

Tier II: Intervention

Which students are eligible for Tier II intervention?

Tier II intervention addresses the needs of students who are not adequately progressing in the general education classroom. Benchmark assessments (fall screening plus winter and spring progress monitoring) identify these students who exhibit low early literacy skills and may be at-risk for reading difficulty. *Tier II intervention should support and augment core reading instruction.* The goal is to get students back on track so they can continue to succeed without further intervention.

Individual schools determine which students to serve through Tier II intervention. As a general guideline, students are eligible if they fail to meet benchmarks.

Where does the intervention take place?

Each school should designate an appropriate setting, which may be the general education classroom or some other intervention setting.

Who provides the intervention?

The Tier II interventionist may be the classroom teacher, a specialized reading teacher, or an external interventionist specifically trained for the intervention. Schools should strongly consider designating teachers who have attended Teacher Reading Academy (TRA) training as Tier II and Tier III interventionists or interventionist trainers.

Interventionist behavior is important to the success of both Tier II and Tier III instruction. Good interventionists redirect off-task behavior, provide students with positive feedback, and effectively communicate expectations by providing clear and explicit goals for activities. In addition, interventionists should consistently follow lesson plans and select practice items that meet lesson objectives.

When should Tier II intervention start?

Benchmark assessments are administered to all students during the fall screening plus winter and spring progress monitoring. It is suggested that testing take place about three weeks after school starts in fall, one to two weeks after the holiday break in winter (mid-January), and no later than two weeks before the end of the school year in spring. Intervention efforts must start as soon as possible after students have been identified through benchmark testing, within one to two weeks if possible (with the exception of spring benchmark testing). For students who fail to meet spring benchmarks, summer school should be considered.

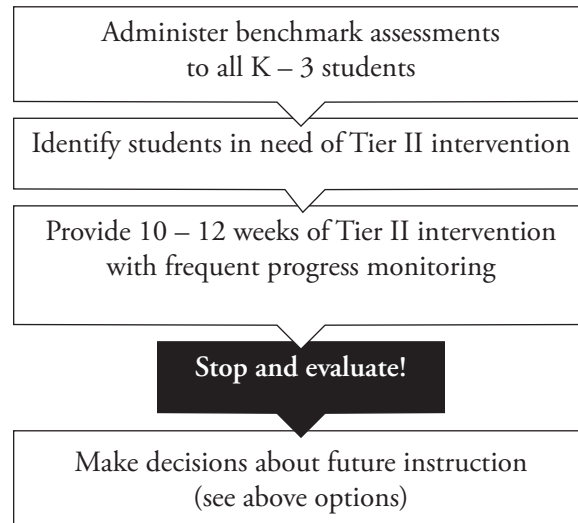
How long is a round of Tier II intervention?

One round of Tier II instruction lasts ten to twelve weeks, covering most of the semester. **After the first ten- to twelve-week round of intervention, a decision should be made about the student’s instructional needs.** The options considered should include:

- exiting Tier II intervention if the student is able to meet benchmarks;
- another round of Tier II intervention;
- entrance to Tier III intensive intervention;
- receiving Tier II or Tier III intervention in summer school;
- referral for special services (dyslexia, 504, etc.).

A committee of school personnel, such as a campus assessment team, pre-referral team, student support team, etc., may make this decision. **It is critical that a student does not exceed twenty weeks of Tier II intervention without careful assessment of the student’s instructional needs.**

Figure 1. Processes for One Round of Tier II Intervention



How does Tier II intervention fit into the school day?

During Tier II intervention, students are provided daily (five days a week) with an additional thirty minutes of focused instruction on critical early reading skills. **This additional instruction should not be done during regular classroom reading instruction, as the aim is to support, rather than replace, core reading instruction.** The scheduling of Tier II intervention should be a school-based decision and may vary within a school from grade to grade. For example, it may be decided that kindergarten students can miss social studies or science, but that second graders should be pulled from computer or library time. Schools may also decide to restructure the school day to allow for a standard time for Tier II intervention.

Excerpted from Vaughn Gross Center for Reading and Language Arts at The University of Texas at Austin. (2005). Introduction to the 3-tier reading model: Reducing reading difficulties for kindergarten through third grade students (4th ed.). Austin, TX: Author.

Table 1. Sample Class Schedule — Kindergarten

| | | | | |
|-------|---|-------|--|---|
| 7:45 | – | 8:45 | Reading Instruction | Reading Block |
| 8:45 | – | 9:30 | Literacy Centers/Small-Group Instruction | |
| 9:30 | – | 10:30 | Writing | <i>Tier II intervention may be done during times designated for special areas, content-area centers, or part of science/social studies.</i> |
| 10:30 | – | 11:15 | Special Areas (Music/Art) | |
| 11:15 | – | 12:00 | Lunch/Recess | |
| 12:00 | – | 1:15 | Math | |
| 1:15 | – | 1:45 | Content-Area Centers/Independent Work | |
| 1:45 | – | 2:45 | Science/Social Studies | |

How do we group students for Tier II intervention?

Tier II groups are organized according to the skills targeted for each student, which is based on assessment data. One-on-one instruction and small groups heighten the level of student engagement by providing students with more opportunities to respond. Grouping students based on their skill deficits allows the interventionist to match instruction to meet the particular needs of each student. This makes for a more efficient use of time during the intervention and maximizes student learning. Student grouping may need adjustment as instructional priorities for each student change.

What should the intervention look like?

Instruction should be systematic and explicit (instruction with modeling, multiple examples, and feedback to individual students). It should be paced to match each student’s skill level. Students should have multiple opportunities to participate and respond, with the interventionist providing corrective feedback. The purpose of Tier II intervention is to provide additional attention, focus, and support. Coordinating instruction for the intervention with instruction in the core program ensures that students have additional opportunities embedded throughout the school day to practice targeted skills.

While working with students, interventionists should follow certain procedures to ensure an optimal learning environment, including:

- ✓ checking in with students during an activity to be sure they are performing correctly
- ✓ asking students to demonstrate what they are doing
- ✓ asking students to repeat the directions
- ✓ checking initial practice items for correctness and providing immediate feedback
- ✓ calling on students during group discussion
- ✓ assisting students in performing assignments correctly
- ✓ using correction procedures

How do we select the intervention program(s) and materials?

The Tier II intervention program(s) should be a specialized and research-based program that emphasizes the components of reading in which the identified students have demonstrated a deficit. Therefore, selection of materials is determined based on the needs of individual students. The program(s) selected may include instructional content for many or all of the essential reading components; however, the interventionist should not simply deliver a program “as is.” Instruction should focus on components of the program that target the specific skill deficits of the students receiving the intervention. This will mean that not all students receive intervention in the same components of reading, as needs will differ from student to student.

Results from assessments help pinpoint target areas for each student. This in turn helps determine student grouping. The interventionist then selects components of the intervention program(s) that specifically address those skill deficiencies. For example, if a kindergarten student scores poorly on a measure of phonemic awareness, the interventionist might analyze the results and see that the student is able to produce only initial sounds. The interventionist can then choose lessons from the program(s) that specifically focus on building phonemic awareness, such as segmenting and blending onset-rime, final, and medial sounds in words.

A school-based committee should decide which program(s) should be used for Tier II. The committee should determine the needs of the students entering Tier II intervention and use that information to select the appropriate program(s).

How do we monitor students' progress?

Progress monitoring occurs every two weeks on each student's targeted skill to ensure adequate progress and learning. Interventionists use the assessment measure that corresponds to the skill targeted by the intervention. For example, if the student has demonstrated low phonemic awareness, the DIBELS™ Phoneme Segmentation Fluency (PSF) measure might be used to track that student's progress. This student-specific information helps the interventionist to adjust instruction to meet current needs.

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When do students exit Tier II and Tier III?

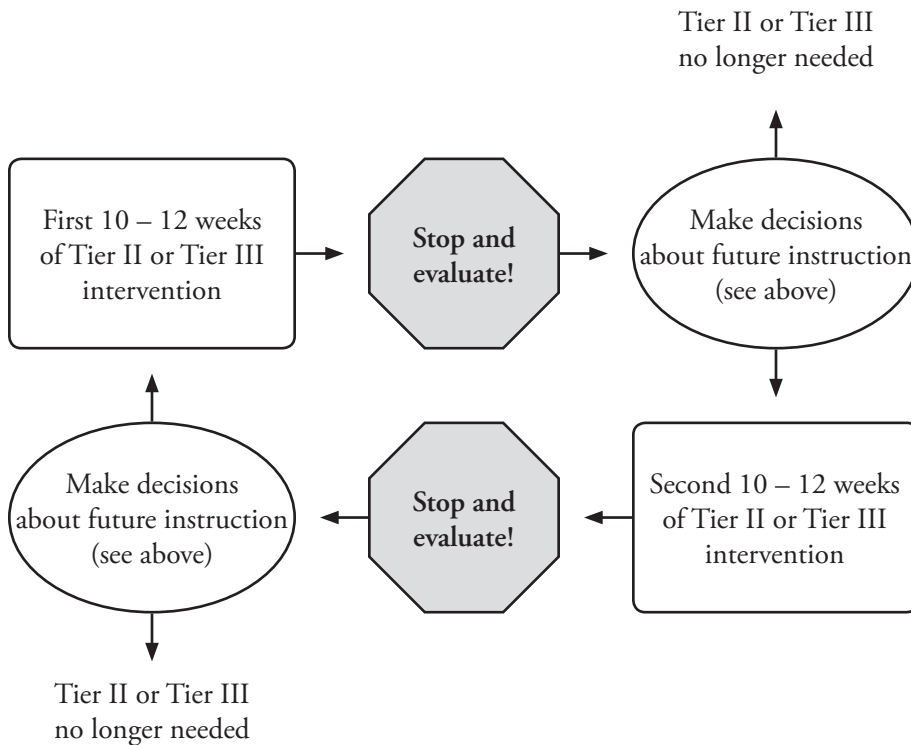
A round of Tier II instruction lasts ten to twelve weeks. After the first ten- to twelve-week round of Tier II intervention, a decision should be made about the student's instructional needs. A committee of school personnel, such as a campus assessment team, pre-referral team, student support team, etc., may make this decision. The options considered should include:

- exiting Tier II or Tier III intervention if the student is able to meet benchmarks;
- another round of Tier II or Tier III intervention;
- entrance to Tier III intensive intervention if Tier II intervention has proved insufficient;
- receiving Tier II or Tier III intervention in summer school;
- referral for special services (dyslexia, 504, etc.).

It is critical that a student does not exceed twenty weeks of Tier II intervention without careful assessment of the student's instructional needs.

As a general guideline, students are ready to exit Tier II and Tier III when they have reached benchmarks on the targeted skills.

Figure 2. Checkpoints in the Decision-Making Process



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Can students re-enter Tier II?

Tier II intervention is designed to give students two chances to meet benchmarks before being identified for Tier III intensive intervention. (However, in some cases students may show a need for Tier III after only one round of Tier II.) Students may enter round two of Tier II intervention if (a) they have been through one round of Tier II and have exited but now need additional intervention, or (b) they have been through one round of Tier II, never met exit criteria, and current benchmark testing identifies a need for further Tier II intervention.

Table 2. “To Do” List for Tier II

- Select research-based intervention program(s)
- Train interventionists (using teachers who have attended the Teacher Reading Academies as interventionists or trainers of interventionists)
- Identify students who have not met benchmarks
- Identify specific skill areas needing additional instruction for each student
- Arrange student grouping according to focus of instruction (use homogeneous grouping format)
- Select components of the intervention curriculum that focus instruction on targeted skill areas
- Monitor progress every two weeks (using progress-monitoring assessments and observations)
- Use progress-monitoring information to adjust instruction, or exit students when appropriate
- Include a record of the intervention and progress-monitoring data in students' files