



Expanding Coaching Support: Targeted (Tier 2) Interventions

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The Pyramid Model is a multi-tiered system of support that equips early childhood educators with strategies and resources to ensure all children receive the interventions and support needed to promote their social, emotional, and behavioral skill development within a high-quality inclusive early childhood program.

Review the [Tier 2 and the Pyramid Model Guide](#), for an overview of Tier 2 and the Pyramid Model

Tier 2, the targeted support level of the MTSS framework, provides additional teaching and intervention strategies for children who need extra help developing social, emotional, or behavioral skills in addition to what is provided to all children in Tier 1.

These coaching tips and considerations will help coaches systematically support early educators to effectively implement targeted social-emotional strategies (Tier 2) that meet each child's needs.

Teaming

Tier 2 interventions work best when a team plans and supports them. As a coach, you play an important role in helping educators plan and use interventions that build children's social, emotional, and behavioral skills.

To address Tier 2 interventions, the educator and coach can work together to:

- ▶ Use data to identify children who may need Tier 2 interventions.
- ▶ Identify and plan interventions.
- ▶ Plan for family engagement in developing and implementing interventions.
- ▶ Support implementation of the intervention.
- ▶ Monitor the child's progress and use data to inform ongoing decisions and support adjustments to the intervention.

Coaching tips:

- ▶ Review how your program identifies children who need Tier 2 support, guides educators in providing targeted interventions, and ensures that educators know how to access this support.
- ▶ Clarify with the educator that Tier 2 interventions do not mean they have to learn and use completely different practices from what they are typically doing. The real shift is toward more intentional instruction, increased practice, and differentiated strategies to meet children's needs.

Screening and Identification

Screening and identifying children for Tier 2 support in early childhood classrooms is an intentional process that uses multiple information sources to identify children who may need extra help in addition to universal classroom practices. Teachers may use a universal screening tool, such as the Devereux Early Childhood Assessment (DECA; [LeBuffe & Naglieri, 1999](#)), with all children to identify those who are at risk for future difficulties and who may benefit from additional supports. Programs should also consider multiple sources of information, such as classroom observations and teacher notes, to provide a comprehensive understanding of the child's social, emotional, and behavioral development and skills. As a coach, you can help educators understand the screening results and support them in collecting and reviewing additional information to decide if a child needs Tier 2 support. The educator may ask you to help by observing a child, reviewing data they have collected, or assisting with collecting additional data.

Coaching Considerations and Questions

- ☐ Has a universal screener been administered, and have screening data been reviewed?
- ☐ Does the educator have behavioral data or summarized anecdotal notes on the child's social, emotional, or behavioral skills?
- ☐ Have concerns been noted by more than one source (e.g., Behavior Incident Reports and observation)?
- ☐ What are the skill areas that a child or children appear to need more support to learn?
- ☐ How has the family been asked to provide input or share perspectives?
- ☐ Have universal screening and additional data review identified groups of children with similar needs?
- ☐ For each child who is tentatively identified as needing additional intervention, what do we know from multiple sources—and what might we still need to confirm?

Coaching tips:

- ▶ Encourage the educator to look for patterns across settings, people, and time.
- ▶ Emphasize that Tier 2 identification should be based on multiple data sources and the team's decisions rather than a single concern.
- ▶ Encourage the educator to talk with families and ask for their input during the identification process.



Identifying the Tier 2 Intervention

Tier 2 interventions supplement universal practices and include teaching social, emotional, and behavioral skills more often and with more guidance and practice. Tier 2 interventions are also important for children whose behavior interrupts learning or daily routines. The intervention should match the child's specific social, emotional, or behavioral needs. Some coaches may already know or have access to structured Tier 2 programs, such as [First Step Next](#) (Walker et al., 2018) or [Banking Time](#) (Williford & Pianta, 2020), that might fit the child's needs.

Coaching Considerations and Questions

- ☐ What explicit social-emotional skill does the child need more practice and feedback with?
What skills do we want the child to use more often?
- ☐ Is there a specific behavior that we want to prevent or decrease?
- ☐ What are the perspectives of the family that should be considered in the development of the Tier 2 intervention?
- ☐ How has the educator implemented Tier 2 interventions in the past, and did they feel successful in implementing the intervention?
- ☐ Is there a Tier 2 intervention currently used within the program or classroom that matches the child's needs?

Developing the Tier 2 Intervention Plan

Tier 2 interventions might be delivered individually, within small groups, or through a hybrid approach that combines multiple instructional modes. Educators and families should implement Tier 2 interventions within the context of everyday activities (e.g., play, group instruction, meals). When a Tier 2 intervention is needed for a child's behavior that presents challenges within specific routines and the function of the behavior is known, teams can use [Teaching Tools for Young Children](#) to create a Tier 2 intervention plan.

Coaching Considerations and Questions

- ☐ Does the Tier 2 plan include a specific operationally defined social, emotional, or behavioral skill to teach the child?
- ☐ How will the Tier 2 plan provide more opportunities for the child to practice the skill?
- ☐ Will the Tier 2 plan fit within the educator's daily routine, ensuring the child receives the intervention supports at the necessary frequency or dosage to achieve outcomes?
- ☐ How will the plan include feedback when the child uses the new skills (e.g., increased positive attention, increased use of positive descriptive feedback, feedback with families on how the child is using the skill)?
- ☐ Does the Tier 2 plan reflect the child's background, language, and strengths?
- ☐ What materials are needed to implement the plan?
- ☐ How will families be engaged in the Tier 2 intervention? Does the family also need guidance or strategies to support the intervention's focus at home or in the community?
- ☐ What training or coaching will the educator and other team members need before implementing the Tier 2 plan? Are there resources you can share on the intervention approach (e.g., practice guides, videos) to help the educator feel more confident using the strategies in the Tier 2 plan?
- ☐ What is the plan for documenting the implementation of the Tier 2 intervention and for monitoring the child's progress in the skills targeted by the intervention?

Coaching tips:

- ▶ Partner with the educator to select or make materials to support implementation of the intervention.
- ▶ Encourage the educator to engage the assistant teacher or paraprofessional in planning and implementing the Tier 2 intervention.
- ▶ Encourage the educator to partner with families to develop the intervention plan and support families in using intervention strategies relevant to home or other community settings.

Implementing Tier 2 Interventions

A Tier 2 intervention plan is most effective when implemented consistently and accurately. The coach can play an important role in ensuring all team members understand the plan, know how and when to implement it, and feel comfortable using the strategies. In your practice-based coaching delivery, you can list implementing the Tier 2 plan as an action-plan goal for your focused observation, reflection, and feedback.

Coaching Considerations and Questions

- ❑ Review the plan with the educator and the other team members who will implement it. Do they have questions or need clarification?
- ❑ Use a focused observation session to observe Tier 2 implementation. Follow the observation with reflection and specific feedback on the educator's implementation of the Tier 2 plan and the child's response to the intervention.
- ❑ Consider side-by-side support or modeling to help the educator feel comfortable delivering the Tier 2 intervention.
- ❑ Make sure the educator knows how to use the intervention strategies across different skills or contexts. Provide multiple examples or demonstrate uses in different contexts to promote generalization.
- ❑ Ask to see the progress-monitoring data and provide support to the educator with data entry and interpretation.
- ❑ Consider offering additional coaching sessions focused on implementing the Tier 2 intervention. The educator must feel comfortable with the intervention and be able to implement it with fidelity to the plan.
- ❑ Build a check-in on Tier 2 intervention implementation into your regular coaching visits. For example, always ask about the children who have Tier 2 plans and their progress. Ensure the educator knows they can seek support from you if they have questions about an intervention or an individual child.

Coaching tips:

- ▶ If your observation time does not occur when the Tier 2 intervention will be used, ask the educator to capture it on video to share in your next coaching session.
- ▶ Depending on your knowledge of the educator's capacity, spend time on direct teaching or modeling as needed. You can also ask the educator to practice the key intervention strategies with you so you can provide immediate feedback.

Progress Monitoring

To make progress monitoring manageable, tools and forms should be simple, quick, and easy to use, minimizing the time they take away from teaching and interaction. Educators will need assistance with collecting and interpreting progress-monitoring data aligned with the Tier 2 intervention plan.

Coaching Considerations and Questions

- ☐ Is the progress-monitoring plan simple enough that the educator and other team members can easily collect the data?
- ☐ Are the data to be collected clearly linked to the child's goal on the plan?
- ☐ Does the progress monitoring tool collect information on the child's skill acquisition?
- ☐ What training or coaching will the educator and other team members need to use the progress monitoring form?
- ☐ Is there a plan to monitor fidelity of implementation?
- ☐ Is there a plan for how data will be summarized and shared with the family?
- ☐ When reviewing progress-monitoring data, guide the educator to reflect on whether the intervention is being implemented as intended and whether the child is responding as intended.
- ☐ If the educator shares implementation challenges, jointly reflect on changes to the intervention to meet the child's needs and fit better with the learning environment.

Coaching tips:

- ▶ Offer to help make sense of the data if needed, such as help with a visual display or graph of the child's skill progress.
- ▶ Review progress-monitoring data with the educator during your debriefing session. Ask questions like: "What are you noticing about when the strategy works best?"
- ▶ "What does the data suggest we should revise? Or "When reviewing the data, what do you notice is happening? What might be good next steps?"
- ▶ Connect the child's progress data with the educator's implementation effort. Ask the educator whether they need to continue or adjust intervention strategies or the frequency/intensity of support based on the child's progress.

Celebrate Small Wins Early and Often

Tier 2 progress is often incremental. Use PBC to highlight early indicators of success (e.g., child's increased engagement, child's attempts at using the skill) and to reinforce the educator for their effort and consistency in implementing the intervention. As coaches support the educator, they should ensure that they do the following:

- ☐ Acknowledge the educator's progress in implementation (e.g., "You maintained the routine consistently for 4 days, which is likely why we are noticing the change).
- ☐ Affirm the educator's and their team's efforts in providing Tier 2 intervention (e.g., "Amy went right to centers when you showed her the visual prompt and asked a friend to play. I can see how the team's effort in teaching her the steps she needs to get engaged in play is helping her.").

References

- LeBuffe, P. A., & Naglieri, J. A. (1999). *The Devereux Early Childhood Assessment (DECA)*. Kaplan Press.
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- Williford, A. P., & Pianta, R. C. (2020). *Banking Time: A dyadic intervention to improve teacher-student relationships*. In A. L. Reschly et al. (Eds.), *Student Engagement* (pp. 239–250). Springer. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-37285-9_13