



Families and Schools Partnering for Children's Literacy Success *Family Track*

[insert - Presenter Name]
[insert - Presenter Title]

If you have questions after the presentation, please contact: [insert contact name and email]

or

[Contact | National Center on Improving Literacy at nciliteracy@gmail.com](mailto:nciliteracy@gmail.com)



The National Center on Improving Literacy (NCIL) is a partnership among literacy experts, university researchers, and technical assistance providers, with funding from the United States Department of Education.

Our mission is to increase access to, and use of, evidence-based approaches to screen, identify, and teach students with literacy-related disabilities, including dyslexia.



Learn About Families and Schools Partnering for Children's Literacy Success

This workshop is part of a series on the key roles families play in supporting children's literacy success. It is designed for parents and caregivers of students in grades Pre-K to 12 who want to better understand how to partner with schools to foster their child's literacy success. Families will learn skills to collaborate with the school to make decisions about their child's literacy education, promote faster development and catch trouble spots early.

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Agenda

- Workshop Overview
- Session 1
 - Family Engagement
 - Communicate and Interact Often
- Session 2
 - Discuss Literacy Instruction and Intervention
- Session 3
 - Practice Literacy Skills at Home
- Session 4
 - Address Concerns Together





Learning Objectives

By the end of this session, participants will be able to:

- **Communicate and interact effectively with the school** by knowing how to ask questions, seek clarification, and stay informed about their child's literacy progress.
- **Discuss literacy instruction and intervention with confidence** by understanding what their child is expected to learn and whether instruction and supports are evidence-based and targeted to their needs.
- **Support literacy practice at home** by identifying activities and strategies that match their child's skill level and coordinating with the school to reinforce learning.
- **Address concerns collaboratively** by sharing observations from home, understanding the school's system of support, and working together to determine next steps when challenges arise.





Workshop Materials

Session 1

- Family Engagement and Student Success: What the Research Says
- Why Family Engagement Matters for Student and School Success
- Family Engagement in MTSS
- Understanding Screening: Overall Screening and Assessment
- Questions to Ask Your Child's School About RTI
- Talk with Your Child's Teacher
- Talk with Your Child's Teacher - Hablar con los maestros de su hijo
- Reading Milestones
- How Families Can Partner with Schools on Literacy Development

Session 2

- 10 Key Reading Practices for All Elementary Schools
- 10 Key Reading Practices for All Middle and High Schools
- 10 Key Writing Policies and Practices for All Schools
- Evidence-based Teaching Practices
- Intensive Intervention: An Overview for Parents and Families

Session 3

- None

Session 4

- Recognizing Reading Problems
- Child Find: What it is and how it works



Session 1:

- Family Engagement**
- Communicate and Interact Often**



Family Engagement



What is Family Engagement?

Family engagement is one of the strongest predictors of student success. When schools and families work together, students benefit through improved grades, stronger attendance, greater persistence, and increased motivation.



What is Family Engagement?

Characteristics of Family Engagement

- Family engagement is a **shared responsibility**, with schools, community organizations, and families all committed to supporting children's learning and development.
- Family engagement is **continuous across a child's life**, with parents' roles evolving as children grow into young adulthood.
- Effective family engagement **reinforces learning across all settings**—at home, in early childhood programs, in school, in after-school and faith-based programs, and throughout the community.



[Learn More](#)

The National Association for Family,
School and Community Engagement



National Center on Improving Literacy



A System of Literacy Services and Supports

How School + Home Work Together to Support Your Child's Literacy



- Literacy instruction
 - Assessment
 - Intervention

**During the
School Day**

**Outside the
School Day**



- Literacy support
 - Practice at home
 - Practice in the community

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Family Engagement in a System of Literacy Support and Services: Multi-tiered System of Support for Reading (MTSS-R)

MTSS-R provides opportunities for families and schools to:

- Build positive relationships
- Empower families
- Provide a system of supports and practices
- Engage in a problem-solving process
- Support multidirectional communication
- Promote a focus on team and data-based decision making

The goal of MTSS is to work WITH families to build systems of support for two-way collaboration

Family Engagement in MTSS:
WHAT DOES THE RESEARCH SAY?

"Families' engagement in their children's education is an important factor in the academic and behavioral success of students throughout the school years...Implementing Multi-Tiered Systems of Supports (MTSS) provides an opportunity for educators to collaborate with families in a problem-solving process focused on improving students' academic performance and behavior" (Weingarten et al., 2020).

Positive Relationships

"The logic underlying the importance of proactive outreach to families is that through reaching out to families before problems arise, schools have an opportunity to define a collaborative relationship with families based on positive communication and build trust. In turn, the positive relationship built through initial contacts can facilitate family engagement in certain practices" (Garbacz et al., 2020).

"Successful school-family partnerships have been associated with increases in family engagement in their children's education and improved academic success and behavioral outcomes for students" (Strickland-Cohen et al., 2021).

Empower Families

"Implementing MTSS provides an opportunity for schools to collaborate with families in a problem-solving process focused on improving students' academic and behavioral performance... When families contribute to these decisions, educators may be more successful in planning and delivering productive intervention supports" (Weingarten et al., 2020).

"Families also reap the rewards of effective collaboration, as research shows that... parents report improved attitudes about school (e.g., seeing school as more welcoming, and seeing themselves as partners in their child's learning experience" (Witte et al., 2021).

Strong and Shared Leadership

"Family members serve on the PBIS leadership team and other committees and workgroups, the PIA and PBIS leadership team consistently work together, and communication systems are implemented that support a feed-back loop between families and school staff" (Garbacz, 2018).

"Universal planning and problem solving organizes the school's PBIS leadership team's family engagement activities and identifies ways to interface with family members on the PBIS leadership team. Universal planning and problem solving is a necessary step prior to establishing activities across systems" (Garbacz et al., 2015).

Multi-Tiered Supports

"...embedding family engagement within the tiered structure of MTSS may help schools plan and implement sustainable and meaningful partnerships with all families" (Weingarten et al., 2020).

"MTSS would provide a system of supports and practices that bolster meaningful family engagement... That system would include broad-based strategies to ensure that all families are informed about and confident in how to help their children succeed" (Fehr & Gerstein, 2019).

MTSS

[**Learn More**](#)



A Multi-tiered System of Support for Reading

MTSS-R

A schoolwide framework for instruction and intervention so all children meet literacy goals

**During the
School Day**

**Specialized Small
Group Instruction**

**Additional Small
Group Instruction**

**High-Quality
Classroom Instruction**

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Videos provided by:



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A Multi-tiered System of Support for Reading (MTSS-R)

How can you help?

Participate in school improvement teams, committees, or in other groups

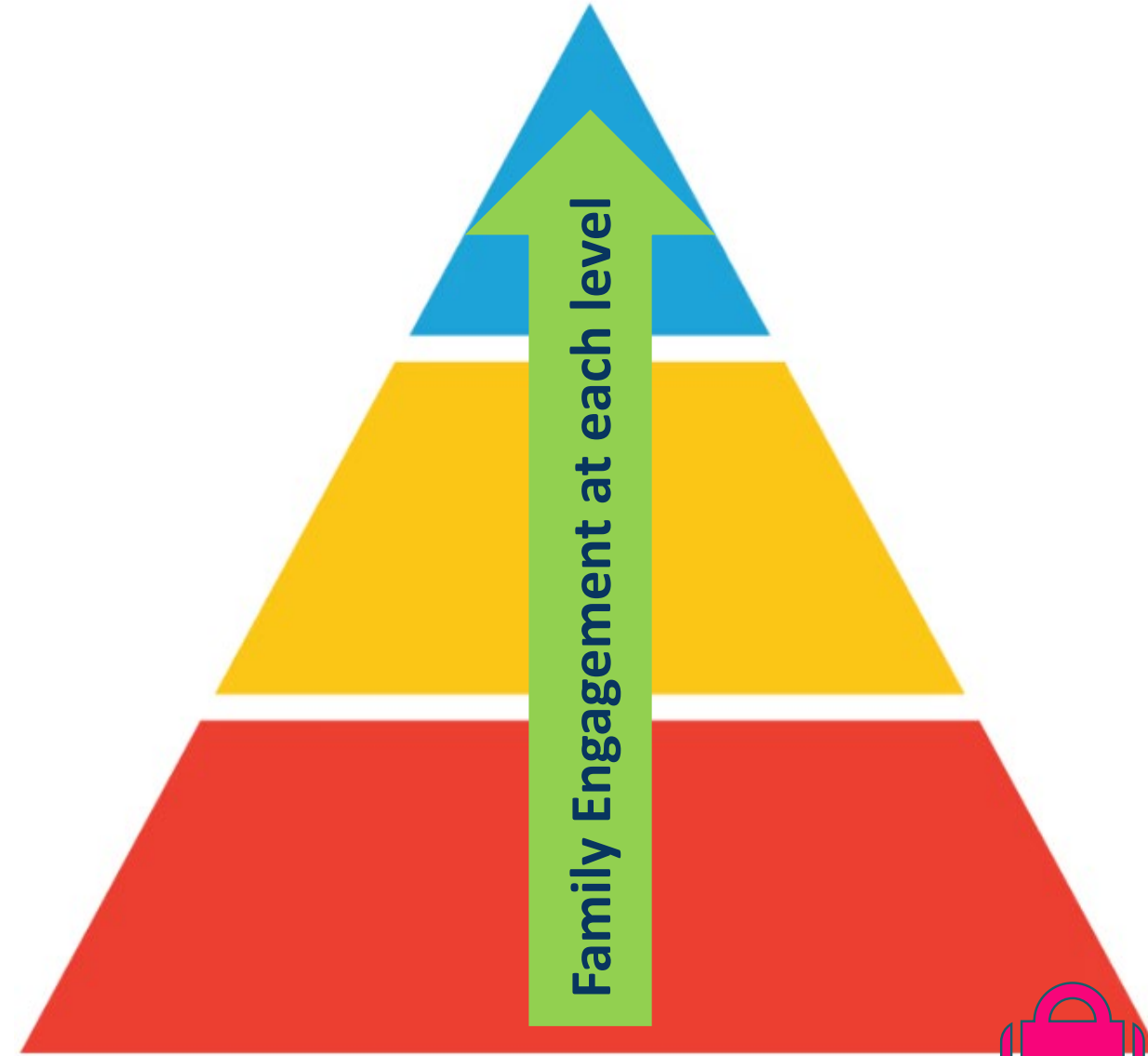
Help develop home literacy lending kits

Help with after-school literacy programs

Link families to community resources

[Try it Out](#)

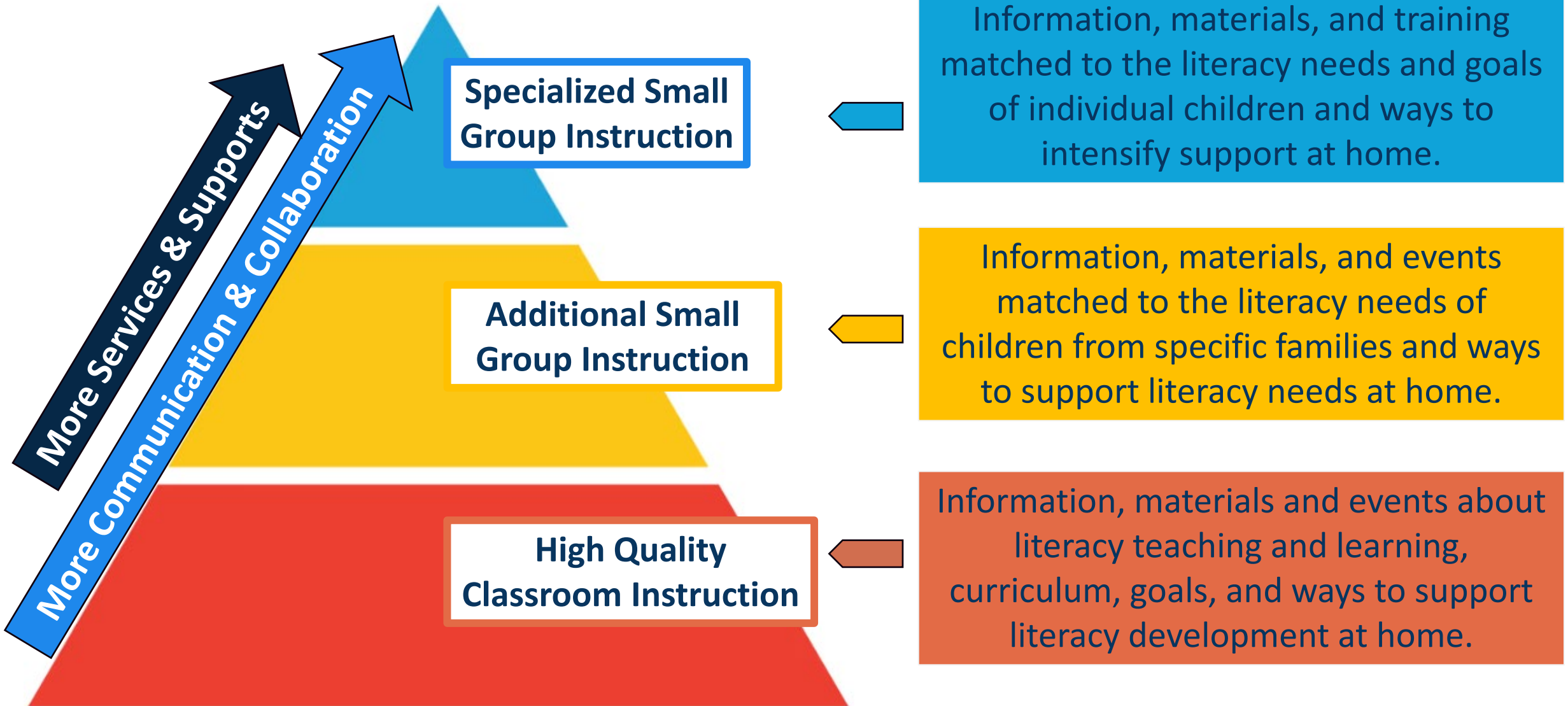
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A Multi-tiered System of Support for Reading



Ask the Question

What are your language and literacy goals for my child and family?



How is my child doing in language and literacy development?



What are the ways I can share information with you about my child's language and literacy learning?



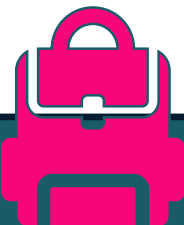
How can I partner with you to develop language and literacy goals for children?



How can I support my child's language and literacy goals?



What does my child need to know and be able to do?



How Families Can Partner With Schools on Literacy Development

Communicate and Interact Often

- Families should ask the school how best to communicate with each other, and should feel comfortable asking questions if more information is needed.

Discuss Literacy Instruction and Intervention

- Families should know what literacy standards their child is working on, review whether those expectations are appropriate, and ask whether the instruction and interventions are evidence-based and focused on the skills their child needs most.

Practice Literacy Skills at Home

- Families should talk with the school about home literacy activities that match the child's skill level.

Address Concerns Together

- Families should discuss with the school which activities or tasks the child has trouble with at home, and how you helped. Learn about the school's system of learning support.





Communicate and Interact Often



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Families and schools work best when they stay connected

Foster Strong Communication

- Ask how the school prefers to communicate
- Find out how you will receive communication from the school
- Feel confident asking questions anytime you need more information

Get and Stay Involved

- Help in the classroom
- Attend school events and meetings (orientation, parent-teacher conferences)
- Join school groups

Ask Meaningful Questions

- Asking thoughtful questions to understand how the school supports literacy to build trust and ensure everyone is working toward the same goals



Families and schools work best when they stay connected

Ask Questions That Matter

Asking thoughtful questions helps families understand how the school supports literacy and how they can be part of the process. These conversations build trust and ensure everyone is working toward the same goals.

Helpful Questions to Ask

- “What are the school’s literacy goals for children and families?”
- “How does the school partner with families when developing literacy goals?”
- “How can I support my child’s language and literacy goals at home?”



Families and schools work best when they stay connected

Share Experiences & Build Partnerships

Families bring valuable insights about their child's strengths, challenges, and learning habits. Sharing these experiences helps the school tailor support and strengthens the home-school connection.

Ways to Share Your Perspective

- Tell teachers what works well at home
- Describe activities or tasks your child finds challenging
- Ask for clarification when something is unclear
- Offer ideas or examples that might help teachers understand your child better



Questions



The big ideas...

- Family engagement for children's literacy learning and achievement is a shared responsibility among families, schools, and communities.
- Trust is the primary ingredient for strong home-school relationships for children's literacy learning and achievement. Strong home-school relationships rely on open, two-way communication.
- An effective system of support and services for children's literacy learning involves home and school partnering together.



Session 2:

- Discuss Literacy Instruction and Intervention**



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Literacy Discussions: Curriculum & Instruction

Talk about literacy standards, curriculum, and instruction

Talk about activities related to literacy goals

[Learn More](#)

Ask about the instructional materials that will be used and the learning expectation for the year

Request examples, activities, and strategies to use at home to connect with your child's reading goals



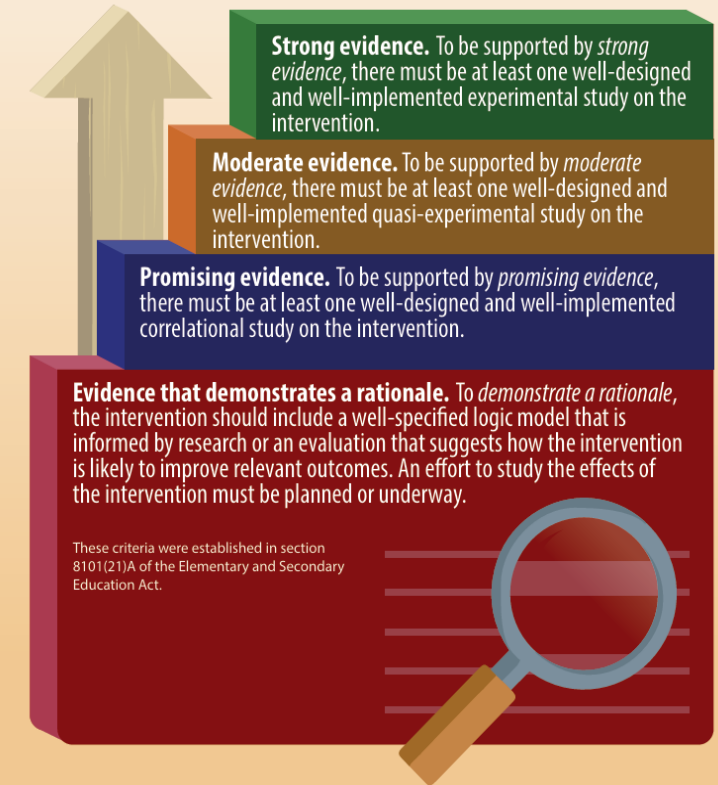
Key Discussion Topics: Evidence-Based Instruction

1

Is the literacy approach, strategy, or program **evidence-based**?

Evidence-based instruction refers to a teaching strategy or program supported by research showing there is credible evidence that it leads to improved academic outcomes.

WHAT DO WE MEAN BY EVIDENCE-BASED?



These criteria were established in section 8101(21)A of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act.

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Video provided by
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Key Discussion Topics: Literacy Practices

2

Are the literacy practices appropriate for my child's grade level?

Are there missing practices?



10 Key Reading Practices
K-5



10 Key Reading Practices
6-12



10 Key Writing Policies and Practices
for K-12



Key Discussion Topics: Instruction Delivery

3

Is instruction designed and delivered effectively?

- ✓ Different ways to get materials
- ✓ Flexibility
- ✓ Accessible and understandable
- ✓ Find out about additional support

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Evidence-based teaching practices

Teacher understanding of effective evidence-based practices is vital for supporting student achievement and closing achievement gaps. While many alternative pathway teachers know what content they must teach, many have never had classes on how to teach the content using evidence-based practices. **This infographic is a quick reference guide containing evidence-based practices that can impact learning that teachers can use daily to support effective instruction.**

Principles of instruction

Research-based strategies that all teachers should know

- 1 Begin lessons with short reviews of previous learning.
- 2 Present new material in small amounts; assist students as they practice this material.
- 3 Ask many questions and observe student responses; questions allow students to connect new material with prior learning.
- 4 Provide models such as step-by-step demonstrations or think alouds to work out the problem.
- 5 Guide student practice by asking good questions and providing feedback.
- 6 Check that students understand the material; doing so can help students learn with fewer errors.
- 7 Obtain a high success rate (~ 80%) through teaching in small steps, guiding practice, and employing mastery learning techniques.
- 8 Provide scaffolds, or temporary supports, for difficult material.
- 9 Prepare students for and monitor independent practice; ample independent practice is necessary for skills and knowledge to become automatic.
- 10 Engage students in weekly and monthly reviews of past material.



Learn More



Literacy Discussions: Assessment and Intervention

Talk About Literacy Assessment and Data

Is it:

- Accurate?
- Timely?
- Accessible and Meaningful?

Talk About Intensive Intervention

[Learn More](#)

Intensive Intervention An Overview for Parents and Families

Are you concerned that your child is not making progress in school? Have you noticed that your child is not meeting his or her Individualized Education Program (IEP) goals? Is your child acting out or struggling with behavioral problems and motivation? Intensive intervention may be able to help.



WHO?

For students with and without disabilities who are struggling with reading, math, and/or behavior despite receiving high-quality instruction and intervention.
For students with disabilities, intensive intervention may be helpful if they are not making progress on their IEP goals.



WHAT?

Intensive intervention is a team-based process that uses student data to help teachers figure out when and how to change and intensify instruction (more practice, feedback, structure, focus) to help students be more successful.

In some schools this may be called **Tier 3**.



WHERE?

The location of the intervention may vary, but intensive intervention often occurs in small groups of one to three students. The intervention is led by a specialist or expert (reading specialist, special educator, math specialist, behavioral specialist, school psychologist, school counselor).



WHEN?

Intensive intervention often includes more frequent intervention — more times per week, more minutes per session or day, or more total sessions.

Teachers also need to collect student data more often. Quick (less than 5 minutes) skill checks may happen daily or weekly so that teachers can learn sooner if they need to make a change to instruction.



HOW?

A team of teachers and specialists goes through your child's data to:

- Determine **WHEN** a change should be made to instruction.
- Figure out **HOW** to make that change.
- Develop a **PLAN** that matches his or her needs.
- Continue collecting **DATA** to see if the changes are working.

Intensive intervention is not a one-size-fits-all approach or a quick fix. Changes before the student makes progress.



Discuss Literacy Instruction and Intervention

Literacy Discussions: Ask the Question

How is reading taught in the school and by whom? What reading skills do you focus on?



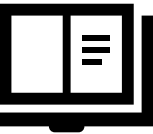
When does literacy instruction and intervention happen and for how long?



How many other children join?



How does the instruction/intervention align with my child's specific language and literacy needs?



What school materials or trainings about literacy are available to me?



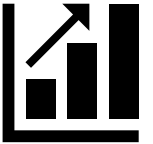
Discuss Literacy Instruction and Intervention

Literacy Discussions: Ask the Question

What screening practices for language and literacy does the school use and when?



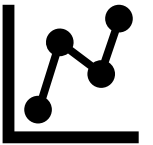
What information does the school collect on my child's language and literacy progress?



How is the information used to make decisions about my child's language and literacy needs?



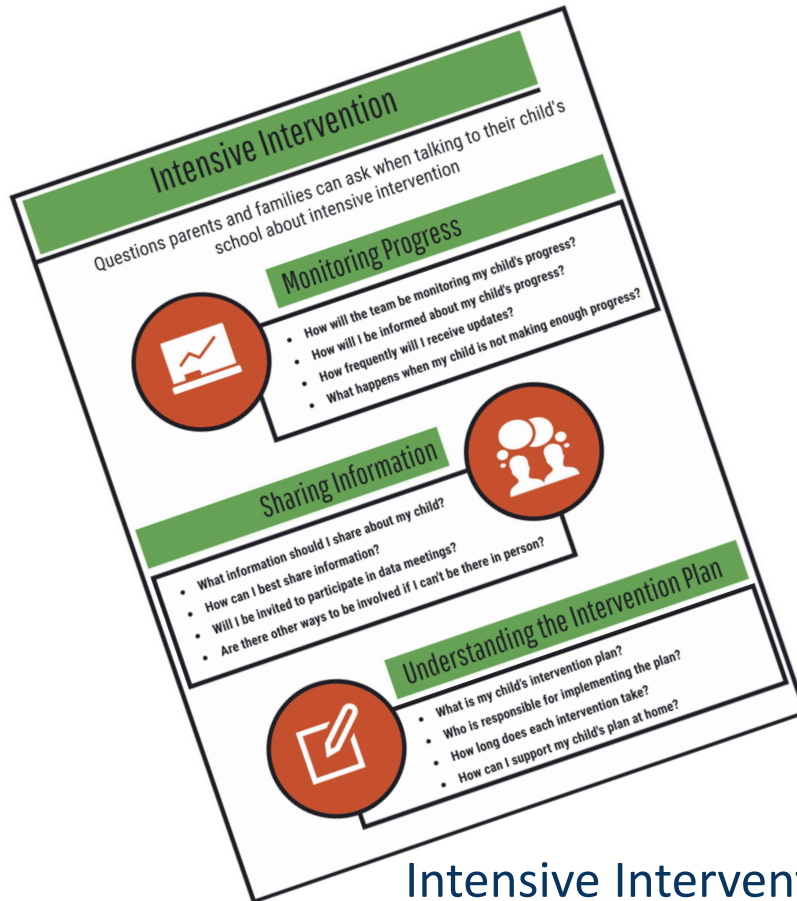
How are you monitoring my child's language and literacy progress?



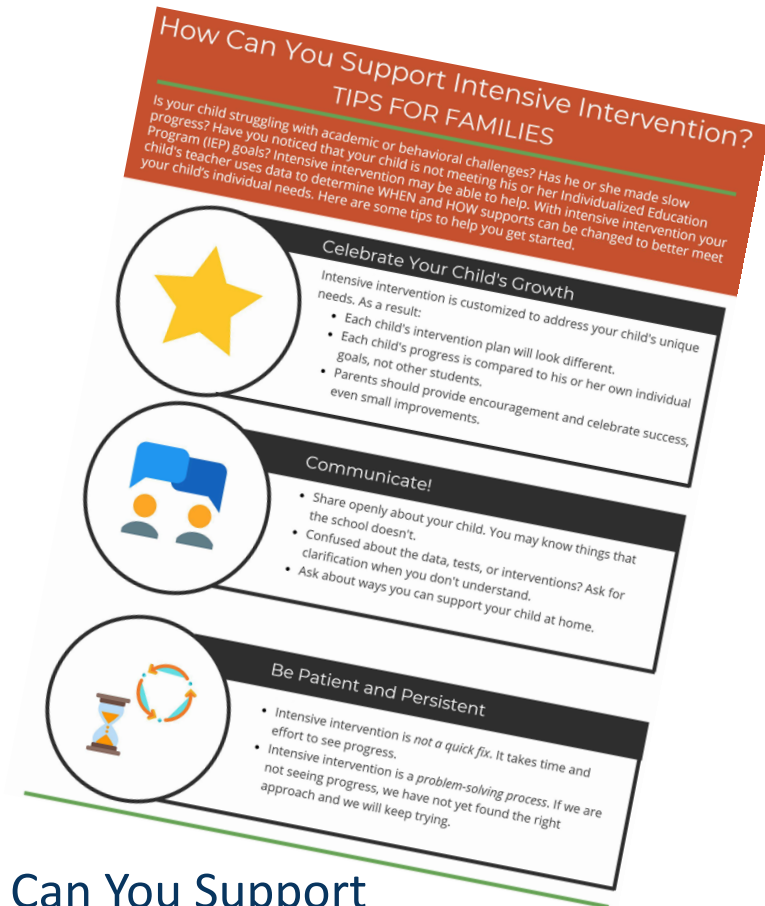
How are children with reading difficulties identified?



Literacy Discussions: Additional Resources



Intensive Intervention:
Questions Parents and
Families Can Ask



How Can You Support
Intensive Intervention?
Tips for Families





Questions



The big ideas...

- Knowing what scientific research says about how kids learn to read can help you determine if the literacy approach, strategy, or program being used with your child is evidence-based.
- It is important to identify if the evidence-based literacy practices are appropriate for your child's grade level or if any key practices are missing.
- Discussing literacy instruction and intervention can help you determine if the literacy approach, strategy, or program being used with your child is designed and delivered effectively.





Session 3:

- Practice Literacy Skills at Home



How Families Can Partner With Schools on Literacy Development

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Practice Literacy Skills at Home

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Address Concerns Together

- Families should discuss with the school which activities or tasks the child has trouble with at home, and how you helped. Learn about the school's system of learning support.



Families should talk with the school about:

- Home literacy activities that match their child's skill level.
- What literacy resources are important to share with one another to better understand and support their child's literacy development
- How our language system works to listen, speak, read, and write well



Why Home Practice Matters

- Home practice strengthens the skills taught in class.
- Frequent practice strengthens reading skills.
- Children learn best when school and home reinforce the same skills.
- Even 10–15 minutes a day can make a measurable difference.

Families can support reading at home with simple, meaningful activities connected to what children learn in school.

Start by asking the school how you can best support your child's reading and writing at home.



How to Partner With the School

- Ask what reading skills your child is working on.
 - *“What activities will help my child practice the skills learned at school?”*
 - *“What strategies should I use to help my child read or write?”*
 - *“What tools or materials are available to support practice at home?”*
- Request one simple activity to practice at home.
- Share what works well for your child.
- Ask for demonstrations if you’re unsure how to help.
- Use school communication tools (email, apps, websites).



Try Activities Connected to School Learning

- Start with one simple activity and build from there.
- **Examples of home activities:**
 - Reading together and talking about the story
 - Practicing letter sounds, sight words, or vocabulary
 - Using writing for real purposes (notes, lists, reflections)
 - Reading articles or books related to school topics
 - Listening to audiobooks to build vocabulary and comprehension



Use Tools and Resources the School Recommends

Examples of tools your school may offer:

- Literacy kits with books, games, and practice materials
- Online reading platforms or leveled texts
- Graphic organizers for comprehension
- Word lists, sound cards, or writing prompts
- Apps for vocabulary or fluency practice

Ask for:

- Clear directions
- A demonstration
- Examples of how to use the tools at home



Additional Resource

[About](#)[Projects](#)[Resources](#)[Academic Library](#)

Helping Kids Learn at Home

[Learn More](#)

The big ideas...

- Two important foundational skills in early reading instruction are phonemic awareness and phonics.
- For children who struggle to read, working with phonemes and decoding words can be especially difficult.
- Learning to listen, speak, read, and write well also includes developing oral language skills and reading fluently and with meaning.





Questions



Session 4:

- Address Concerns Together**



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Learning Objectives

- To learn what makes reading a complex and unnatural process
- To learn how to appropriately address children's literacy needs early
- To learn about reading disabilities, including dyslexia



Address Concerns Together

A Complex and Unnatural Process

Watch Video

Video provided by:



Learn More

Explicit and
Systematic
Reading
Instruction

Reading
Comprehension

Vocabulary

Fluency

Phonics

Phonemic Awareness



Address Concerns Together

Signs of Risk for Reading Difficulties



[Child Find](#)

[Learn More](#)

Video provided by:



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Address Concerns Together

Ask the Question

How is my child's language and literacy learning being supported in this system of literacy services and support?



What types of support are offered to my child if he or she is struggling to read or write?



What accommodations does the school provide to help my child read or write?



What might happen next if my child continues to struggle?



Check for Understanding

What can I say or do to find out more about my child's literacy supports and services at school?

Think about what you've learned about partnering with your child's school to help Dave. He is interested in learning about his child's school system of literacy support and services and how his child is being supported within that system. What can Dave say or do to find out more? Choose the answer that best fits.

- ☐ Find out what opportunities are provided to help with literacy learning at the school.
- ☐ Discuss what literacy skills his child has learned and what they are still working on.
- ☐ Ask for literacy activities matched to his child's skill level and share what worked well and what did not.
- ☐ Request information on his child's literacy progress and talk about what happens if he has concerns about the progress being made.
- ☒ All of the above.





The big ideas...

- All children benefit from explicit, systematic reading instruction in phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension.
- Some children continue to struggle with reading even with evidence-based classroom reading instruction.
- If you or your child's teacher is concerned that your child's reading difficulties are unexpected or unusual, seek further information from the school and others about next steps.





Questions





How Can I Learn More?



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Thank You!

- [insert contact information]

