

## CHAPTER 1

# Laying the Foundation for Tier 2 Interventions

### *Anthony*

It is November, and it is clear that Anthony is struggling in his kindergarten classroom. Anthony is impulsive, hyperactive, and sometimes aggressive with his peers. He has received three office disciplinary referrals in the past month and goes to the safe spot and buddy room almost every day. Due to budget cuts, the school no longer has a behavioral consultant, and the teacher does not have the knowledge or skills to develop an intervention plan to meet Anthony's needs. The school-based positive behavior support (PBS) team has not received adequate training in the area of Tier 2 supports and has called on an outside consultant to provide some professional development for the school. In the meantime, what will happen with Anthony?

### *Olivia*

Olivia is struggling in reading. As a second grader, she is reading at the kindergarten level. She has moved three times in the past 3 years. Two of her former schools did not use a systematic evidence-based approach for working with children's reading skills. In her current school, they do use evidence-based core instruction and reading strategies. However, she is so far behind that her teacher is concerned that she may have a learning disability and is going to refer her for an evaluation for special education and related services.

### *José*

José is a fourth grader who has behavior problems and is struggling academically. His teacher is concerned that his family may be struggling to meet their basic needs. José frequently comes to school too late to eat the free breakfast for which he is eligible, and he has been caught on several occasions stuffing food in his pockets at lunch. His

behavior has gotten worse over the past year; this is the first year he has not completed and returned homework assignments. The school counselor and his teacher have communicated with José's mother, who seems overwhelmed due to various family stressors. José's father recently lost his job, and the family is on the brink of homelessness.

In schools today, students who are at risk for failure, like Anthony, Olivia, and José, are often the rule rather than the exception. The number of students who struggle in school behaviorally and/or academically is staggering (Donahue, Voelkl, Campbell, & Mazzeo, 1999; Institute of Medicine, 2009). The multiple problems children face and the need for early intervention across school and home contexts is also clearly illustrated by research. For example:

- According to the World Health Organization (2004), as many as one in five children have social, emotional, and behavioral needs for support, and if they receive any services, they receive them in school.
- As early as kindergarten, many children struggle significantly in school. Some children in kindergarten are already at a disadvantage compared to their peers in terms of early literacy and self-regulation skills (Stormont, Beckner, Mitchell, & Richter, 2005).
- Approximately 14% of young children have both academic and behavior issues, and these children have the poorest outcomes when compared to peers with either behavior or academic problems (Reinke, Herman, Petras, & Ialongo, 2008).
- Early behavior problems predict risk for later academic problems and, similarly, early academic risk predicts later social and emotional problems, including depression (Bohanon et al., 2011a; Herman, Lambert, Reinke, & Ialongo, 2008).
- The American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry (2010) reports that about 5% of children and adolescents in the general population suffer from depression at any given time; depression can have a significant impact on children's academic, social, and emotional functioning.
- Data from the U.S. Department of Education (2007) indicated that 43% of grade 1 students were below proficient in reading (based on fluency outcome measures); without early intervention, children are at great risk for never reading on grade level.
- Despite efforts to improve student performance in mathematics, the National Center for Education Statistics (2010) reported that 62% of fourth-grade public school students scored at basic or below-basic levels in mathematics achievement in 2009. The number of students identified with mathematics disabilities has increased by over 25% since 1990 (National Mathematics Advisory Panel [NMP], 2008).
- Many economic challenges face families today. Due to increases in unemployment/underemployment and decreasing housing options and wages for low-income individuals, more and more people are at risk for poverty and homelessness (Stormont & McCathren, 2008).
- Families represent 40% of the homeless population, and children represent 25% (Stormont & McCathren, 2008). Most children are young, and half of these children

are under the age of 6. Children who are homeless may miss, on average, 3 weeks of school every 3 months, which can significantly diminish their success in school. Children from low-income backgrounds are also at increased risk for social, emotional, and physical health problems as well as academic failure.

Many children who are at risk have a number of factors that are influencing their ability to be successful in school. Regardless of the reasons behind a child's risk for failure, research has clearly shown that there is a window for prevention of social, emotional, and early academic problems. If problems remain when children reach the upper primary grades, they are likely to be sustained, and children are then at risk for a host of additional negative outcomes, including association with deviant peers, school failure, dropping out of school, and incarceration (Kauffman & Landrum, 2009; Reid, Patterson, & Snyder, 2002).

Thus, schools must build the capacity to address the many different types of problems that at-risk children will manifest, including academic and behavior problems. It is also important that schools implement approaches to working with children that are culturally sensitive and that support and partner with families as much as possible. For many students who are at risk, relatively simple, and often temporary, interventions can have a large impact (Rathvon, 2008; Reinke & Herman, 2002; Reinke, Lewis-Palmer, & Martin, 2007; Stormont, 2007). For other students, more extensive and individualized interventions are needed. Within the context of a continuum of supports, or a three-tiered model, students' needs are determined by their responsiveness to intervention (Lembke, McMaster, & Stecker, 2009; OSEP Center on Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports, 2004; Stormont, Lewis, Beckner, & Johnson, 2008). Tiered prevention approaches are designed to support all students' academic achievement and/or successful social behavior in an intentional, systematic, and data-driven manner that often includes changing the way schools operate. The two prevention models discussed in this text have the same overall problem-solving approach and similar essential features. Many researchers have called for increased integration of prevention models for academic and social behavior problems (e.g., Kalberg, Lane, & Menzies, 2010; Sugai, 2011). However, given the fact that professionals reading this text are from schools, districts, and states in various stages of implementing one or both of these models, we have chosen to discuss them separately.

**Regardless of the reasons behind a child's risk for failure, research has clearly shown that there is a window for prevention of social behavior and early academic problems.**

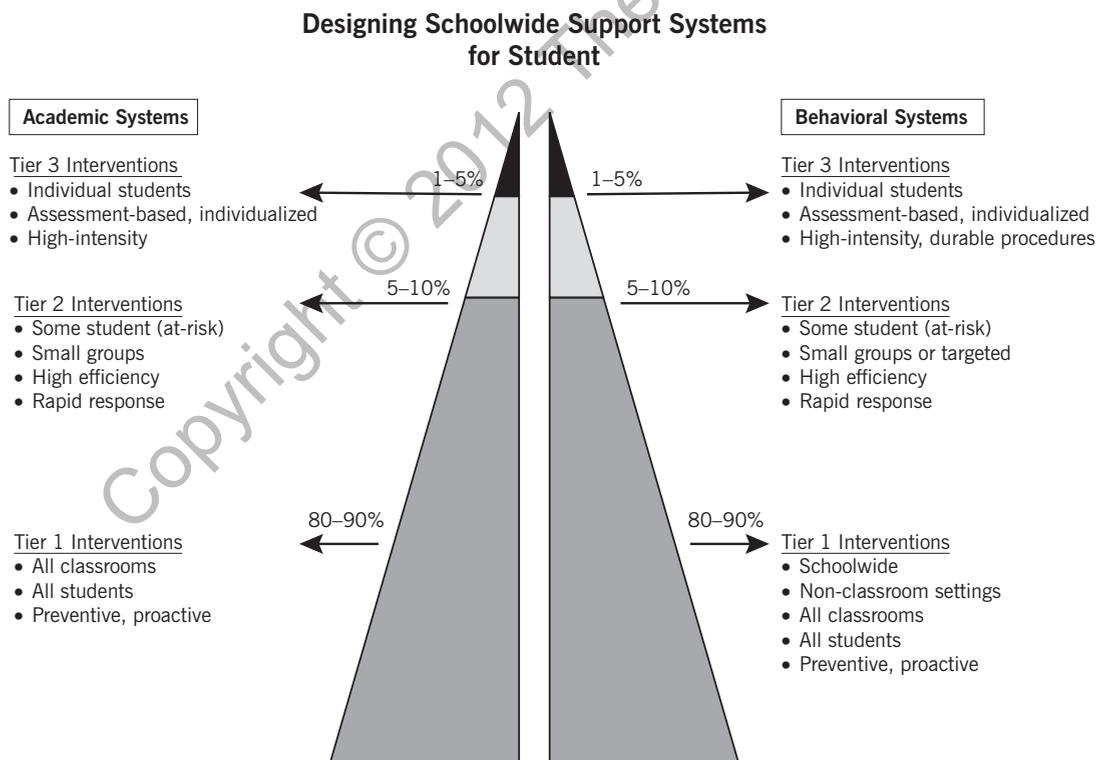
One of the two models discussed in this text is RTI, which includes assessment and intervention practices that have a long history in education (e.g., precision teaching, direct instruction). RTI has also been cited in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (2004) as an optional process for identifying students with learning disabilities (Stecker, 2007; Sugai, 2007, 2011). The second three-tiered model discussed in this text is a schoolwide posi-

**Tiered prevention approaches are designed to support all students' academic achievement and/or social behavior success in an intentional, systematic, and data-driven manner that often includes changing the way in which schools operate.**

tive behavior intervention support (PBIS) system; both models have a foundation in public health.

Within both three-tiered prevention-based models, evidence-based interventions are implemented at a universal level for all students and followed by more intense interventions for students requiring a second (Tier 2) or third level (Tier 3) of support. Figure 1.1 presents the approximate percentage of students that would be in need of each type of preventive intervention provided within the continuum if the system were functioning well for students in the school. “Functioning well” means that the core academic and/or behavioral system in place is meeting the needs of the majority of students in the school.

If core instruction is functioning well for the majority of students in the building, we would expect a schoolwide screening in academics to reveal that at least 80% of students fell into Tier 1, meaning that these students do not need additional academic or behavioral interventions (Sugai, 2011). In terms of primary prevention for social behavior problems, 80% of students respond to school and classwide systems in place to support all students across all settings. Extensive research has been conducted on the overall effectiveness of schoolwide universal academic and behavioral supports (e.g., Horner & Sugai, 2005; Nakasato, 2000; Scott, 2001; Stecker, 2007), and most educators and school-based clinicians are aware of a variety of preventive interventions.



**FIGURE 1.1.** Tiered prevention models and the percentage of students that responds to each tier. From *pbis.org*. Copyright 2011 by *pbis.org*. Reprinted by permission.

A vast amount of social behavior research has also been conducted on more individualized interventions for the 1–5% of students who need Tier 3 levels of support (e.g., Bambara & Kern, 2005). However, less academic research has been conducted on targeted interventions for students who need Tier 3 interventions, and most of the academic research has been restricted to reading (Stecker, 2007). Tier 3 supports are designed for students who have intensive needs that require extensive supports. Laying the foundation for Tier 3 supports is discussed in Chapter 7.

The middle part of the triangle, Tier 2, has not received very much attention in the literature. Tier 2 represents a large percentage of students who struggle or have traditionally “slipped through the cracks.” Even though this is a large group of students, many practitioners are not aware of interventions that are appropriate for this group, and school-based systems may not be clearly structured to provide needed identification systems and infrastructure to support these students and/or the staff. Hill Walker (2004) states: “There is perhaps no field in which there is a greater discrepancy between the availability of empirically developed, evidence-based practices and their adoption and use than in K–12 education” (p. 399). This is most certainly true for Tier 2 students. However, school reform, increased attention to student outcomes, and use of evidence-based practices clearly support the need for schools to work smarter, not harder. Although the general principles guiding both RTI and PBIS are fairly straightforward, implementing the systems pieces, which are foundational for success, can be quite an extensive undertaking, depending on a school’s current practices. Commitment to adopting new models may also require significant changes in what adults in schools are expected to do. All of the essential features work in tandem, so that resistance to adopting one piece (e.g., progress monitoring) will influence the effectiveness of the whole system.

The remainder of this chapter lays the foundation for Tier 2 supports. First, the key universal features of Tier 1 need to be in place and implemented with integrity. If they are not, then the focus should be directed to building capacity at this level. Second, decision-making rules need to be established for determining which students are in need of Tier 2 supports. Third, resources need to be allocated to focus specifically on children in need of Tier 2 interventions. These resources include a team charged with carefully monitoring the progress of individuals receiving Tier 2 supports. Resources also need to be allocated for professional development on the types of interventions available to support children in Tier 2. It is vital that professionals who intend to use specific interventions are prepared to implement them with a high degree of integrity.

## **UNIVERSAL SUPPORTS ARE IN PLACE**

To maximize social behavior and academic learning for all learners, including those at risk, a solid core of evidence-based instruction must be in place. Thus, before schools implement Tier 2 interventions, they need to verify that they do indeed have sound core instruction in place (Burns, Griffiths, Parson, Tilly, & VanderHayden, 2007; Richter, 2008; Sandomierski, Kincaid, & Algozzine, 2007; Stormont et al., 2008). For academic areas such as reading and

mathematics, research has identified core curricula and practices that must be included at the universal level to be able to identify students who need more support. Research in reading has been particularly extensive; many evidence-based curricula have been developed and are available for schoolwide adoption (Burns et al., 2007). Evidence-based programs in reading include the foundational practices of building phonemic awareness, phonological skills, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension (National Institute of Child Health and Human Development, 2000). Although there hasn't been the amount of research in mathematics as there has been in reading, recommendations provided by the NMP (2008) and the Institute on Educational Sciences' report on the use of mathematics interventions in RTI (Gersten, Beckmann, et al., 2009) add considerably to the research on mathematics interventions.

Within PBIS systems, evidence-based universal practices to teach and support social behavior are not packaged in a core curriculum, unlike in the case of reading. Within a schoolwide PBS-tiered model, social behavior is taught systematically, but the specific social behavior varies and is determined by individual schools or districts and supported by school-based teams. The foundational social skills promoted within a schoolwide system of PBS are typically delineated on a matrix that is agreed upon by the majority, preferably all, of staff and widely disseminated. Figure 1.2 includes a sample matrix, and Forms 1.1 and 1.2 (in the Appendix) include the steps involved in creating a matrix and teaching plan. Matrices include agreed-upon behavioral expectations—such as be respectful, be responsible, be safe—and specific behavioral illustrations of what each expectation looks like in a classroom, hallway, cafeteria, playground, bus, and other settings.

Once the behavioral expectations and rules are agreed upon, they are taught explicitly and then supported through prompts, behavior-specific praise, and incentives. As occurs with academic subjects, some children will learn specific skills fast, whereas others will need more practice and support. Some children may need minor supports, such as reminders (e.g., “Remember to *walk* to get the scissors”), and others may need more extensive support that can be delivered individually or in small groups. The latter more typically involves students who need Tier 2 behavioral supports.

## **UNIVERSAL SUPPORTS ARE IMPLEMENTED WITH INTEGRITY**

Often when RTI or PBIS systems are not effective in supporting student growth, it is because the infrastructure is not fully in place. Both tiered systems of support require significant commitment, resources, and capacity to support various kinds of changes in response to data. Such changes may include providing adults with more support to teach behavioral expectations by sending coaches to classrooms to model how to teach specific expectations. In another case, a new teacher may need support in continuing to use the progress monitoring data he or she is collecting to determine who is responding to the core curriculum. Just as children need a continuum of supports, often teachers and other staff will need support as well. Traditional professional development does not support the generalization

Setting	I can be respectful:	I can be safe:	I can be a learner:
All Settings (These expectations apply to all specific locations discussed below.)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>I can show respect for others. This means I will:</b></li> <li>• Use polite language, tone, and volume.</li> <li>• Use polite body language.</li> <li>• Treat others as I want to be treated.</li> <li>• <b>I can allow others to work undisturbed. This means I will:</b></li> <li>• Put materials where they belong.</li> <li>• Put trash in trash cans.</li> <li>• Ask permission to use the property of others.</li> <li>• <b>I can accept responsibility for my own behavior. This means I will:</b></li> <li>• Be honest.</li> <li>• Accept the consequences for my choices.</li> <li>• <b>I can cooperate with others. This means I will:</b></li> <li>• Allow others to resolve their own conflicts.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>I can allow others to work undisturbed. This means I will:</b></li> <li>• Keep my hands, feet, and objects to myself.</li> <li>• <b>I can manage personal and school property. This means I will:</b></li> <li>• Use materials and equipment for intended use.</li> <li>• Push in my chair after use.</li> <li>• <b>I can follow rules and directions. This means I will:</b></li> <li>• Go directly to my destination with a pass.</li> <li>• Walk in the building at all times.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>I can listen attentively. This means I will:</b></li> <li>• Listen when others are speaking.</li> <li>• Raise my hand to share when appropriate.</li> <li>• Give appropriate responses or ask appropriate questions.</li> <li>• <b>I can cooperate with others. This means I will:</b></li> <li>• Work appropriately with others in small groups.</li> <li>• Be a problem solver.</li> <li>• <b>I can follow rules and directions. This means I will:</b></li> <li>• Work independently after directions are given.</li> <li>• Complete the task without frequent reminders.</li> <li>• Respond to the universal attention/quiet signal.</li> <li>• <b>I can stay on task. This means I will:</b></li> <li>• Do my work until it is completed.</li> <li>• Begin and complete assignments on time.</li> <li>• Give my best effort.</li> <li>• <b>I can manage personal and school property. This means I will:</b></li> <li>• Keep my materials organized and prepared for learning.</li> <li>• <b>I can participate in discussions and activities. This means I will:</b></li> <li>• Contribute ideas or suggestions to my group/class.</li> </ul>
	<b>I can be respectful. This means I will:</b>	<b>I can be safe. This means I will:</b>	<b>I can be a learner. This means I will:</b>
<b>Hallway</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Wait for a teacher's signal to pass other lines.</li> <li>• Keep my hands to myself and off the walls and student work.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Walk on the right side in a single-file line</li> <li>• Stop at stop signs.</li> <li>• Walk through doorways on the right-hand side.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Greet others with a quiet wave.</li> </ul>
<b>Bathroom</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Allow privacy for others.</li> <li>• Flush the toilet.</li> <li>• Turn off faucets when finished.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Wash my hands with soap and water and dry with a paper towel before leaving.</li> <li>• Keep the floor dry and clean.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Return to class promptly when I am done.</li> </ul>

(cont.)

**FIGURE 1.2.** Rock Bridge Elementary (RBE) PBS matrix of expectations. From RBE PBS. Copyright 2008. Reprinted by permission.

Setting	I can be respectful. This means I will:	I can be safe. This means I will:	I can be a learner. This means I will:
<b>Cafeteria</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Handle and eat food appropriately.</li> <li>• Take only what I can eat.</li> <li>• Stop speaking when the yellow light flashes.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Eat only my own food.</li> <li>• Put my lunchbox in classroom basket.</li> <li>• Wipe up my table space.</li> <li>• Keep my coat with me.</li> <li>• Bring only appropriate belongings.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Remember my PIN and lunch.</li> <li>• Make healthy food choices.</li> </ul>
<b>Playground</b>	Line up quickly at the first signal. Invite others to play. Share/take turns when using school equipment.	Leave rocks, sticks, and wood chips on the ground. Participate in school-approved games only. Play in approved areas.	Follow the rules of school-approved games. (See <i>RBE Expectations for detailed rules and procedures for playground games.</i> )
<b>Buses</b>	Keep food and drinks in my backpack or lunchbox until I get off the bus.	Stay out of the street while waiting for the bus. Remain seated in my assigned spot on the bus. Wait my turn to exit the bus. Cross in front of the bus.	Be on time to the bus stop in the morning. Follow the driver's directions. Listen for my bus number to be called after school.
<b>Parent Pick Up</b>	Walk in the hallway safely to the parent pick-up area. Keep food and drinks in my backpack or lunchbox.	Remain seated in my assigned spot. Stay on the sidewalk until an adult gives permission to go. Ask permission to go back into the building.	Be on time to parent pick-up area in the afternoon. Watch for my ride.
<b>Assemblies</b>	Applaud appropriately to show thanks. Stay seated flat on my pockets, legs criss-cross.	Stay with my teacher and class.	Keep comments and questions on topic.

**FIGURE 1.2.** (cont.)

of skills into classroom settings. Adults need practice in context and feedback. Some professional educators may assume that educators will have the skills, knowledge, and supports to independently implement recommended practices. These assumptions contribute to the research-to-practice gap in schools.

Professional development needs will change depending on where individual schools are in the change process. Some schools may need support implementing universal supports or features for several years, whereas others may have a fairly sound foundation after 1 year. Professional development tends to occur across phases that include awareness building, initial implementation, full implementation, and institutionalization with ongoing opportunities for review of skills and practice (Stormont et al., 2008). Too often, schools report that they are working to establish Tiers 2 and 3 systems of support when they have not fully

**Just as children need a continuum of supports, often teachers and other staff will need support as well.**

established the structures and systems to support Tier 1. Therefore, at a minimum, schools implementing tiered systems of support need to ensure that the following universal supports are in place

before moving to secondary levels of supports (Burns et al., 2007; Richter, 2008; Sandomierski et al., 2007; Stormont et al., 2008):

- *Buy-in.* At least 80% of the school staff needs to be onboard and supportive. Staff members may be more willing to accept new practices if they are provided with the support and professional development they need. Sharing data, including successes, and involving staff in reviewing and providing feedback may also support buy-in.

- *Team-driven process.* Schools must have a representative team driving the process of establishing the key features of the tiered approach and educating other staff on these features. Teams frequently conduct needs assessments to determine if certain needs exist in their schools and then devote time and resources, or even create resources, to meet those needs. Many tools are available online at *pbis.org* and at *rti4success.org* for teams to assess their needs and guide goals and/or action plans.

- *Administrator support and commitment.* Teams could not devote the time and resources required for successful implementation of tiered supports without the support of their administration. Administrators need to ensure that (1) the support is available both short- and long-term, (2) that resources are allocated, and (3) the implementation of RTI and/or PBIS is a priority. At a minimum, schools can expect that efforts to support change will not be fully realized for 3–5 years. Universal supports need to be in place for a period of time before Tier 2 and 3 levels of support can be implemented.

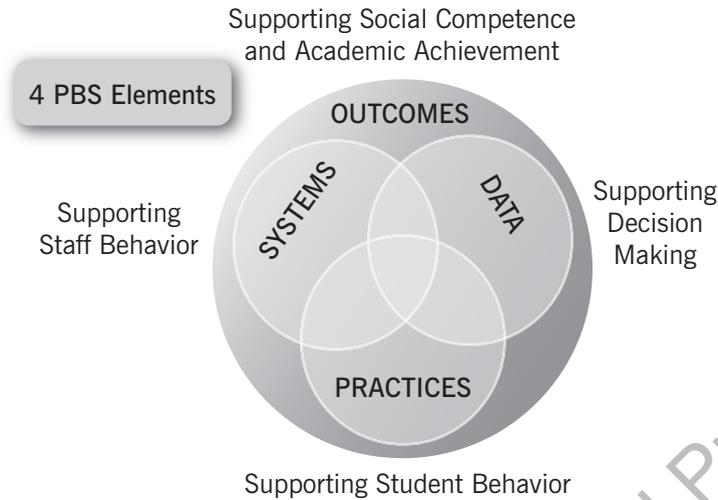
- *Evidence-based curriculum, instruction, and practices.* As discussed in the previous section, it is essential that all students be provided with effective instruction and core foundational practices.

- *Data-based decision making.* Data need to be collected to carefully monitor every step of the way, even though full implementation and the subsequent changes will take several years. Data collected on the implementation of universal features for supporting social behavior or on the core curriculum in academic areas can be used to show the impact of interventions at that level, which is then used to guide further decision making. Data gathering to determine if an intervention is effective is, in itself, an evidence-based practice. The use of objective data for decision making is often much more common in special education and school psychology than in general education. Accordingly, general educators may need more support in learning and implementing systematic data collection and progress monitoring practices.

- *Problem solving.* Using data to guide problem solving is a foundational feature of PBIS and RTI. Ascertaining the interface among practices, data, and system needs are all part of this process (Sugai, 2011). The lens for failure is not focused on students but rather is wide, encompassing all possible factors that are influencing success. Figure 1.3 illustrates these essential, interrelated features (Sugai, 2011).

- *Technical assistance/training needs.* As noted above, one of the unique features of using RTI and PBIS systems is that data are constantly informing the needs for professional development.

**Data gathering to determine if an intervention is effective is, in itself, an evidence-based practice.**



**FIGURE 1.3.** Essential features of SWPBS and RTI. From *pbis.org*. Copyright 2011 by *pbis.org*. Reprinted by permission.

The question is not whether schools need technical assistance or specific training but rather *what* assistance and training they need. The answer is provided by needs assessment data—that is, data collected on students and/or staff. School staff, at a minimum, “need to understand the priorities of what to teach, how to teach, and when to teach it. Problems occur when the priorities are not communicated or there are competing demands on staff time” (Bohanon, McIntosh, & Goodman, 2011, p. 3).

- *Family involvement.* Family involvement is critical to support the effectiveness of any intervention. Chapter 2 provides an overview of the importance of, and specific practices to use to increase, family involvement. It is clear that when families are involved in their children’s education, they can be more supportive at home. When school professionals and families have more trusting relationships, school professionals also have the opportunity to share school and community resources with families.

- *A system of schoolwide screening/benchmarking and progress monitoring that is technically adequate.* This key feature is introduced in the following section and then covered in greater detail in each of the intervention chapters.

- *Data management and frequent communication.* It is important to devote time and resources to training selected members of school teams on data management and analysis (Sugai, 2011). People need to be trained on the types of data that are useful for specific purposes, data management systems, data entry, and data analysis. Administrators need to ensure that people who are trained also have time allocated for data management and analysis tasks. It is equally important that teams report findings back to staff and families and to publicly acknowledge any improvements that children are making in specific areas. Data reports can also summarize survey data or show increases in family involvement in specific homework activities (see Chapter 2). Commonly used data management systems include the School-wide Information System (SWIS) for social behavior and AIMSweb for

academic and social behavior. Additional academic data management systems are discussed in Chapters 5 and 6.

## **ASSESSMENT OF UNIVERSALS**

Given the problem-solving orientations used within RTI and PBIS systems, it is vital that time and resources are devoted to establishing systems of schoolwide screening and progress monitoring. It is important that PBIS and RTI teams meet often and regularly use data to inform their decision making and that the school is supportive of team efforts and willing to make changes that need to be made to support success (Stormont et al., 2008). In terms of specific data used for decision making, multiple sources of information, including informal and/or descriptive data, are often valued and used; however, it is important that the screening and progress monitoring evaluation systems also include measures that have strong reliability and validity.

Many tools are available with which to assess the implementation of universal features of PBIS and RTI. The most often used evaluation for assessing implementation of universal features of PBIS is the School-wide Evaluation Tool (SET; Sugai, Lewis-Palmer, Todd, & Horner, 2001). SET data are used to assess key features of PBIS, determine goals for the year, monitor efforts from year to year, and evaluate processes and needs for improvement. Multiple data sources are used when administering the SET, including school data (e.g., discipline handbook), student data (e.g., office disciplinary referrals; ODRs), and teacher data (e.g., social skills lesson plans). Data are also collected from a minimum of 10 staff and 15 students to assess the integrity of implementation. A SET score of 80% or higher indicates that a school is implementing the universal features of PBIS with integrity. The original SET has been revised and is available online at [www.pbis.org](http://www.pbis.org).

There are similar integrity measures for RTI that help districts and school teams assess the effectiveness of implementation. For instance, on [rtisuccess.org](http://rtisuccess.org) an entire section of the library is devoted to fidelity in maintaining the RTI process. Fidelity of implementation is addressed and tools are provided (e.g., see Johnson, Mellard, Fuchs, & McKnight, 2006). However, these fidelity tools need more research to document their technical characteristics.

Additional survey data can also be collected and used to ensure that universals are sound prior to instituting Tier 2 supports. An example located at the PBIS website is the Effective Behavior Support Self-Assessment Survey (Sugai, Horner, & Todd, 2000), which can be used by school staff members to determine their current implementation across different systems of support as well as where they need improvement. Data from the survey are then used to create an action plan. A similar type of assessment is available for schools to use to assess core reading practices. Kame'enui and Simmons (2003) created the Planning and Evaluation Tool for Effective Schoolwide Reading Programs. School teams can also collect observational data (e.g., percentage of students on task, number of students in the hallway when bell rings) and additional survey data depending on the information they feel is important for decision making.

## DECISION RULES FOR TIER 2

Which children need Tier 2 supports? They represent a large number of students (approximately 15%) who do not respond to evidence-based universal social behavior or academic instruction (e.g., Burns et al., 2007). But, who they represent in a given school will vary in relation to school professionals' decision rules for identifying who is struggling and how much or how long students struggle before they are provided with more resources. Research can provide some direction in terms of how academic and social behavior risk has been defined in the context of tiered prevention-based models.

Screening decision rules have been established within the academic areas of reading and math. These are covered in more depth in Chapters 5 and 6. Who is at risk within a PBIS model has not been standardized for social behavior as well as it has been for academic behavior. In an exhaustive investigation of the existing published peer-reviewed literature, Mitchell, Stormont, and Gage (in press) reviewed research that has been conducted using Tier 2 social behavior interventions within the context of a three-tiered prevention model, such as PBIS. The 13 articles that met inclusionary criteria included different strategies for identifying children who needed Tier 2 interventions. Students were identified through three main methods: nomination, student data, and behavioral screening. In the research student referrals for Tier 2 interventions have included (1) teacher nomination based on a perception of the need for more support (Campbell & Anderson, 2007; McIntosh, Campbell, Russell-Carter, & Dickey, 2009), (2) increased classroom behavior problems (Fairbanks, Sugai, Guardino, 2007), and/or (3) the existence of a behavioral support plan (McCurdy, Kunsch, & Reibstein, 2007). Administrator nomination has also been used as one part of the identification process.

The most commonly used student data to identify students who need Tier 2 behavioral interventions are ODRs. Researchers have used different numbers of ODRs as criteria for participation; two ODRs were used in one study, whereas another study used five. Other researchers have also considered the number of ODRs within a time frame (e.g., one or more within the first 4 months of school). However, it is important to note that the use of ODR data alone has not been common in the research in this area. Typically researchers have used a combination of student behavioral and academic data and perceptions of need according to teachers, administrators, or behavioral support teams. In 3 of the 13 studies, a behavioral screening instrument was utilized to identify students in need of Tier 2 interventions. Two studies used the Social Skills Rating Scale (SSRS; Gresham & Elliot, 1990) and one study used the Systematic Screening for Behavior Disorders (SSBD; Walker & Severson, 1992). Research methodologies have varied in terms of who is screened and when, with some using the criteria that students are screened after schoolwide prevention efforts are in place, whereas others recommend screening all students as part of the implementation of schoolwide prevention efforts. One of the benefits for using the schoolwide

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behavioral screening is that students who have internalizing problems can also be referred for more support. Another benefit of screening all students is that some of the research in this area has used subjective criteria for inclusion (e.g., teacher perception of increasing problems) and behavioral screening instruments that have been standardized provide more objective data that can be used for decision making. Chapters 3 and 4 more thoroughly discuss measures and methods that can be used to screen for children with externalizing and internalizing problems. Chapters 3, 4, 5, and 6 also include data and processes that can be implemented for progress monitoring and for determining students who need more intensive Tier 3 supports. Forms 1.3, 1.4, and 1.5 (in the Appendix) include sample nomination and referral forms and cumulative record reviews that teams can use.

## **TIER 2 RESOURCES**

Just as schools must be committed to providing universal supports if they are to be effective, they must also be committed to ensuring the success of Tier 2 efforts. A Tier 2 team consisting of individuals with expertise in working with students at risk for academic and social behavior failure should be established to support efforts. The team should be charged with determining Tier 2 readiness, as described earlier in this chapter, as well as selecting the specific assessment tools and interventions to be used.

The Tier 2 team members should ensure that communication with staff is open, and they should promote buy-in by soliciting feedback from staff on proposed data collection methods and interventions. The team should also make sure that home–school communication is firmly set in place and it should determine specific interventions and practices that may or may not fit with the culture of any given school (Crone, Hawken, & Horner, 2010). It is important that the administration support this team by providing the time and resources needed for its success. Depending on the team's composition, some team members may need to receive additional training in specific interventions. This training may be available through professional development opportunities at local universities, webinars, or state or national workshops. The team may want to self-assess its school regarding the specific needs presented in this section and to develop action plans to determine appropriate starting points (McIntosh, Bohanon, & Goodman, 2010; see Form 1.6 [in the Appendix] for an example).

**Just as schools must be committed to providing universal supports if they are to be effective, they must also be committed to ensuring the success of Tier 2 efforts.**

## **TIER 2 SUPPORTS AND PROGRESS MONITORING**

Too often in schools today, children are not provided with an appropriate intervention, and many times this is because educators don't know what their options are and/or how to determine which children need what type of intervention. Another potential barrier for imple-

menting effective Tier 2 practices is that some educators may not believe that specific roles fit with their current job responsibilities. We recently conducted two surveys of special and general educators related to supporting children with emotional, behavioral, and social needs (Reinke, Stormont, Herman, Puri, & Goel, 2011; Stormont, Reinke, & Herman, 2011; Stormont, Reinke, & Herman, in press). Some relevant findings include the following:

- Forty-five percent of educators reported that they had not heard of the term *evidence-based practices*.
- Only 43% of educators agreed or strongly agreed with the statement *I am confident that the interventions/practices I use have the desired impact on students*.
- Both RTI and PBIS require that classroom teachers systematically collect data to inform instruction and needs for support. However, teachers reported they thought it was more the role of school psychologists than teachers to conduct behavioral assessments.
- Special educators were more likely than general educators to agree that evidence-based social behavior practices were indeed evidence-based; general educators were more likely than special educators to agree that non-evidence-based behavioral practices were evidence-based.
- Of 10 evidence-based programs used to support improvement in social behavior, only PBIS was acknowledged as an evidence-based program by the majority of teachers.

## TIER 2 PLANS

It is also recommended that children who need Tier 2 interventions receive support plans to guide systematic planning based on their needs and progress monitoring data. Such a plan would include:

- Identification of specific needs for support
- Identification of a target intervention or interventions
- Identification of the data to be utilized for progress monitoring
- Determination of who is in charge of data collection
- Scheduling of meetings to monitor progress
- Frequent ways of supporting home–school communication
- Determination of additional needs for support

A sample completed plan is provided in Figure 1.4. A reproducible blank plan is available in Form 1.7 in the Appendix. The sample plan includes examples of evidence-based practices and programs as well as appropriate progress monitoring mechanisms (discussed in this book). It is vital that this level of depth and clarity in intervention planning and progress monitoring is achieved with Tier 2 children if optimal results are to be obtained. Tier 2 children have been selected because of their need for extra supports that are not provided to everyone. At the Tier 2 level, a small number of supports and interventions are typically

Student: Jackson Miller

Support needs	Interventions currently in place in school	Person responsible	Data to monitor progress
<i>Literacy</i> —needs extra support for identifying rhyming words, letter naming, and naming the first sounds when a word is spoken aloud	Intervention time 30 minutes daily in a small-group setting using the peer-assisted learning strategies program	General education teacher	Individual growth and development indicators (IGDIs) to include rhyming, alliteration, and picture naming given weekly for 1 minute each
<i>Attention</i> —has attention problems and thrives on adult attention	Check-in/Check-out	Counselor	Meets 80% of behavior goals, 4 weeks
<i>Anger management</i> —difficulty thinking about other choices besides verbal aggression (when upset, yells, screams); this has improved but may be an issue especially with more children, more structure, and more challenging work	Small social skills group  Visual reminder	School psychologist	Direct observation data and teacher ratings
<i>Impulse control</i> —blurts out answers during large group	Use prompts and cues, proximity, and immediate reward (sticker) every day child meets a specific goal	Teacher	Direct observation data; number of days child meets goal
<i>Home-school communication</i> —increase communication to family about progress	Family preference is e-mail	Counselor	One summary of progress every week

(cont.)

FIGURE 1.4. Tier 2 support plan.

**Notes:**

**Data management system:** *The school psychologist will create an Excel spreadsheet to keep track of all data to monitor progress. Each support need will have a column and the data collected will be given to the school psychologist on a weekly basis.*

**Meeting for progress review:** Monthly

**Discuss any family support needs:** *Mother is in between jobs and struggling with some health issues. The school counselor will email the progress report once a week and also offer support in terms of resources available in the community. Counselor will also phone before monthly meetings to determine if there are any barriers for participation and will determine ways to help overcome barriers (e.g., child-care, need for voucher for transportation).*

**FIGURE 1.4.** *(cont.)*

**It is recommended that children who need Tier 2 interventions receive support plans to guide systematic planning based on their needs and progress monitoring data.**

chosen to allow for greater integrity of implementation. Interventions can be delivered to small groups or to individuals with similar needs in a one-on-one setting. Although interventions can be delivered to individuals, they are not as highly individualized as are Tier 3 supports. The interventions are often scripted, and research has supported their effectiveness for students with specific characteristics (Hawken, Pettersson, Mootz, & Henderson, 2009; McIntosh et al., 2011). When supports require extensive individualization, time, resources, and expertise to implement, they are typically considered to be Tier 3 supports (Stecker, 2007).

## SUMMARY

This chapter provided an overview of the reasons that universal supports need to be in place if we are to effectively identify students in need of Tier 2 supports. Tiered prevention models for academics (RTI) and for social behaviors (PBIS) were reviewed as well as how to determine if the universal systems for each model are in place. Recognizing the need to monitor the progress of student outcomes as well as to monitor the integrity of implementation of interventions is necessary to ensure effectiveness and for determining when to

modify, fade, or intensify supports. This chapter highlights these important issues to ensure that schools can create teams that effectively identify and intervene with students in need of Tier 2 academic and behavioral supports. Chapter 2 provides an ecological context for providing Tier 2 supports and Chapters 3–6 present specific evidence-based practices and interventions that can be used as Tier 2 supports for students with externalizing problems, internalizing problems, and reading and math deficits. The book concludes with a chapter on determining when children may need Tier 3 supports.

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