
Completing the Continuum: Integrating Preschool Programs Into The



Kansas Multi-Tier System of Supports



Outcomes for Today

Understand how early childhood programs naturally fit within the MTSS framework.

Discuss the similarities/differences when applying an MTSS to school based or collaborative preschool programs.

Identify steps that can be taken immediately in anticipation of integrating preschool into district MTSS efforts.



PRESCHOOL & MTSS: A NATURAL FIT



Why a Multi-Tier System of Supports?

- Lack of appropriate instruction
- Cumulative effect of insufficient learning
- Difficulty of content area work
- Excessive absenteeism resulting in splinter skills
- Significant behavior problems that impede student learning

(adapted from Shores, 2008)



Preschool Programs: The Natural Place to Start

- Lack of appropriate instruction:
 - *Identify and use research/evidence based teaching practices at the earliest possible point.*
- Cumulative effect of insufficient learning:
 - *Gap may not even exist at this point though there may be signs it could easily develop*



Preschool Programs: The Natural Place to Start

- Difficulty of content area work:
 - *Support early cultivates a love of learning & feelings of success, promoting tenacity when faced with challenging tasks*
- Significant behavior problems that impede student learning:
 - *Children experience caring and responsive environments, that actively teach appropriate/expected behaviors that promote success in school and in life*



Goals of MTSS

- To provide an integrated systemic approach to meeting the needs of all students.
- To become the guiding framework for school improvement activities to address the academic and behavioral achievement of all students.



Preschool Programs Support the Goals of MTSS

- To provide an integrated systemic approach to meeting the needs of all students.
 - Until this point in time preschool programs have been routinely disconnected with the overall school system.



Preschool Programs Support the Goals of MTSS

- To become the guiding framework for school improvement activities to address the academic and behavioral achievement of all students.
 - The MTSS framework is appropriate for preschool, primary, and secondary education.



Priority of and Supported by KSDE



- Commissioner DeBacker's priority is helping all students meet or exceed academic standards.

- KSBE Goal 1 of 5 - Provide a flexible delivery system to meet our students' changing needs.

KSBE Objective 1.1. Support statewide implementation of Multi-Tier System of Supports (MTSS)

Dr. Diane DeBacker
Kansas Commissioner of Education

The Basics of MTSS: From The Inside Out



MTSS: The Triangle & CIA



- Assessment
 - Screening
 - Diagnostic
 - Progress Monitoring
 - Outcomes
- Curriculum
 - Core
 - Supplemental
 - Intensive
- Instruction
 - Core
 - Supplemental
 - Intensive

The Hurricane: Creating the System



- Leadership
- Empowering Culture
- Professional Development

Preschool MTSS: Similarities/Differences



Intervention Structures

- Preschool schedules are structured in a way that supports a wide variety of skill development.
- Therefore MTSS intervention structures will occur within the core curriculum during activities that are conducted within...
 - Small flexible groups
 - Intentionally embedded learning opportunities within learning centers an/or other ongoing classroom activities



Small Flexible Groups

- Between 2-4 children, based on individual needs such as...
 - Below instructional target
 - At instructional target
 - Above instructional target
- Similar skill levels
- Game like activities
- Differentiation (materials, altering activities, increased or decreased scaffolding)



Learning Centers/ Embedded Learning Opportunities

- Proactively designed based on individual learning needs providing opportunities for:
 - One-on-one instruction
 - Extended practice
- May be intentionally designed for content focus
- May be embedded within a typical learning center (e.g. blocks, dress-up, art, outside)
- May be embedded within routines (e.g. transition songs, arrival-sign in, etc.)



Preschool MTSS: Emergent Literacy



Focus Of a Preschool MTSS:

Emergent Literacy

- Evidence Based Core Curriculum
 - Supporting emergent literacy skills including oral language, phonological awareness, alphabet knowledge, print awareness
- Evidence Based Instructional Strategies
 - Intentional teaching and differentiated instruction within small flexible groups, learning centers. embedded learning opportunities



Emergent Literacy: Defined

Emergent Literacy describes the earliest phases of literacy development including the skills knowledge, and attitudes that are precursors to conventional reading and writing

- (Teal & Sulzby, 1986; Whitehurst & Lonigan, 1998)



Emergent Literacy: Assessment



- Assessment
 - Screening
 - Diagnostic
 - Progress Monitoring
 - Outcomes

Early Childhood Screening Terms

- **Developmental Screening:** Tools used to detect the possibility of a developmental delay or disabilities. They assess broad developmental domains such as communication, motor, cognitive, social and emotional and self help skills.
- **Pre-Academic or Instructional Screening:** Identify children who may be at risk for later academic challenges and who might benefit from additional or differentiated instruction. Focus is on critical skills that are precursors or prerequisites to later academic achievement.



Universal Screening for Preschool

- General Outcome Measures
- Given 3 times per year
- Measure accuracy and fluency of specific emergent literacy skills
- Brief and easy to administer
- Includes multiple forms to use for progress monitoring
- Use with other information for instructional planning



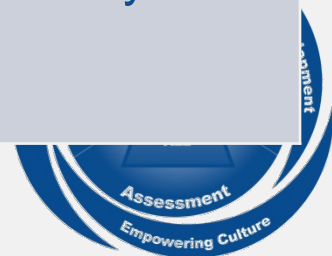
Critical Skills for Universal Screening (Preschool)

Recommended Grade Levels	Measures	Skills Assessed
Preschool	Rapid Picture Naming	Memory Oral Language
	Rapid Naming of Numbers	
	Rhyming Alliteration	Phonological Awareness
	Letter Naming Fluency	Alphabet Knowledge



Universal Screening

EXAMPLES	USE	PURPOSE	QUESTIONS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •DIBELS Next (K-6) •AIMSWEB (K-8) •Get It, Got It, Go •mClass C.I.R.C.L.E. (Pre-K) 	<p>identify children who need more intense assessment to determine the potential for intervention.</p>	<p>“First Alert”</p>	<p>Who is at risk?</p> <p>Who may need additional assistance?</p> <p>Who needs close monitoring?</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Get Ready to Read (Pre-K) 	<p>Secondary source for instructional planning</p>		<p>What might they need?</p>

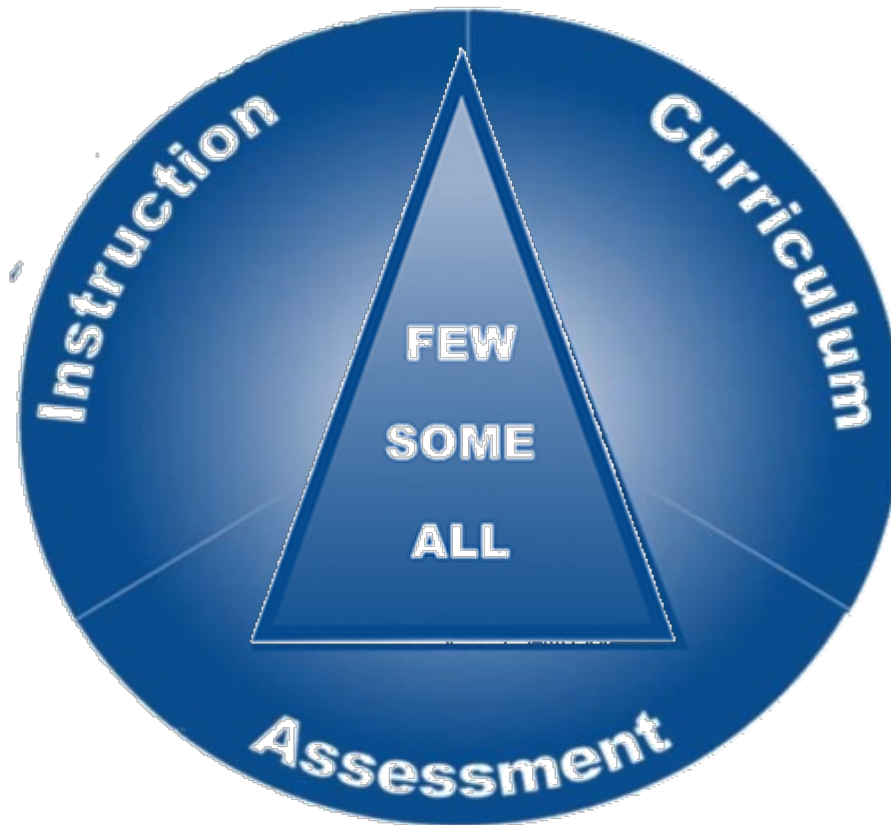


Decision Rules for the Universal Screener Preschool

- At this time most universal screening tools provide normative information (Preschool IGDIs)
- Some have provided “cut points” (mClass C.I.R.C.L.E.).
- Screening data used for differentiation within the core curriculum, and therefore less need to develop hard and fast decision rules for these tools.



Emergent Literacy: Curriculum



- Curriculum
 - Core
 - Supplemental
 - Intensive

Preschool Core Curriculum should...

- Be evidence-based/intentionally taught
- Support the development of the “whole-child”
- Provide integrated learning experiences that include opportunities for both teacher directed and child initiated learning
- Include instruction through large/small groups, learning centers, free play, routines



Preschool Core Curriculum should...

- Provide an appropriate scope and sequence outlining a predetermined order that skills should be taught
- Align with the Kansas Early Learning Standards
- Help children move from concrete to abstract
- Allow for schedules that are predictable, allow for an orderly routine while at the same time be flexible/responsive to meet individual learning needs



Preschool Core Curriculum should...

- Provide opportunities for unstructured PLAY
 - Play is an opportunity for children to practice skills in meaningful context
 - Play provides opportunities for rich language, reciprocal conversations
- How adults set up and participate within play environments dramatically increases/decreases opportunities for targeted learning



Emergent Literacy Curricular Focus

Preschool

- National Early Literacy Panel, 2008
 - Oral Language (speaking and listening)
 - Phonological Awareness
 - Alphabet Knowledge
 - Print Knowledge



Oral Language

- Vocabulary-expressive, receptive, definitional
- Grammar-language rules
- Syntax-sentence rules



Importance of Oral Language

- Direct link between oral language development of young children to later reading comprehension
- Hart & Risly (1995) by age 3 children from middle class families had vocabularies 5 times greater than children from disadvantaged families
- Preschool is an opportunity to try and mitigate this disadvantage



Phonological Awareness

- Phonological awareness begins with an understanding of larger to smaller units of sound:
 - Rhyming words
 - Number of words in short sentences
 - Syllables in words
 - Beginning/end sound in a word (onset/rime)
 - Phoneme (letter sound in isolation)



Phonological Awareness

- PA skills include skills such as...
 - Dividing words into syllables
 - Rhyming
 - Identifying beginning/final sounds in words
 - Segmenting words into sounds
 - Deleting/manipulating sounds in words
 - (Shuele & Boudreau, 2008)



Alphabet Knowledge

- A Skill fundamental to “breaking the reading code” (NELP, 2008) and includes
 - Ability to identify individual letters by name and by their formation in print (both lower/upper case).
 - Understanding that individual letters represent specific sounds
- By end of preschool children should know most, but not necessarily all of the letters



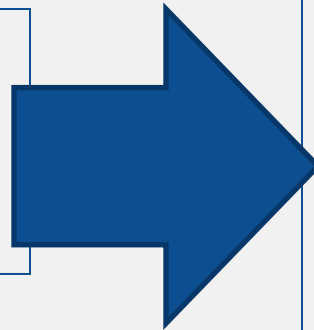
Print Knowledge

- Refers to tasks that combine elements of alphabet knowledge, concepts about print, and early decoding.
- Although not found by NELP to be “highly predictive of later reading ability” activities supporting print knowledge concurrently support other emergent literacy skills
- Print Knowledge activities provide meaningful context for learning these other skills



Big Three to Big Five

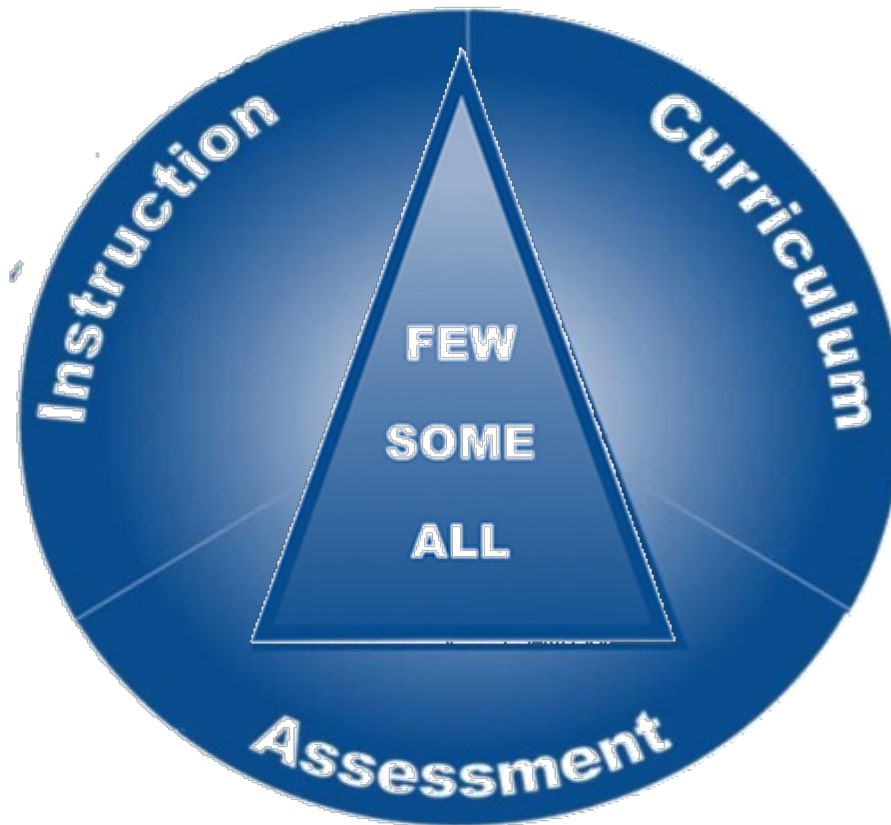
1. Oral Language
2. Phonological Awareness
3. Alphabet Knowledge



1. Phonemic Awareness
2. Phonics
3. Fluency
4. Comprehension
5. Vocabulary



Emergent Literacy: Instruction



- Instruction
 - Core
 - Supplemental
 - Intensive

Emergent Literacy Instruction:

- Emergent literacy is best accomplished through learning experiences that
 - Spark children’s interest
 - Are introduced and practiced within a meaningful context
 - Supported through responsive and nurturing teaching techniques
 - » (Neuman, 2010)



Promoting Oral Language

- Strategies to engage in/extend conversations
 - Slow down the pace
 - Be a good listener
- Extending word knowledge/sentence complexity
 - Talking out loud (labeling, scripting, expanding)
- Targeted Vocabulary Instruction



Instructional Activities to Support Phonological Awareness Should Be..

- Appropriate to individual skill level
- Conducted with a sense of playfulness/fun
- Deliberate/purposeful but not skill/drill/rote
- Provided within context of real reading/writing
- Conducted in small group settings/one-on-one and for short periods of time



Storybook Reading

- Repeated
- Interactive
- Dialogic



Dialogic Reading

- Prompt Evaluate Expand Repeat
- Questioning
 - Completion
 - Recall
 - Open-ended
 - Wh
 - Distancing



Preschool Resource

- What Works: A Teacher's Guide for Early Language and Emergent Literacy Instruction
- www.famlit.org/pdf/what-works.pdf



Code Focused Instruction Preschool

- Instructional Strategies for “Breaking the Reading Code”
 - Phonological Awareness
 - Alphabet Knowledge
 - Print Awareness

- Print Referencing
 - My Read It Again Pre-K



Alphabet Knowledge

- Ability to identify letters when entering kindergarten is highly predictive of beginning reading success (NELP) HOWEVER....
- Learning to identify the letters in a rote and isolated manner such as “the letter of the week” is neither effective nor appropriate (Venn & Jahn, 2003)



Alphabet Knowledge

- Children often recognize whole words before they are able to identify specific letters (e.g. McDonald's, STOP) and often learn logo's, labels, in the environment
- Learn the letters through words that are most important to them individually (e.g. their name)
- Letters that “say their name” and/or those that occur in the beginning of the alphabet



Alphabet Knowledge & Print Awareness

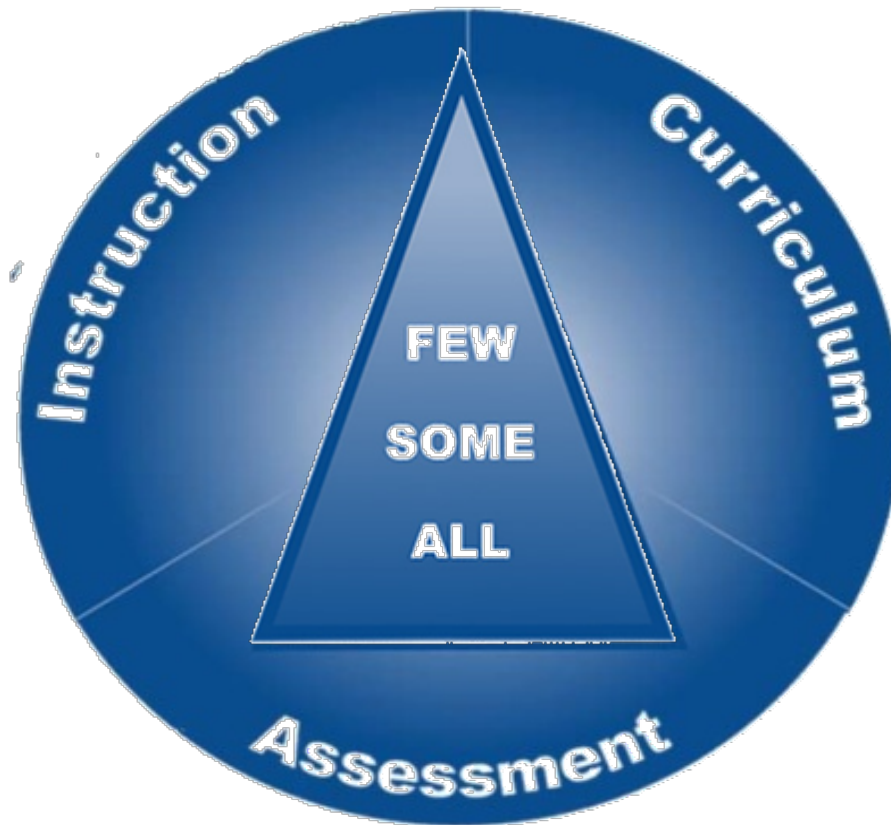
- Print Awareness activities provide opportunities for
- Children to see the letters within words (within a meaningful context e.g. writing)
- Modeling the sound-symbol relationships through writing activities, or activities pointing out script (e.g. Dialogic Reading)



Preschool MTSS: Emergent Numeracy



Emergent Numeracy: Assessment



- Assessment
 - Screening
 - Diagnostic
 - Progress Monitoring
 - Outcomes

Critical Concepts for MTSS

Early Numeracy

- Young children have the ability to learn mathematics, though this potential is often not realized in the preschool years.
- High-quality mathematical programs should be provided in early childhood programs.
- The focus of mathematical experiences in preschool should be on early numeracy (including whole and number, operations, and relations) and geometry, spatial relations and measurements.



Critical Concepts for MTSS

Early Numeracy

- Experience in high-quality mathematics instruction is especially important for preschool children living in poverty
- Preschool teachers should actively introduce mathematical concepts, methods, and language through a range of appropriate experiences and teaching strategies



Early Numeracy Measures

- Tests of Early Numeracy are designed to measure **number sense**.
 - Number sense “refers to a child’s fluidity and flexibility with numbers, the sense of what numbers mean, and an ability to perform mental mathematics and to look at the world and make comparisons” (Gersten & Chard, 1999, pg. 19)



Universal Screening

Early Numeracy

- Important skills for preschool universal screening include:
 - Oral counting
 - Number naming
 - Quantity comparison
 - Pattern Recognition
 - Measurement



Universal Screening Early Numeracy Assessments

- Available for purchase at this time:
 - STEEP preschool measures
 - AIMSweb Tests of Early Numeracy, pre-K norms
- In development, may be available from authors:
 - Preschool Numeracy Indicators (PNIs)
 - Early Arithmetic, Reading, and Learning Indicators (EARLI)



Emergent Numeracy: Curriculum



- Curriculum
 - Core
 - Supplemental
 - Intensive

Early Numeracy Core Curriculum

- Provide math experiences that concentrate on:
 - Number, including whole numbers, number operations, and number relations
 - Geometry, spatial relations, and measurement
- Focus on:
 - Number words
 - Counting principles (one to one correspondence)
 - Comparing, joining, separating sets



Emergent Numeracy: Instruction



- Instruction
 - Core
 - Supplemental
 - Intensive

Differentiating Early Numeracy Instruction

- Preschool has a mixed age range and includes a wide range of skill and ability
- Differentiate through use of:
 - Small flexible groups
 - Learning Centers and embedded learning opportunities



Preschool MTSS: Behavior



Preschool MTSS: The Triangle & CIA (Behavior)



- Assessment
 - Defining Majors/Minors/BIR
 - Formal Measures
 - Continuum of Consequences
 - Data System
- Curriculum
 - BW Expectations
 - Lessons/teaching expected behaviors
 - Recognition System
- Instruction
 - Schedule
 - Procedures/Routines

Behavior

- PBIS/Teaching Pyramid
- Basic premise and practice are the same
- More evidence in tiered supports for early childhood behavior than currently in academics
- Including preschool may provide additional supports to K-1-2



Behavior: Key Differences

- Behavior is generally a curriculum subject that is routinely accepted as valuable in early childhood programs.
- Terminology- may be somewhat different
- Availability of computerized systems to compare data is limited especially against K-12.



Behavior: ODR/BIR

- Behavior Incidence Reports
 - Similar to the Office Discipline referral
 - Have found that some schools can use this with K,1 grades
 - Others have used this as a way to analyze minor behavior problems over time.



Putting It All Together: Integrating Preschool Into the System



- **Leadership**
- **Empowering Culture**
- **Professional Development**

Challenges to Be Aware Of...

- District Programs/Collaborative Programs/Community Programs
- Target Programs/Required Practices vs. Perceived Required Practices
- Calendars
- Incentive to participate



Places To Start

- Learn more about your specific preschool program(s)
- Be familiar with federal projects and on going research in preparation.
- Start with the curriculum focusing on emergent literacy, early numeracy, and/or behavior.



Future Directions

- This coming school year
 - Buildings that have already gone through MTSS Structuring
 - Add a preschool representative
 - Provide time to bring new person up to speed (6 months)
 - Provide time to educate the Leadership Team on preschool practice (6 months)
 - Adapt curriculum, instruction, assessment, and other plans to include practices appropriate for preschool including timelines and action plans (Professional Development/Empowering Culture)



Future Directions/Questions...

- This coming school year
 - Kansas MTSS Core Team develop materials for preschool implementation
 - Continue to review new and ongoing research to inform the process



Questions?



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**Kansas MTSS Core Team/
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