

# Multi-tiered system of supports

A multi-tiered system of supports (MTSS) is a framework that matches the level of support to student learning needs, ensuring all students receive high-quality instruction and the support required to succeed.

## MTSS is



A coordinated approach to supporting students across different levels of learning need. It provides high-quality instruction for all students while using screening data to identify and support those who need additional help.



MTSS typically consists of 3 tiers of support, each increasing in intensity and specificity:

- **Tier 1** – Evidence-based instructional practices delivered to all students.
- **Tier 2** – Targeted small-group support, provided in addition to Tier 1.
- **Tier 3** – Highly individualised support, with increased intensity, frequency and duration. Provided in addition to Tier 1



Regular progress monitoring, proportional in frequency to the level of intervention, ensures supports are working and can be adjusted or reduced as needed.

## MTSS isn't



### A replacement for quality teaching practices

MTSS builds on high-quality Tier 1 instruction for all students. Tier 2 and 3 interventions supplement rather than replace core teaching.



### A fixed program

MTSS is a flexible framework that schools adapt to their unique contexts, resources and student needs using professional judgment.



### Only for students with learning difficulties

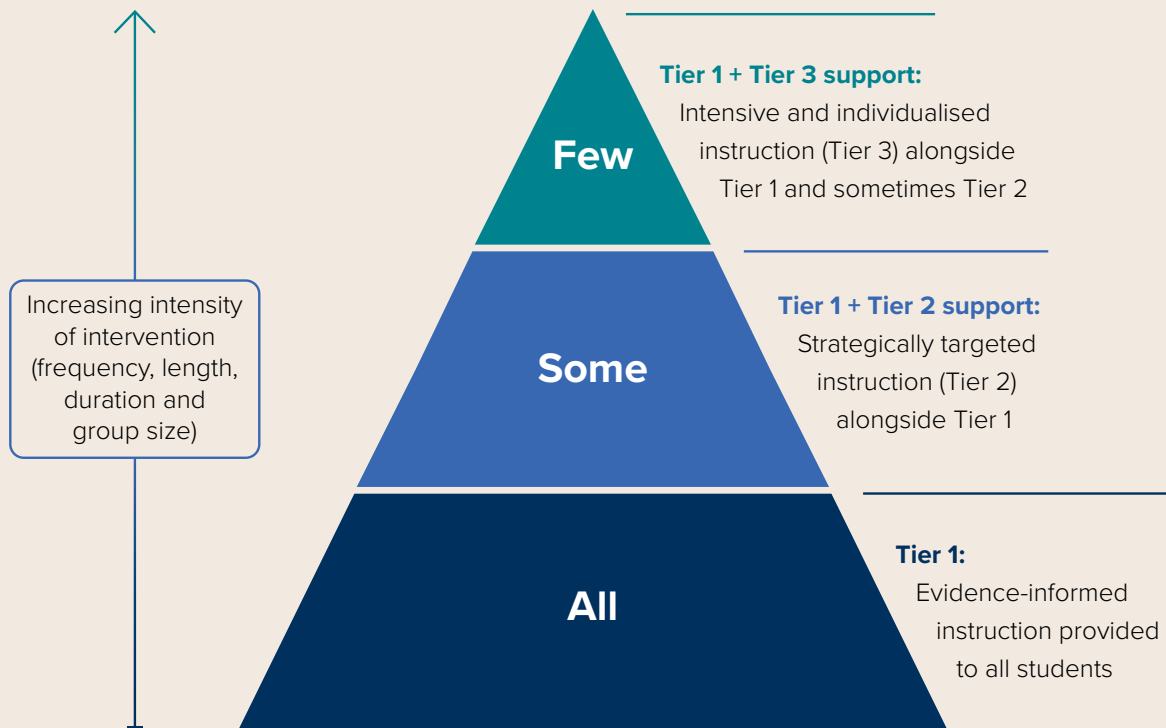
MTSS supports any student struggling with foundational skills, regardless of whether they have a diagnosed learning difficulty.



### A one-time intervention

MTSS involves ongoing monitoring so supports can be reintroduced if students fall behind again, with clear entry and exit criteria for interventions.





## Why it works

- **Early identification:** Targeted interventions catch students who need support before achievement gaps widen.
- **Evidence-based decisions:** Using data ensures support is directed where it's needed most, rather than relying on assumptions.
- **Right support, right time:** Tiered intensity means students receive an appropriate level of intervention when they need it.
- **Responsive monitoring:** Regular progress checks mean interventions can be adjusted or removed as student needs change.
- **Learning barrier removal:** A systematic approach to reducing learning barriers helps students build the foundational knowledge and skills needed for future success.

## In practice

### Primary school example

A Year 4 student is struggling with number sense and place value. Screening data prompts his teacher to include him in an existing Tier 2 small-group maths intervention alongside strong Tier 1 instruction. Regular monitoring shows some progress during intervention, and improvements during Tier 1 learning with additional use of scaffolds during practice tasks. As the student's fluency improves, Tier 2 support tapers off and he continues successfully with Tier 1.

### Secondary school example

A Year 7 student arrives at secondary school reading well below grade level. Screening identifies her need for support. She receives quality literacy instruction in English class (Tier 1) plus small-group phonics intervention 3 times weekly (Tier 2). After monitoring shows she still has significant gaps, she begins one-to-one tutoring (Tier 3) alongside her other supports. As her reading improves, the intensive support is gradually reduced until she succeeds with Tier 1 instruction alone.

For more about [MTSS](#), take a look at AERO's suite of resources on the topic. AERO's work is made possible by the joint funding it receives from Commonwealth, state and territory governments.

