



According to the International Dyslexia Association (2008), dyslexia is a specific learning disability that is characterized by difficulties with accurate and/or fluent word recognition and decoding abilities.

The International Dyslexia Association (2008) points out that it is possible to identify potential reading problems in young children even before the problems turn into reading failure. This can be done by assessing students three times a year using screening assessments such as DIBELS or AIMSweb. These assessments help schools determine students who are “at risk” for reading difficulties. This process of finding students who are at-risk for reading difficulty is part of the Multi-Tier System of Supports (MTSS) framework. Consequently, schools trained in the MTSS framework have the tools to adequately screen and identify students with reading difficulties, specifically to target a student’s reading fluency and accuracy, which are characteristics of dyslexia.

The following table provides information on how the Kansas MTSS process addresses some of the facts and recommendations from The International Dyslexia Association and researchers of dyslexia.

Facts Regarding Reading Disabilities or Dyslexia	Kansas Multi-Tier System of Supports (MTSS)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A young child must develop phonemic awareness if he is to become a reader (Shaywitz, 2003, p. 51).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Students needing intervention are given the following Phonological Awareness subtests to determine instruction                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Phoneme Isolation of Initial Sounds</li> <li>Syllable Blending, Segmentation, &amp; Deletion</li> <li>Concept of Spoken Word</li> </ul>                             (MTSS Implementation Training)                         </li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Research (Fuchs, Deno, &amp; Mirkin, 1984) shows that students with reading disabilities make stronger reading gains when teachers use Curriculum Based Measurement-Reading Assessments (CBM-R). It helps teachers amend instruction until it is effective and gives the clearest picture of student’s ongoing reading growth (The International Dyslexia Association, 2007).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>In the MTSS process students are given a curriculum-based measure of oral reading fluency. (MTSS Structuring Guide)</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Careful progress monitoring and analysis of student performance are the key elements of a scientific approach to instruction that has the most promise to meet the unique needs of students with dyslexia (The International Dyslexia Association, 2007).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Progress monitoring for students receiving supplemental (Tier 2) and intense (Tier 3) instruction is critical so that teachers know if the intervention is working and how to adjust instruction (MTSS Structuring Guide)</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Preventive intervention should begin immediately, even if dyslexia is suspected (The International Dyslexia Association, 2009).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Once the diagnostic information has been collected, students will be grouped for intervention according to skill needs. (MTSS Implementation Guide)</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Shaywitz (2003) reports that brain scans of dyslexic kindergartners and first-graders who have benefited from a year’s worth of targeted instruction start to resemble those of children who have never had any difficulty reading.</li> <li>Individuals with dyslexia require intense, precisely, focused instruction (The International Dyslexia Association, 2007).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Students in K-3 should receive targeted skill based instruction for supplemental and intensive interventions.</li> <li>Targeted Skill-based Lessons are teacher-planned lessons that are more systematic, explicit, and focused on a small number of specific skills at a time. (MTSS Implementation Training Materials)</li> </ul>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “If kids are at risk, we can address it with 30 minutes of intervention a day at the kindergarten level,” (Kantrowitz &amp; Underwood, 1999).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• For Grades K-3 it is suggested that an additional 30 minutes of targeted instruction should be provided beyond the core, conducted in small homogeneous groups of 3-5 students. (MTSS Structuring Guide)</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Different people respond to approaches, depending on their personality and the nature of their disability. “The data we have don’t show any one program that is head and shoulders above the rest. But the most successful programs emphasize the same core elements; practice manipulating phonemes, building vocabulary, increasing comprehension, and improving fluency of reading.” (Shaywitz, 2003).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• For supplemental and intensive support to be provided in grades K-3, curriculum materials must be selected that focus on skill-based instruction. Skill-based instruction refers to the five essential areas of reading; phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension. (MTSS Structuring Guide)</li> <li>• In MTSS teachers use data analysis from the universal screener or progress monitoring assessment to place students in intervention programs or materials from the school’s curriculum matrix. (MTSS Implementation Training Materials)</li> </ul>

KSDE [Kansas State Department of Education] has policies and procedures in place to ensure that all children with exceptionalities residing in the State, including children with exceptionalities attending public or private schools, are home schooled; are highly mobile, including migrant and homeless; or are wards of the State, and who are in need of special education and related services are identified, located, and evaluated. Local school districts are required to conduct ongoing public notice, screening, general education interventions, and evaluation to ensure that Kansas children from birth to age 5 with disabilities, and children from kindergarten through age 21 with exceptionalities are identified appropriately (Kansas State Department of Education, 2011, p. 30).

The use of MTSS or any other process should not be used to delay an initial evaluation for special education. The school will make a referral for an initial evaluation whenever it is suspected that a child may be a child with an exceptionality to determine eligibility for special education and related services. At any time, a parent may request an initial evaluation under IDEA.

#### Works Cited

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