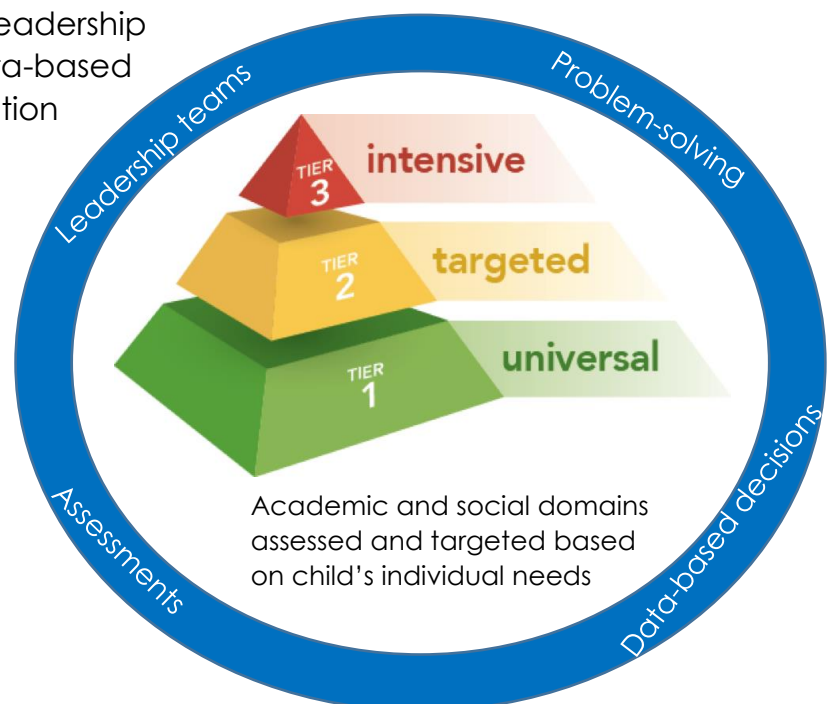


How Can We Ensure Preschoolers are Ready for Kindergarten? An Introduction to Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS)

Picture this: Julian is a 4 year old preschooler who will be starting Kindergarten next year. His parents are from Puerto Rico and speak Spanish to him at home. He attends a preschool in which his teacher, Ms. Jones, speaks English. She provides him with instruction primarily in English and her paraprofessional clarifies instructions in Spanish. Ms. Jones follows a curriculum that targets both social-emotional development and academic skills. At the beginning of preschool, Julian was most dominant in Spanish. However, over the course of the year, he began communicating more fluently in English. Julian has strong inter-personal skills. He shares toys and initiates play. He has learned how to ask for help and is learning to label emotions. However, Ms. Jones and Mrs. Lopez noticed that Julian has difficulty comprehending stories in both languages. He also appears to have limited vocabulary in Spanish and English. Despite being introduced to letters sounds and phonological awareness activities daily during Circle Time and small groups, Julian appears to be having difficulty catching up to his peers. Ms. Jones and Mrs. Lopez noticed that he is lagging behind peers who were less fluent in English at the start of preschool. They are not sure what to do to help Julian be ready for kindergarten.

What is Multi-tiered Systems of Support (MTSS)?

MTSS is an educational framework and prevention model in which a leadership team applies problem-solving, data-based decision making, and tiered instruction to support the academic and social-emotional needs of all children.



What are the components of MTSS?

Component	Description	
Leadership Teams	Leadership teams consist of administrators, preschool directors, teachers, parents, speech-language pathologists, psychologists, and other professionals. The job of the leadership team is to establish a system that provides the infrastructure for MTSS. This infrastructure will evaluate which components of MTSS are in place and which need to be added. They ensure that the curriculum, instruction, standards, and assessments used are aligned. They provide teacher professional development and coaches to support the implementation of MTSS. They oversee children's data and make recommendations for instruction. They meet regularly to problem-solve as a team.	
Problem-Solving	Problem-solving is at the heart of MTSS. Problem-solving involves identifying the children who might need additional support and providing a plan for instruction that meets the individual child's needs. Problem-solving is used to closely monitor children and determine their progress, as well as future action steps	
Assessment and progress monitoring	In MTSS, all children are screened using "universal screenings." The purpose of these screeners is to determine which children might be falling behind in one or more of the academic or social domains. Children who are not meeting benchmarks on one or more of the domains are then assessed more specifically on the relevant area of need. These children are assessed more frequently to monitor progress and to determine appropriate interventions.	
Data-based decision making	Data used from the assessments and progress monitoring are used to make decisions about the type and intensity of instruction a child needs.	
Tiered instruction	Tiered instruction provides scaffolded support to meet all children's academic and social needs. There are usually 3 tiers of instruction:	
	Tier 1	All children receive high quality, evidenced-based instruction using curricula that targets academic and social domains. Universal screenings are administered around 3x a year on all children. Data analyzed to determine who needs Tier 2 or Tier 3 instruction.
	Tier 2	When a child is behind on one or more domains, they will receive more focused instruction that matches their specific needs. Instruction is explicit, systematic, and focused, usually in small groups, and more intensive. Children's progress is monitored weekly, biweekly, or monthly. The leadership team analyzes the data frequently to determine next steps.
	Tier 3	This is for a child who is significantly behind peers in one or more domain or who is not responding well to Tier 2 intervention. Instruction is intensive and explicit, delivered individually. Like Tier 2, children's progress is monitored weekly, biweekly, or monthly. Leadership teams analyze the data to determine next steps, including further evaluation by professionals including psychologists or speech-language pathologists.

How can MTSS Help Julian? Many children who are Dual Language Learners are misidentified as having a learning or language impairment, when in reality, they really need guided support and instruction to provide them with learning opportunities that might new to them. However, assuming that their academic difficulties are caused by their limited English skills and “waiting to see” what happens can be dangerous because teachers might miss precious instructional time to intervene. Just like every preschooler, Julian is a great candidate for MTSS! Julian would benefit from screenings across all academic and social domains in Spanish and English to identify his areas of need. If the leadership team considers him a good candidate for tiered instruction, he would also benefit from tiered interventions tailored to his area(s) of need(s), as well as frequent progress monitoring and ongoing problem-solving.

I want to learn more about MTSS, where do I start?

Book: *Multi-Tiered Systems of Support for Young Children: Driving Change in Early Education*
By: Judith Carta & Robin Miller Young

Pyramid Model for Promoting Social Emotional Competence in Young Children
<https://challengingbehavior.cbcs.usf.edu>

Kansas MTSS
http://kskits.dept.ku.edu/ta/virtualKits/MTSS_IntegratingPreschools.shtml