

Alternatives-to-Suspension Fact Sheet: Targeted Tier II Interventions

Approximately 10-15 percent of students with more intensive behavioral needs may require more support than the Tier I strategies provided to all students. Tier II systems and procedures utilize data-driven processes to identify and tailor supports for students with academic and behavioral needs that interfere with learning. These students need supports that address the underlying academic and behavior skill deficits that are preventing them from engaging in learning. The implementation of effective, targeted supports should be efficient and rapid. Strong Tier II systems of early interventions prevent more significant problems and establish a healthy learning environment for all students.

Early Identification

School teams should have access to real-time data and regularly review academic and behavioral records to identify students who are demonstrating early signs of falling behind their peers. Examples of readily available data that may indicate that a student is struggling include:

- Absences/tardies/detentions.
- Behavioral incidents/office discipline referrals/referral for support services.
- Lagging academic outcomes/missing classwork/low test scores/failed classes.
- Limited class participation or engagement.
- Out of school suspensions/exclusions/expulsions.

Problem-Solving Process

Data should be the foundation of the problem-solving process. Team-Initiated Problem Solving (TIPS) is one research-based process for effective problem-solving (see resources). First, identify the problem and define it in terms that are objective, specific, and observable. Try to answer the “who, what, when, where, why, how” questions. For example, the statement “Taylor is aggressive” is too vague and does not provide enough information for intervention. A more objective, specific statement, such as “Taylor shouts out and refuses to do math work during independent work time,” provides a description that helps the team develop an intervention. The problem-solving team should focus discussion on data and solutions rather than anecdotal stories about the student.

Next, identify the underlying issues that are contributing to the problem behaviors. Keep in mind that inappropriate behavior works for the student by getting what is wanted or avoiding what is uncomfortable, difficult, or boring: all behavior is a form of communication about getting needs met. Use discipline and other data to identify the function of the behavior. Analyze the antecedents (what happens before the behavior) and consequences (what occurs after the behavior) to develop a hypothesis about the function of the behavior. Skill deficits are a factor in many behavior problems. For example, a kindergartner who is disruptive during playtime may not have sharing skills; a high school junior who shouts out and refuses to do math work may not have the academic skills necessary to do the work.

After you have identified the most likely function of the behavior, choose an intervention or evidence-based practice that addresses that function. Identify a replacement behavior or an appropriate behavior that would serve the same function as the misbehavior. Interventions for misbehavior stemming from skill deficits should focus on increasing the student’s competence on the specific skill.

Finally, teach the replacement behavior and make changes to the student’s environment to so that the misbehavior no longer works to serve the same function.

After identifying an intervention, create a clear plan for implementing and reviewing it. This should include: 1) intervention action items, 2) staff responsible for implementing action items, 3) deadlines for action items, 3) a date to review intervention, and 4) an objective, measurable goal for the intervention.

Targeted, Evidence-based Interventions

Resources are listed below to assist the process of identifying appropriate evidence-based interventions. Interventions should be delivered to small groups of students with similar needs. Consider including students who are strong in the replacement behavior as model peers. Interventions should include:

- Communication between and among school staff.
- Ongoing communication with the family.
- Frequent monitoring of academic and behavioral progress.
- Monitoring to ensure that the intervention is being implemented with fidelity.
- A plan and date to review the effectiveness of the intervention and to determine whether it should be intensified, maintained, or faded.

Common effective strategies for behavioral interventions include mini-courses or social skills training to teach replacement behaviors and learning targets; mentoring to foster staff-student relationships and increase opportunities to teach; restorative practices such as problem-solving circles; and alternatives to suspension like community service.

Resources for Finding Effective Tier II Interventions:

[Team-Initiated Problem Solving \(TIPS\)](http://www.pbis.org): <http://www.pbis.org>.

Search "TIPS" for information on a research-based problem-solving process.

[Positive Behavior Intervention Support World](http://www.pbisworld.com/): <http://www.pbisworld.com/>.

This site helps you identify the problem and find relevant interventions and tools.

[What Works Clearinghouse](http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/findwhatworks.aspx): <http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/findwhatworks.aspx>.

Find information on the effectiveness of different educational programs and interventions.

Pre-referral Intervention Manual, 3rd Edition, by Stephen McCarney.

This book contains interventions for students who are struggling academically or behaviorally.

Teacher's Encyclopedia of Behavior Management, 2nd Edition, by Randy Sprick.

This book has more than 500 easy-to-implement intervention plans.

[Intervention Central](http://www.interventioncentral.org): <http://www.interventioncentral.org>.

This site has intervention ideas and tools such as progress monitoring and behavioral charts.

[Restorative Measures](http://education.state.mn.us/MDE/StuSuc/SafeSch/RestorMeas): <http://education.state.mn.us/MDE/StuSuc/SafeSch/RestorMeas>

This site listed many resources for developing programming, curricula and intervention practices relate to restorative measures.

Additional Resources

[Alternatives-to-Suspension Fact Sheet: Multi-Tiered System of Support](http://education.state.mn.us/MDE/dse/sped/alt/):

<http://education.state.mn.us/MDE/dse/sped/alt/>

For more information, [see the Alternatives-to-Suspension Fact Sheets on the Minnesota Department of Education website](#) or contact Eric Kloos at (651) 582-8268 or eric.kloos@state.mn.us.