends; Read it Again-Prek, Story Champs, PAths to Literacy*
Examples of Tier 2 Interventions in Early Literacy/Language
Progress Monitoring

• **PURPOSE**: monitor students’ response to instruction to find students who are not demonstrating adequate progress

• **TOOLS**: brief assessments that are valid, reliable, and evidence based

• **TIMEFRAME**: students are assessed at regular intervals (e.g., weekly, biweekly, or monthly)
Tier 3

- Is for children not making adequate progress in response to Tier 2
- Is supplemental instruction that is more intensive than Tier 2
- Can be offered in different instructional domains (e.g., language/literacy, social-emotional)
Features include:

- Focus on prioritized content
- Systematic instruction with carefully designed scope and sequence
- Explicit instruction
- Increased opportunities to respond
- Individualized instruction
- More frequent progress monitoring
Some Key Decisions about Implementing a Tiered Approach

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<th>WHAT will be the goals of instruction?</th>
<th>What evidence-based strategies are available?</th>
<th>Who will teach? (what PD will they need?)</th>
<th>What materials are necessary?</th>
<th>When/where will it be taught?</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tier 1 (for all children)</td>
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<td>Tier 2 (for children below benchmark)</td>
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<td>Tier 3 (for children well below benchmark)</td>
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How does MTSS for young children compare to MTSS for children in K – 12?

• **CORE PRINCIPLES AND COMPONENTS:** Essentially the same for both age groups; differences are in HOW they work.

• **NUMBER OF SYSTEMS:** There are many ECE systems delivering services to meet children’s and families’ needs compared to the K-12 public school system. Hard to achieve coordinated and aligned practices across so many different ECE systems.

• **CHILD FIND RESPONSIBILITIES:** The ECE systems operate child find procedures within classrooms as well as separate preschool screening processes outside of classrooms. In k – 12, child find is almost exclusively done by teachers in classrooms.
MTSS Service Delivery Framework: Meeting the needs of Dual Language Learners (DLLs)

Dual language learners

• Assessments (universal screening and progress monitoring) need to conducted in home language with valid instruments
• Can be at any level of MTSS
• Strengthening Core/Tier 1 with use of home language, language bridging techniques can help dual language learners be successful
Children with disabilities can enter a class as part of an MTSS program in several ways:

1. Eligible for Part C (EI) and then become age-eligible for Part B (ECSE).

2. Participate in “Preschool Screening” and identified as a child who is suspected of meeting disability criteria. Participate in evaluation and then IEP team recommends ECSE and it is offered in an ECE MTSS program.

3. Already in an ECE or at-risk program and then suspected of having a disability. Participate in evaluation as in #2 above.
1. SUSPECTED DISABILITY: IDEA is very clear that participating in an MTSS program may not be used to delay referral, evaluation, or the provision of special education and related services to child who is “suspected of having a disability”.

2. IDEA ELIGIBILITY DETERMINATION: Various data gathered indicating the child’s status (“One-point-in-time”) and progress (“Data-over-time”) in tiered instruction may be helpful in determining eligibility; and if eligible, in writing IEP, especially goals and objectives.
MTSS Service Delivery Framework: Meeting the needs of Children with Disabilities

- Every child has strengths and needs that vary across developmental domains and early academic disciplines.
- Some needs may be addressed through an IEP; yet, needs in other areas may respond well to instruction in the general curriculum.
- EXAMPLE: A child with a disability may have expressive language delays and receive ECSE to address IEP goals in that area. However, that child’s needs for instruction in motor skills may be addressed in Tier 1 (Core Curriculum) and needs in math may be addressed in Tier 2 (Core plus Strategic instruction)
MTSS Service Delivery Framework: Meeting the needs of Children with Disabilities

MTSS and IDEA (ECSE): Common Elements

- General education settings preferred.
- Problem solving methods for development and implementation of educational and instructional services and supports.
- Individualization of educational and instructional services and supports.
- Measurement of progress towards specific goals or objectives to maximize learning.
- Evidence-based practices are employed.

Key Takeaways

• All children receive instruction that meets their needs
• Preventing delays and disabilities—better than “wait to fail”
• Early intervention is more effective and less costly than later remediation.
• Continuous progress monitoring ensures that children don’t get “stuck” receiving ineffective instruction.
• Data-based decision-making fosters team members moving in the same direction.
Instructional Leadership Team (ILT)

Sole Purpose: Ensure the instructional and intervention delivery system results in verifiable gains for young children and their families.
Vision: What are the long-term goals for our families and children?

Values: What will we choose as rules?
INCREASED LEARNING & ACHIEVEMENT

OUR MISSION
Working with families to provide positive learning experiences

OUR VISION
All students will achieve foundational skills and knowledge for future success

OUR PURPOSE
Core values and best practices

HOW?
Staff & Families working together

WHAT?
Initiatives & goals

STUDENTS
Families, Staff, Community
MTSS Service Delivery System Framework: Grounded in the Blended Practices Model

Builds on inclusion by combining “beliefs, values, traditions, practices, and even funds from multiple disciplines, sources, and perspectives to maximize our efforts in serving all young children.”

Quality Components of Blended Programs

- **OBJECTIVE:** Promote learning and development for all children.
- **HOW OBJECTIVE IS ACHIEVED:** Blend recommended practices from a number of disciplines across assessment and progress monitoring, curriculum, activities and routines, and teaching strategies.
- **INTENDED PARTICIPANTS:** Diverse children and families.
- **STAFF TRAINED:** All staff trained in ECE and EI/ECSE curricular, instructional, environmental and assessment practices.
- **COMBINED RESOURCES:** Fiscal, human and program resources combined to meet needs.

Quality Components of Blended Programs

**FISCAL:** Federal, state, local and private funds across ECE, at-risk, and IDEA sources

**HUMAN:** Licensed and certified ECE/EI/ECSE educators, SLPs, OTs, School Psychologists, paraprofessionals

**PROGRAM:** Curricula, instructional materials, environmental modifications, assessment materials

**RESOURCES** for Infrastructure (Components) & Operation (Processes)
The MTSS Service Delivery System Framework and the Blended Practice model are “desirable, inter-related, and inter-dependent schooling models for educating all children, including those who have or are at-risk of developing disabilities.”

Young, Chandler, & Carta, 2019, p. 195
Steps of the Problem-Solving Model

**Problem Identification**
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**Problem Analysis**
Why does the problem exist?

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Figure 4.1. Steps of the problem-solving model. Source: Batsche, G. et al., 2005.
Strengths-based Problem-Solving Process

SCHOOL/PROGRAM Level:

• How are all children performing in core? Compare current indicators with expected or desired goals.

• Identify needed improvements. Make program changes, implement with fidelity, and monitor progress.

• Compare students’ performance and growth to goals. Determine next steps.
Clasroom Level:

- Core curriculum should be meeting most students’ needs. So, which children need supports?
- Arrange small groups to provide targeted interventions (standard protocol if possible). Implement with fidelity; monitor progress.
- Compare student performance and growth to goals; decide next steps.
Strengths-based Problem-Solving Process

INDIVIDUAL-CHILD Level:

• Core curriculum plus strategic interventions should be meeting almost all children’s needs.

• So, which few children require intensive interventions that are more individually-designed supports?

• Provide targeted interventions. Implement with fidelity; monitor progress.

• Compare student performance and growth to goals; decide next steps.
What Is Family Engagement?

- How is it different than parent involvement?
- How family engagement might look in a program implementing MTSS?
How would family engagement look like in MTSS?

- How might a child’s involvement in Tier 1, Tier 2 or Tier 3 influence families’ engagement?
Some Beginning Conversation with Families about MTSS

- What’s the difference between MTSS and Special Education?
- What are the tiers and why do some children get different instruction?
- The importance of their input in data-based decision-making
- Getting their input about their child, goals, and approaches to intervention
Families and the Problem-Solving Model

- Considerations in explaining MTSS to families
- What misconceptions families might have about MTSS?
Program Self-Assessment on Family Engagement Practices

• Asks how well program demonstrates intentional family engagement related to:
  ➢ Communication with families
  ➢ Beliefs about family engagement
  ➢ Respect for family values and practices
  ➢ Cultural awareness and sensitivity
  ➢ Inviting parents in and making them feel welcome

• Can be used for developing action plans related to families

How would you rate your program on these practices related to COMMUNICATION?

• Encouraging parents to tell you what the child is doing at home and what parents are working on at home.

• Helping families feel they can make a positive difference in their children’s lives.

• Providing parents with daily information about what their children do in the classroom.

Ratings:  5 = Very Well; 4 = Pretty Well; 3 = Okay; 2 = Poorly; 1 = Very Poorly
Using Text Messaging to Strengthen Family-School Partnerships (Colorado Department of Education, n.d.)

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vmuFmPQxP1s.
How would you rate your program on these practices related to BELIEF ABOUT FAMILY ENGAGEMENT:

- Incorporating family strengths and resources in the supports offered.
- Working together with parents to generate options for intervention strategies.
- Breaking barriers to family participation by providing child care, language translation, written information in home language, home visiting.

Ratings: 5 = Very Well; 4 = Pretty Well; 3 = Okay; 2 = Poorly; 1 = Very Poorly
How would you rate your program on these practices related to FAMILY VALUES AND PRACTICES:

- Communicate with families in their preferred format (phone, in-person, email, text)
- Offer parents opportunities to problem-solve and make joint decisions with which both staff and parents are comfortable

Ratings: 5 = Very Well; 4 = Pretty Well; 3 = Okay; 2 = Poorly; 1 = Very Poorly
How would you rate your program on these practices related to CULTURAL AWARENESS AND SENSITIVITY:

1. Have an understanding of, and are open to, and respect the culture and value system of families you serve
2. Make special efforts to reach families from all racial, cultural, and language groups

Ratings: 5 = Very Well; 4 = Pretty Well; 3 = Okay; 2 = Poorly; 1 = Very Poorly
How would you rate your program on these practices related to INVITING PARENTS IN AND MAKING THEM FEEL WELCOME:

1. Frequently invite parents to participate in their child’s learning at home and at school
2. Make parents feel comfortable being in the classroom (e.g., wanted, useful, belong there)
3. Provide materials that are family friendly and instructions that help families expand on the classroom curriculum

Ratings: 5 = Very Well; 4 = Pretty Well; 3 = Okay; 2 = Poorly; 1 = Very Poorly
Michael’s Story: The Middle

• BACKGROUND: Michael’s preschool operates in an MTSS framework. He is in a blended class and he receives ECSE and Speech Therapy to address expressive language goals.

• APLICATION:
  1. Describe Michael’s typical day in the blended class.
  2. How can the MTSS feature of a “layered continuum of support” benefit Michael?
Michael’s Story: The End

APLICATION:

3. How can “data-based decision-making” and “progress monitoring” ensure that Michael has instruction of the right intensity?

4. How do Michael’s parents stay engaged to ensure he has the best of ECE and ECSE practices?
Sofia’s Story: The Middle

• BACKGROUND: Sofia’s early learning program operates in an MTSS framework. She is eligible for ECSE to improve her significantly delayed social and communication skills. Her IEP states that most instruction will be in a self-contained ECSE and some will be in a blended ECE/ECSE class.

• APPLICATION:
  1. Describe a typical day for Sofia as she spends time in both settings.
  2. How can Sofia benefit from a “layered continuum of support”?
Sofia’s Story: The End

APPLICATION:
3. How can “data-based decision-making” and “Progress monitoring” ensure that Sofia has instruction of the right intensity?
4. How do Sofia’s parents stay engaged to ensure she has the best of ECE and ECSE practices?
Henry’s Story: The End

• **BACKGROUND:** Henry’s preschool operates in an MTSS framework. He is in a blended class and he scores in the lowest 10% of all the children his age on the Universal screener of vocabulary skills.

• **APPLICATION:**
  1. Describe Henry’s typical day in the blended class.
  2. How can the MTSS feature of a “layered continuum of support” benefit Henry?
APPLICATION:

3. Henry’s progress in Tier 1 is monitored; then, he receives with Tier 1 and Tier 2 (Standard Protocol). After progress monitoring, he needs more intensive instruction (Tier 3). After receiving Tier 3, Henry goes back to Tier 2, and then to Tier 1.

4. Describe the vocabulary instruction Henry received at each tier, and how his progress was measured.
Our Vision for MTSS in Early Education

Wouldn’t it be great if... 

Every child could participate in an early education program with evidence-based instruction, and receive appropriate levels of instructional interventions to achieve the best possible early academic and behavioral outcomes?
Measures and Interventions Cited

• **Developing Talkers**: [https://developingtalkers.org/](https://developingtalkers.org/).
• **Explicit Instruction—Archer & Hughes**: [https://explicitinstruction.org/](https://explicitinstruction.org/).
• **IGDIs**—http://igdi.ku.edu/.
• **myIGDIs**—[https://www.myigdis.com/](https://www.myigdis.com/).
• **Path to Literacy**: [https://products.brookespublishing.com/PAth-to-Literacy-P965.aspx](https://products.brookespublishing.com/PAth-to-Literacy-P965.aspx).
• **Pyramid Model—National Center for Pyramid Model Innovation**: [http://challengingbehavior.cbcs.usf.edu/](http://challengingbehavior.cbcs.usf.edu/).
• **Read It Again Pre-K**: [https://earlychildhood.ehe.osu.edu/research/practice/read-it-again-prek/](https://earlychildhood.ehe.osu.edu/research/practice/read-it-again-prek/).
• **World of Words**: [http://www.nyuwow.org/](http://www.nyuwow.org/)
A new slide of resources:

Our book with videos (www.brookespublishing.com/carta/materials). You may be interested in videos that go along with the book. See separate pdf sent with conference PPT for descriptions of the six (6) videos.

Annotated Bibliography correct link: Here is the link to an Annotated Bibliography.

Webinar: https://home.edweb.net/webinar/inclusiveeducation20190207/

PCP video: http://www.rtinetwork.org/professional/videos/virtualvisits
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