

Multi-Tiered Systems of Support in Early Childhood: Stages of Implementation Analysis

State, Region, District, or School: _____ Date: _____

Implementation team members completing this analysis: _____

“Is the multi-tiered systems of support (MTSS) in early childhood (EC) framework the right system initiative for a specific program/school or agency? If so, how do we get started?” These are important questions to ask as program/school and agency leaders evaluate different ways to provide effective and efficient early care and education services to young children and their families who also have demonstrable outcomes. Completion of the Exploration Stage activities in this document may help programs/schools and agencies determine if the MTSS in EC initiative is the right fit for a specific school/program or agency. It may also help determine feasibility and staff readiness for shifting into MTSS in EC practices, as well as the beginning steps of Installation. A school/program or agency leadership team should complete the document. For activities scored as “Not Yet In Place” or “Initiated or Partially In Place,” the Implementation Team may wish to:

- a. Examine the importance of the activity in relationship to achieving success.
- b. Identify and address barriers to completion of the activity.
- c. Ensure that an action plan related to the item(s) is developed (sub-activities, accountable people identified, timeline, evidence of completion) and monitored.

Scoring Key

A strength of stage score can be computed for each stage to help guide action planning. Award points for each element (e.g., 1–10) and for each sub-element where those are available (e.g., 2 a–g) to arrive at a total possible of 46 (2×23).

- Each element/sub-element identified as **In Place** = 2 Points
- Each element/sub-element identified as **Initiated or Partially In Place** = 1 Point
- Each element/sub-element identified as **Not Yet In Place** = 0 Points

Documentation

For each element that is identified as “In Place” or “Initiated or Partially in Place” please briefly describe or reference the evidence and/or data sources that demonstrate that that element is observable or measureable (e.g., needs assessment document, fidelity reports, training plan). One data source may serve to document several items. Use the back of the document or attach relevant evidence and/or data sources as supplemental pages to this document.

Adaptation of Stages Analysis Developed Specifically for MTSS in Early Childhood

EXPLORATION Stage-Related Activities for: MTSS in Early Childhood	In Place (2 points)	Partially in Place or Initiated (1 point)	Not Yet in Place (0 points)	Evidence for “In Place” or “Initiated or Partially in Place” Components. Use back of page if necessary.
1. Form Implementation Team: This might be an Instructional Leadership Team with a focus on MTSS in EC implementation (repurpose/expand a current team) or create a specifically dedicated MTSS in EC Team.				
2. Engage in Exploration Process: Explore activities, timeline, benefits, and risks, and communicate activities to key stakeholder groups, including families. Consider activities aligned with MTSS in EC defining components and processes, 2a through 2g.				
<i>a) Ensure alignment:</i> For example, teaching (curricula, instructional practices), staffing (hire, train, PD, evaluate) and decision making (data, teams, communication) are aligned vertically (across the age/grade continuum) and horizontally (at any one age/grade level) so all participants are engaged in a consistent, holistic learning experience.				
<i>b) Use universal screener(s):</i> Tools are needed that are reliable and valid, sensitive to instructional effects, have benchmarks of adequate progress, are low cost and efficient, and have accurate indicator(s) of children’s performance on future essential outcomes.				
<i>c) Develop a tiered instructional model:</i> Develop differentiated curricula, instructional and environmental arrangements, and aligned assessment tools and processes of varying intensity (Tiers 1, 2, and 3); Tier 1 is top priority.				
<i>d) Use tools that are research-based, scientifically validated practices:</i> Curricula, instructional tools, environmental tools, assessment tools, and decision-making processes are evidence based.				
<i>e) Ensure treatment integrity:</i> Ensure that a high quality, comprehensive curriculum addressing developmental, early academic, and social-emotional competencies is employed with integrity at each level; each person adheres to plan.				
<i>f) Create teams:</i> Configure membership so that high performing, collaborative teams engage in a four-step, strengths-based, problem-solving process (Problem Identification, Problem Analysis, Intervention Development and Implementation, and Plan Evaluation) to ensure student needs are matched with instruction of the correct intensity.				
<i>g) Expect accountability:</i> School-wide accountability is needed to achieve an observable and measurable goal for student growth; Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) is in place, coaching and Professional Learning Community members assist program improvement.				

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3. Analyze Data: Determine need and prevalence. Example: Do you have a Universal Screener in place? If yes, examine universal screening data at district, organization, and/or school/program level to determine how effectively and efficiently school/program goals are being achieved. Change Tier 1 if it is not effective before adding other tiers.				
4. Select Targeted Areas: Address needs (e.g., student, teacher, family outcomes): (a) academic and socially significant issues, (b) parent and community perception of need, (c) data indicating need.				
5. Review: Identify how MTSS in EC might match your target areas and address needs.				
6. Review and Discuss MTSS in EC model: Use the Hexagon Tool: Exploring Context (http://implementation.fpg.unc.edu/resources/hexagon-tool-exploring-context) to look at 6a through 6f below.				
<p>a) Needs of Students: How well would the MTSS in EC model meet the needs of families and children? Example: How might it close the achievement gap of students who are low performers? How can data-based decision making assist in matching instruction of the right intensity to meet children’s needs at various tiers, including children with Individualized Education Programs (children moving from Tier 1 to Tier 2 to Tier 3 and moving from Tier 3 to Tier 2 to Tier 1)?</p> <p>Needs of Teachers and Staff: How would the MTSS in EC model impact staff efficiency and use of human, financial, and natural resources? Would there be a positive impact on school climate and culture?</p>				
<p>b) Fit: How well would MTSS in EC fit with current initiatives, priorities, structures and supports, and parent/community values? Example: It fits well with initiatives to support “Inclusionary/Blended” practices, “Birth to Grade Three Seamless Learning Continuum,” Intentional Teaching, strategies for ELLs, newer teacher evaluation models (e.g., Danielson), alignment of the CCSS from Pre-K to Elementary, state early learning standards, and so forth. It is supported by Division for Early Childhood (DEC)/National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC)/National Head Start Association (NHSA).</p>				
<p>c) Resource availability: What resources are available for training, staffing, technology supports, curricula, data systems, and administration? Example: Can you access problem-solving training through state-wide PD/coaching resources, local special education cooperative or joint agreement?</p>				

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<i>d) Outcome evidence:</i> What outcomes might be expected if the program or practices are implemented well? What do those who are experienced in MTSS in EC say about the outcomes they have achieved? What is their evidence?				
<i>e) Readiness for replication:</i> Who else at the local, regional, state, and national level has been successful? Where do you find expert assistance? Where can you see good MTSS in EC models?				
<i>f) Capacity to implement:</i> Can you implement MTSS in EC as intended and sustain and improve implementation over time? Example: Is there a long-term commitment from the school board? Do you have a low rate of staff turnover? Do you have a leadership plan of succession? <i>Productive discussion:</i> Schedule time and conduct a productive discussion of a thorough exploration process focused on the MTSS in EC model. Implementation Team(s) need to consider six areas listed above (6a through 6f)				
7. Determine match: Determine match of MTSS in EC for your program needs based on assessment results above. Would a different initiative meet your needs better?				
8. Methods: Develop methods to promote exploration and assess “consensus and commitment” for range of impacted stakeholders.				
9. Analyze: Conduct analysis of information and results of exploration activities.				
10. Implementation Team: Recommendation made to select or not MTSS in EC; forward to appropriate level (e.g., next leadership level team, best practices groups, local partners, alliance, District leadership) for final decision.				
Total points				
Average % in each category— Strength of Exploration score				
Overall Score: (23 items × 2 = Maximum of 46 points possible)				

Adapted by Young (2014) from *Stages of implementation analysis: Where are we?* (pp. 1–5) by Blasé, K., van Dyke, M., & Fixsen, D. (2013). *The State Implementation & Scaling-up of Evidence-based Practices Center (SISEP)*. Chapel Hill, NC: Frank Porter Graham Child Development Institute, University of North Carolina Chapel Hill. Adapted and used with permission of SISEP. No endorsement from the SISEP or NIRN is implied nor should it be assumed for this adaptation.