MTSS at a Glance

A practical introduction to Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) for families.

A Note for Families

You may have heard the term MTSS at a school meeting or in a message from your child's school. It can feel like one more acronym in an already complicated process. This guide explains what MTSS is, why schools use it, and what it may mean for your child. It is a starting point, not a substitute for individualized guidance.

What Is MTSS?

MTSS stands for Multi-Tiered System of Supports. It is how schools give extra help to students who need more than everyday classroom instruction provides. Students may receive extra instruction or targeted intervention while their progress is monitored over time.

> DEA PERSPECTIVE
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> **The right support at the right time.**
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> MTSS is meant to catch learning needs early, provide targeted help, and use data to see whether it is working. Success isn't measured by how long a student stays in MTSS. It is measured by whether the student is making progress.

The Three Tiers

Tier 1	High-quality classroom instruction for all students.
Tier 2	Targeted interventions for students who need additional support.
Tier 3	More intensive interventions for students who need a higher level of support.

Students move between tiers as their needs change, and that movement often means the process is working. Not every student experiences every tier.

Distributed Education Advocacy is not a law firm and does not provide legal advice or representation.

Common Misconceptions

MYTH	WHAT PARENTS SHOULD KNOW
MTSS automatically leads to a special education evaluation.	MTSS is designed to provide support. Many students move in and out of MTSS without ever being evaluated.
Every student in Tier 3 will be evaluated.	Tier 3 does not automatically lead to an evaluation or to special education eligibility.
MTSS decides whether a student qualifies for special education.	MTSS data may be one source of information, but MTSS itself does not determine eligibility.

How to Stay Involved

- Ask what intervention your child is receiving and who provides it.
- Ask to see progress-monitoring data and graphs.
- If your child isn't responding, ask whether a different intervention or interventionist should be considered.
- Ask questions whenever the data or process is unclear.

Questions About MTSS?

Every child is different, and no guide can replace individualized support. If you would like help understanding your child's data, educational records, or school supports, schedule a consultation with Distributed Education Advocacy.

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