MULTI-TIERED SYSTEM OF SUPPORTS (MTSS) IN THE CLASSROOM

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Purpose & Audience

This brief provides guidance to educators implementing an MTSS framework, like positive behavioral interventions and supports (PBIS), in the classroom across the continuum of student need. Educators regularly provide a range of supports for students in the classroom—from universal supports for all students to intensive and individualized supports for a few students.

The purpose of this brief is to help educators familiar with PBIS organize classroom supports for preventing, teaching, and responding to students' **social, emotional, and behavioral (SEB)** needs across the continuum. Educators new to PBIS who are interested in learning more about classroom implementation are encouraged to check out Habits of Effective Classroom Practice[1] (Center on PBIS, 2021) and Supporting and Responding to Behavior[2] (Office of Special Education Programs, 2015).

Introduction

Effective educator practices have their greatest impact when they are implemented within a schoolwide system of support for staff and students. Schools invest in an MTSS framework, like PBIS, across the implementation cascade (i.e., state, district, school, classroom) to promote equitable academic and SEB outcomes for each and every student (Center on PBIS, 2021). The organization of a continuum of evidence-based practices across tiers facilitates the provision of efficient and effective classroom supports guided by data-based decisions.

In classrooms, each educator implements, differentiates, and intensifies critical evidence-based and contextually-relevant SEB practices to meet the needs of all learners (Simonsen & Myers, 2015). In this practice guide, we emphasize four critical components of effective SEB support.

- **Prevent** SEB challenges by setting students up for success.

- **Teach** critical SEB skills.

- **Respond** in ways that encourage SEB skills and decrease repeated SEB challenges.

- **Decide** whether to maintain or adjust (e.g., intensify, adapt, or fade) support based on data. See the PBIS Technical Guide on Classroom Data[3] (Center on PBIS, 2021) for further guidance.

These components are similar to other comprehensive approaches to SEB support (e.g., Prevent-Teach-Reinforce; Dunlap et al., 2010).

To maximize efficiency, these practices are organized in a three-tiered continuum of support (see Figure 1).

The following points briefly introduce each tier, and hyperlinked tables provide key considerations for implementing and differentiating practices within each tier to meet the needs of all the learners. Although the focus of this guide is to address classroom implementation and considerations, it is important to note that Tier 2 and 3 levels of support require team-based approaches to data collection and decision-making.
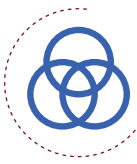
- **Tier 1:** Create a robust foundation of support in Tier 1. Table 1 presents key considerations for implementing and differentiating each practice in Tier 1.

- **Tier 2:** Target implementation of each practice to support students who require an additional layer of support. Consider standardized approaches, like Check-In Check-Out (CICO; Hawken et al., 2021) or small-group social skills instruction (e.g., Cho Blair et al., 2020; Kern et al., 2020; Lane et al., 2009), to support common SEB needs. Table 2 presents key considerations for targeting implementation of key practices in the classroom, with additional considerations for CICO and small-group social skills instruction.

- **Tier 3:** Individualize and intensify implementation of key practices for a few students with significant or persistent SEB needs. Table 3 presents key considerations for individualizing classroom practices and developing a comprehensive support plan.

As illustrated in Figure 1, educators prevent, teach, respond, and decide throughout the continuum. In **Tier 1**, educators **prevent** when they effectively design space, develop and teach predictable routines, connect with students, select and define classroom norms and critical SEB skills, prompt expected SEB skills, actively supervise, and engage in effective instruction. Educators explicitly **teach** positively-stated classroom norms and SEB skills; and they **respond** when they provide specific positive feedback on SEB skills, provide supportive corrective feedback to address SEB errors, and maintain a high ratio of positive to corrective feedback.

In **Tier 2**, educators target **prevention** when they increase structure, re-teach routines increase connections, target prompts and supervision, and implement targeted antecedent manipulations. Educators explicitly **teach** targeted SEB skills and connect targeted instruction to tier 1 norms or expectations. Educators also target how they **respond**; they increase specific positive and supportive feedback, enhance continuum of recognition strategies, and enhance strategies to decrease SEB challenges.

In Tier 3, educators intensify and individualize **prevention** when they individualize physical design, individualize routines, intensify connections, intensify and individualize prompts for SEB skills, and implement individualized antecedent manipulations. Educators individualize, intensify, and explicitly **teach** SEB and academic skills, and align individualized SEB skills with classroom and school norms or expectations.
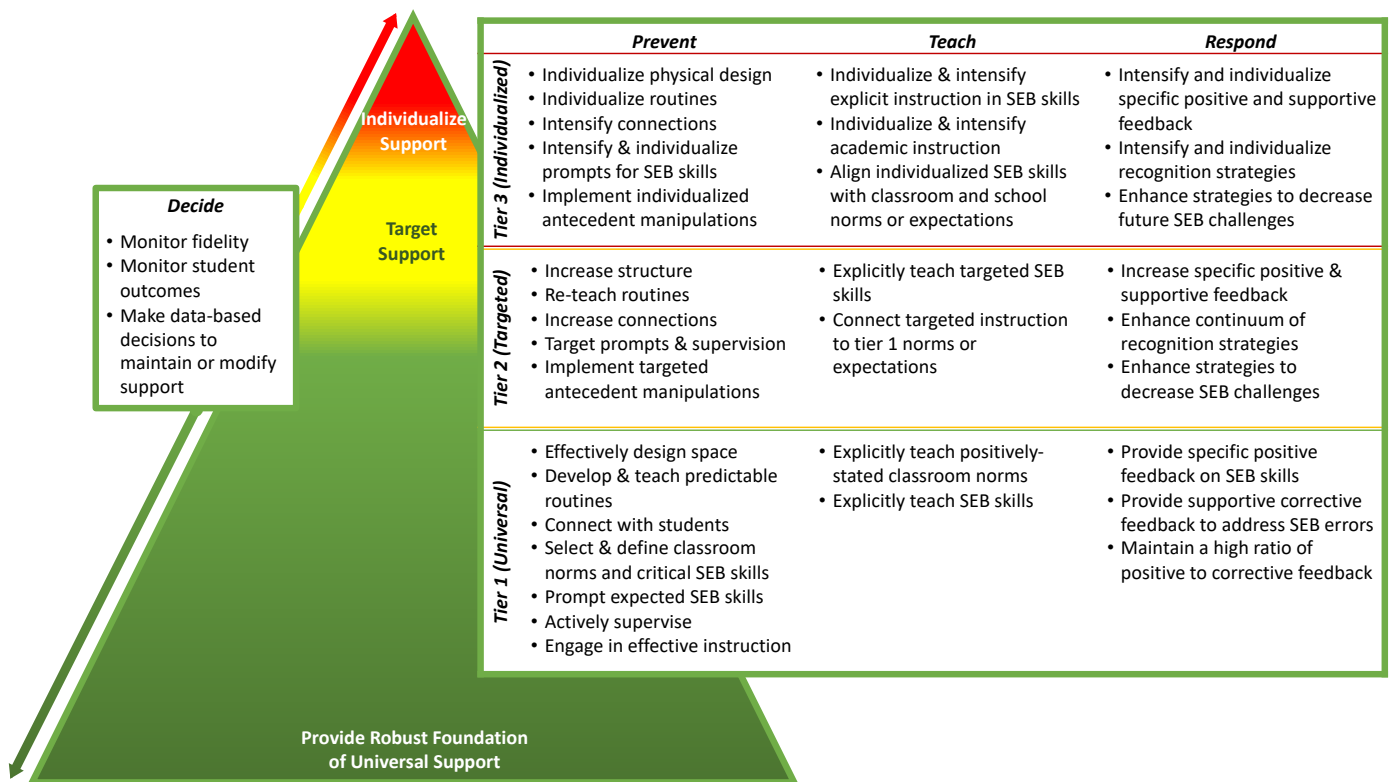
Educators also intensify and individualize how they **respond**; they intensify and individualize specific positive and supportive feedback, intensify and individualize recognition strategies, and enhance strategies to decrease future SEB challenges.

Throughout the continuum, educators **decide**. They monitor fidelity, monitor student outcomes, and make data-based decisions to maintain or modify support.

Educators are encouraged to review each table with the purpose of evaluating their current classroom practices and the extent to which they are differentiating and supporting every student in their classroom. The action plan in Table 4 can be used to guide implementation and fidelity monitoring of key practices. Choosing several targeted practices for their own professional learning goals may further enhance use of these practices.

Figure 1. Prevent, Teach, Respond, and Decide within a MTSS Framework

Decide
- Monitor fidelity
- Monitor student outcomes
- Make data-based decisions to maintain or modify support

Individualize Support

Target Support

Provide Robust Foundation of Universal Support

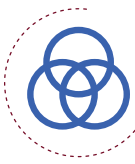|	Prevent	Teach	Respond
Tier 3 (Individualized)	• Individualize physical design • Individualize routines • Intensify connections • Intensify & individualize prompts for SEB skills • Implement individualized antecedent manipulations	• Individualize & intensify explicit instruction in SEB skills • Individualize & intensify academic instruction • Align individualized SEB skills with classroom and school norms or expectations	• Intensify and individualize specific positive and supportive feedback • Intensify and individualize recognition strategies • Enhance strategies to decrease future SEB challenges
Tier 2 (Targeted)	• Increase structure • Re-teach routines • Increase connections • Target prompts & supervision • Implement targeted antecedent manipulations	• Explicitly teach targeted SEB skills • Connect targeted instruction to tier 1 norms or expectations	• Increase specific positive & supportive feedback • Enhance continuum of recognition strategies • Enhance strategies to decrease SEB challenges
Tier 1 (Universal)	• Effectively design space • Develop & teach predictable routines • Connect with students • Select & define classroom norms and critical SEB skills • Prompt expected SEB skills • Actively supervise • Engage in effective instruction	• Explicitly teach positively-stated classroom norms • Explicitly teach SEB skills	• Provide specific positive feedback on SEB skills • Provide supportive corrective feedback to address SEB errors • Maintain a high ratio of positive to corrective feedback

Table 1. Tier 1 Classroom Practices

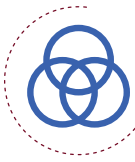| Critical Component	Tier 1 Practice	Considerations for Implementation of Tier 1	Considerations for Differentiation of Tier 1
Prevent	Effectively design space	• Design the classroom environment to facilitate typical instructional activities (e.g., small group, whole group, individual, and/or remote learning), facilitate transitions (e.g., plan movement among parts of room, organize instructional materials), and minimize distractions. • Create purposeful visual prompts and displays to support learning (e.g., reminders of strategies), access to materials (e.g., labeled bins), and independent engagement with academic activities.	• Consider diverse mobility and other physical or mental health needs when designing the classroom environment (e.g., pathways that ensure wheelchair access, quiet or calming spaces). • Consider diverse language, reading, and related abilities when developing visual prompts (e.g., pair pictures with text).
	Develop & teach routines	• Post and review schedule for the day or class period. • Define, explicitly teach, prompt, and regularly review procedures for common activities (e.g., arrival, dismissal, turning in homework, working in groups).	• Consider breaking common routines or procedures into discrete steps (i.e., develop a task analysis), and teach, prompt, and review simple steps for students who need additional support with the routine. • Adjust and reteach routines as needed. Some students will need more frequent review, structure, and opportunities to rehearse routines and/or visual supports (e.g., picture sequence of routine).
	Connect with students	• At the start of each year, plan activities to get to know each student, connect with each family to establish a positive relationship, and deliberately create a welcoming environment. • Use simple strategies, like positive greetings at the door, to connect with students at the start of each day. • Throughout the day, provide opportunities for authentic connection (e.g., lunch bunch, peer-to-peer connections in academic routines, cooperative group work). • Routinely engage families and students in bi-directional communication; for example, move beyond a newsletter where educators share information by inviting feedback and participation to create an engaged, vibrant classroom community.	• Provide families and students with a variety of opportunities to connect that (a) honor family and student identity, (b) consider a range of needs (e.g., language, ability, transportation, scheduling), and (c) engage families and students across time (e.g., beyond back-to-school night or open house). • When implementing simple connection strategies (e.g., greetings), offer a range of ways for students to engage, ensure communication supports are in place to enable each student to participate, and differentiate content of greeting to meet the needs of each and every student.

Table 1. Tier 1 Classroom Practices *continued*

Critical Component	Tier 1 Practice	Considerations for Implementation of Tier 1	Considerations for Differentiation of Tier 1
Prevent	Select & define classroom norms and critical SEB skills	• Adopt school norms, or expectations, for the classroom (if school has a few positively stated norms). If school norms do not exist, engage students in selecting a few (3-5) positively stated classroom norms (e.g., take care of others, environment, and self). • Define norms, or expectations, in the context of classroom routines. Consider using a matrix that specifies norms (row headers), routines (column headers), and examples of SEB skills that are consistent with norms within each routine (in each box of the matrix).	• Ensure all students are able to actively engage in selecting and defining classroom norms, or expectations. For example, consider diverse communication and language needs when planning activities to select and define norms. • With students, identify a range of critical SEB skills that are contextually, culturally, and developmentally appropriate for all students to ensure each student is able to "see" themself in the norms (representation) and engage in the skills represented in the matrix (skill differentiation).
	Prompt expected SEB Skills	• Provide precorrections regularly before presenting students with the opportunity to perform critical SEB skills (e.g., at the start of class, before transitions, prior to starting an activity). • Ensure prompts are specific and describe the expected SEB skill.	• Use non-verbal prompts, such as visuals, gestures, and modeling, in addition to verbal prompts, to support the understanding of all students. • Provide visual reminders (e.g., checklist, picture sequence of expected behaviors within routine) to promote independence.
	Actively supervise	• Regularly scan and circulate through entire classroom space (physical or virtual) during all classroom routines • While supervising, check in with individual students and use proximity, precorrections, and specific verbal praise to promote on-task behavior.	• Increase supervision and interactions for students who require additional prompts, praise, and redirection to stay engaged. • Adjust mode of supervision to meet the needs of students in diverse learning contexts (e.g., electronically monitor engagement in virtual environments) and/or with diverse needs (e.g., consider praise notes for students who do not benefit from adult attention)
	Engage in effective instruction	• Engage students in instruction through frequent and various opportunities to respond (OTRs) that include a mixture of individual and choral or unison responding. • Vary OTRs to match the activity and provide a range of ways for students to participate across OTRs. Consider response modalities (e.g., verbal, gestural, written, or electronic responses); individual, small-group, or whole class unison responses; or embed polls or chat during virtual instruction. • Select instructional materials that are evidence-based and culturally relevant, so students see their identities reflected in pictures, text, and other aspects of instructional materials.	• Pre-teach OTRs to students who require additional support to respond so that each and every student is able to successfully engage in OTRs. • Ensure alternative augmentative communication devices are available and programmed to enable participation.

Table 1. Tier 1 Classroom Practices *continued*

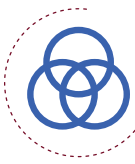| Critical Component	Tier 1 Practice	Considerations for Implementation of Tier 1	Considerations for Differentiation of Tier 1
Teach	Explicitly teach positively stated classroom norms	• Explicitly teach classroom norms, as defined in the classroom matrix described in prevent section, using a range of examples (and non-examples) to teach the "general case" of SEB skills that are consistent (and inconsistent) with norms during each routine. • Use a model (I do), lead (we do), and test (you do) format to ensure that each student has an opportunity to demonstrate and receive feedback on engaging in behaviors that are consistent with classroom norms within each routine.	• Enhance instruction with visuals and social narratives to ensure norms are clear to all students. Some students may benefit from visuals of norms that they can keep with them for reference. • Provide extra opportunities to practice and receive praise for modeling norms to students who may need it, especially prior to tasks or times that have presented challenges to students in the past.
	Explicitly teach SEB skills	• In addition to teaching SEB skills in the context of classroom norms and routines, educators may (a) use data to identify additional SEB skills (e.g., asking for help, problem solving) and develop lesson plans to teach these skills, (b) adopt an evidence-based curriculum, or (c) use a combination of these approaches to promote students' SEB growth. • Regardless of approach (e.g., curriculum or teacher developed lessons), engage students in explicit instruction (model, lead, test), make connections between skills and classroom norms, and provide practice opportunities and specific feedback throughout classroom routines.	• Consider diverse abilities and needs when prioritizing SEB skills to teach. • If adopting an evidence-based curriculum, consider contextual and cultural relevance of lessons. • Consider visual (e.g., picture sequence to prompt problem solving) and alternative or augmentative communication strategies that enable all students to engage in social/communication skill. • Provide additional opportunities to review, practice, and receive feedback on SEB skills that are challenging for some students.
Respond	Provide specific positive feedback on SEB skills	• Provide specific verbal praise that labels the specific SEB skill to acknowledge individuals and groups for engaging in SEB skills that are consistent with classroom norms. • Ask students to complete a survey for preferred praise or acknowledgement strategies to maximize the contextual and cultural relevance for all learners. • Match acknowledgement approaches to students' interest, developmental level, etc. and to ensure acknowledgement is reinforcing (i.e., enhances SEB skills).	• Provide even more specific verbal praise for students who experience frequent error corrections. • Praise effort, improvement, and progress toward key SEB skills. • Consider additional acknowledgement approaches (e.g., group contingency, token economy) to increase opportunities for reinforcement during challenging routines or times of year.

Table 1. Tier 1 Classroom Practices   *continued*

Critical Component	Tier 1 Practice	Considerations for Implementation of Tier 1	Considerations for Differentiation of Tier 1
Respond	Provide supportive corrective feedback to address SEB errors	• Correct SEB errors in a supportive manner, similar to academic corrections by calmly informing the student of the error and contextually appropriate SEB skill for the context (e.g., "Instead of running, we agreed to be safe by walking in the classroom."). • Ensure corrections are (a) brief, (b) provide an opportunity for the student to perform the contextually appropriate SEB skill followed with praise, and (c) redirect the student to the contextually appropriate skill. • Teach and use strategies to reduce implicit bias when responding to student SEB errors (e.g., identify vulnerable decision points, implement neutralizing routines)*	• Provide visual supports and additional opportunities to practice the contextually appropriate SEB skill in addition to verbal error correction. • Re-teach SEB skills as necessary to reduce the likelihood of future behavior errors. • Consider additional low-intensity response approaches (e.g., private conference, reflection sheet, planned ignoring, differential reinforcement).
	Maintain a high ratio of positive to corrective feedback	• For every correction, provide at least 5 praise statements or positive interactions. This sets the tone for a reinforcing classroom environment.	• Maintain an even higher praise to correction ratio (i.e., 9:1 for students with disabilities and those requiring additional support) in order to increase engagement, decrease disruption, and maintain a positive environment.
Decide	Monitor fidelity	• Collect simple fidelity data to self-assess the use of the above practices (e.g., tally positive to corrective statements, count opportunities to respond).	• If data indicate fidelity of implementation is lower than desired, set a goal to improve (e.g., increase specific praise rate), continue to monitor, seek additional training and coaching support if appropriate, and celebrate implementation efforts and improvements in fidelity.
	Monitor student outcomes	• Collect simple outcome data on students' SEB skills to (a) guide implementation and differentiation of Tier 1 support for all students and (b) determine who is benefitting and who may need additional support (e.g., on/off-task, target skill demonstration). • Monitor outcomes for all student subgroups (i.e., race/ethnicity, gender, language status, disability status) to ensure equitable access and benefit.	• If data indicate that Tier 1 support is not meeting the needs of students, collect additional data on (a) students' skills (e.g., SEB, academic, engagement/attendance data) and (b) the context associated with challenges (e.g., specific routines, content, activities, time of day) to more clearly define the concern and identify an action plan to enhance support.

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*See A 5 Point Intervention for Enhancing Equity in School Discipline (McIntosh et al., 2018) to learn more about vulnerable decision points, neutralizing routines, and other approaches to improve equity in discipline. [https://www.pbis.org/resource/a-5-point-intervention-approach-for-enhancing-equity-in-school-discipline]
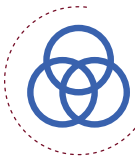
Table 1. Tier 1 Classroom Practices *continued*

Critical Component	Tier 1 Practice	Considerations for Implementation of Tier 1	Considerations for Differentiation of Tier 1
Decide	Make data-based decisions to maintain or modify support	• Implement universal screening process to identify students who may require additional SEB support to meet targeted (Tier 2) or intensive (Tier 3) support needs. • Use a variety of data sources (fidelity, outcome, screening) to make decisions about (a) increasing or decreasing support to meet the needs of all students (Tier 1) or (b) considering additional support for some (Tier 2) or a few (Tier 3) students with more targeted or intensive needs, respectively.	• Monitor implementation and outcomes of enhanced Tier 1 support, and consider whether individual students require targeted (Tier 2) or intensive (Tier 3) support in one or more areas (e.g., SEB skills, academic skills).

Table 2. Tier 2 Classroom Practices

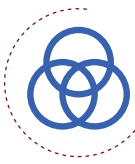| Critical Component	Tier 1 Practice	Considerations for Implementing Tier 2 Practices in the Classroom	Considerations for Implementing Check-In/Check-Out (CICO)	Considerations for Implementing Social Skills Instruction
Prevent	Increase structure	• Consider strategies to increase structure within the classroom environment to further support students' SEB success (e.g., seating arrangement, designated space for calming routine, visual prompts for key SEB skills).	• Implement CICO to provide additional structure to student routines at the start (check-in) and end (check-out) of each activity and each day. • Design the physical space to accommodate CICO (e.g., basket or clipboard to collect paperwork, location for quick checks in/out).	• Select a space for targeted social skills instruction that maximizes structure and minimizes distractions (e.g., quiet space in a conference room or office, table in classroom when all students are engaged in small group activities).
	Re-teach routines	• Increase specificity and predictability in students' routines, including increased opportunities to practice SEB skills, take breaks, and other targeted adjustments to meet the needs of small groups of students.	• When introducing CICO, teach new CICO routines to students and communicate new routines to families. During this instruction, review or re-teach classroom routines and norms, as appropriate.	• Establish and teach predictable routines for targeted social skills instruction, which may occur in small groups in a pull-out context, including a re-entry routine for students to rejoin their classroom community after instruction.
	Increase connections	• Provide targeted opportunities for peer-to-peer connections (e.g., provide opportunity to work with peers on tasks, peer-to-peer praise or acknowledgement). • Provide targeted opportunities for student-to-educator connections (e.g., lunch bunch, private conference, 1:1 walk during PE). • Provide targeted opportunities for family connections (e.g., virtual coffee hour, drop-in family time), and increase outreach to families of students with targeted SEB needs.	• Use CICO to enhance opportunities to connect with students (during check-ins at the start of day, end of each activity, and end of day), and provide another opportunity for students to connect with a family member (during home check in). • Share brief positive comments or other information with family members on the daily progress report (DPR), and invite a similar exchange from the family members by including space for family comments on the DPR.	• Intentionally create opportunities for students to practice and generalize SEB skills and connect with each other during and outside of targeted social skills instruction. • Because a range of trained educators (e.g., a school psychologist, counselor, special educator, and/or social worker) may facilitate targeted social skills instruction, this activity provides an opportunity to further enhance students' connections with the broader school community.

Table 2. Tier 2 Classroom Practices *continued*

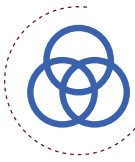| Critical Component	Tier 1 Practice	Considerations for Implementing Tier 2 Practices in the Classroom	Considerations for Implementing Check-In/Check-Out (CICO)	Considerations for Implementing Social Skills Instruction
Prevent	Target prompts and supervision	• Increase visual and verbal prompts for targeted SEB skills. • Use active supervision to increase proximity, provide additional opportunities for specific praise (as students are engaged in SEB or academic skills), and/or provide timely redirections to use SEB skills in context.	• During morning check-in, provide prompts and precorrections for the day ahead, check to ensure the student has necessary materials, and give the student a blank DPR, if you are the CICO facilitator. • The DPR includes a written reminder of norms, as items to be rated. • At the start of each class period or activity, briefly check-in with each student participating in CICO (and collect their DPR). During this brief check-in, connect positively, prompt key SEB skills (connected to classroom norms), and transition to the first classroom activity.	• Provide an opportunity for students to communicate skills learned during social skills instruction with the educators and peers in their classrooms. • Consider a visual prompt (e.g., handout, poster, card) to prompt SEB skills learned during small group in the classroom. • Provide targeted prompt (e.g., verbal reminders, gesture to visual of targeted skills) to encourage SEB skills before and during each classroom activity.
	Implement targeted antecedent manipulations	• Consider additional targeted adjustments to the classroom context to support students (e.g., increase opportunities for choice, adjust task difficulty, adjust response options).	• In addition to the enhanced routines provided by CICO, consider other opportunities to increase choice, prompt other classroom SEB skills during CICO, and remind students of available reinforcers.	• In addition to prompting SEB skills taught during targeted social skills instruction, consider providing additional opportunities to practice, provide choice, and utilize other relevant antecedent supports.
Teach	Explicitly teach targeted SEB skills	• Reteach and provide additional opportunities for practice of SEB skills taught in Tier 1. • When re-teaching, design lessons to be more explicit, more specific, and/or delivered in small-groups to support targeted SEB skills. • Build in frequent opportunities for review.	• When teaching CICO routines, re-teach critical SEB skills in the context of classroom and schoolwide norms. • During brief check-ins at the beginning of each day, at the end of each activity, and at the end of each day, provide mini-lesson (or review) of critical SEB skills connected to norms where data indicate re-teaching would be beneficial.	• With targeted social skills instruction, educators often adopt and implement an evidence-based curriculum that explicitly teaches SEB skills in targeted areas of need. Some curricula may be designed to target a specific need (e.g., managing anxiety). Others may provide options for educators to select specific lessons based on targeted needs.

Table 2. Tier 2 Classroom Practices *continued*

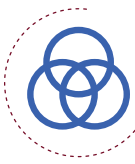| Critical Component	Tier 1 Practice	Considerations for Implementing Tier 2 Practices in the Classroom	Considerations for Implementing Check-In/Check-Out (CICO)	Considerations for Implementing Social Skills Instruction
Teach	Connect instruction to Tier 1 norms or expectations	• Ensure targeted SEB skill instruction is connected to overall classroom norms and Tier 1 SEB skills taught, prompted, and reinforced for all students. • Provide extra doses of instruction using varied examples and multiple opportunities to role-play, problem-solve, or demonstrate how to use the skills appropriately within the classroom.	• Ensure the daily progress report is based on school and classroom norms (e.g., take care of others, environment, and self), so that written prompts on the DPR, verbal reminders, reteaching, and feedback are all directly connected to Tier 1 norms.	• Educators teach norms for the group activity that are consistent with school and classroom norms. • Explicitly connect SEB skills learned as part of social skills instruction with classroom norms. During social skills instruction, ensure educator is familiar with each student's classroom norms (if students are grouped across classrooms), and explicitly teach how each skill is connected to norms.
Respond	Increase specific positive and supportive feedback	• Increase frequency of specific praise, and provide praise in a manner consistent with student preference. • Increase specificity of supportive feedback, and increase opportunities to practice targeted SEB skill following an SEB error (i.e., contextually inappropriate behavior).	• At the end of each class activity or period, (a) provide specific positive or supportive feedback on the students' behavior and (b) rate the students' behavior on the daily progress report (typically on a 3-point scale reflecting whether the student's behavior did not meet, met, or exceeded expectations). • At the end of the day, the CICO facilitator checks out with the student, reviewing the day, summarizing ratings and feedback, determining if the student met the goal for the day, giving the student a copy of the DPR to bring home, and entering data from the DPR into a CICO database.	• During targeted social skills instruction, provide specific positive and supportive feedback on engagement and use of specific SEB skills. • During typical classroom activities (i.e., outside of targeted social skills instruction), provide specific positive and supportive feedback to encourage and improve SEB skills, enhance fluency, and promote generalization and adaptation of skills across contexts.

Table 2. Tier 2 Classroom Practices *continued*

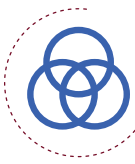| Critical Component	Tier 1 Practice	Considerations for Implementing Tier 2 Practices in the Classroom	Considerations for Implementing Check-In/Check-Out (CICO)	Considerations for Implementing Social Skills Instruction
Respond	Enhance continuum of recognition strategies	• Implement a continuum of acknowledgement strategies that vary in form and function (e.g., attention, tangible items, activities, breaks from work, sensory), availability (e.g., continuously available vs. special occasion), and schedule (e.g., frequent vs. infrequent, predictable vs. unpredictable).	• In addition to providing feedback and ratings, consider developing a menu of acknowledgement activities (e.g., lunch with educator and peer, homework pass) students can chose from on days they meet their goal. (This could be a token economy, with activities priced at different values and "purchased" with points, or simply available on days students meet goals.	• In addition to feedback, consider adopting an acknowledgement system (for entire class or small group of students participating in targeted social skills instruction) to recognize and reinforce key SEB skills.
	Enhance strategies to decrease SEB challenges	• Implement a least-to-most continuum to address SEB errors based on student need. For example, consider enhanced implementation of proximity, redirection, reteaching before using more intensive targeted response strategies (e.g., differential reinforcement, problem-solving conference).	• In addition to providing supportive corrective feedback, consider re-teaching CICO routines during times which students continue to experience challenges (e.g., accepting feedback, transitioning between activities). • Also consider strategies from least-to-most continuum (see previous column) to address SEB errors.	• In addition to providing supportive corrective feedback, consider re-teaching targeted SEB skills that replace contextually inappropriate behaviors (e.g., teach student to request help instead of ripping up classwork). • Provide additional targeted social skills instruction in natural contexts to facilitate generalization. • Consider additional strategies from least-to-most continuum (see second column).
Decide	Monitor fidelity	• For each targeted strategy, monitor implementation fidelity to ensure strategies are implemented as intended.	• Monitor fidelity of each CICO component (check in and out activities, completion of daily progress report, home check-in).	• Monitor fidelity of targeted social skills instruction and re-entry routine.

Table 2. Tier 2 Classroom Practices *continued*

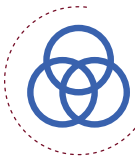| Critical Component	Tier 1 Practice	Considerations for Implementing Tier 2 Practices in the Classroom	Considerations for Implementing Check-In/Check-Out (CICO)	Considerations for Implementing Social Skills Instruction
Decide	Monitor student outcomes	• Monitor students' SEB skills in an efficient way to examine progress and benefit from targeted supports. • Monitor targeted outcomes for all student subgroups (i.e., race/ethnicity, gender, language status, disability status) to ensure equitable access and benefit.	• Count and summarize each student's daily progress report ratings (i.e., points) to monitor individual student outcomes, and aggregate data at the school, grade, and/or classroom levels to monitor overall program outcomes	• Monitor students' use of SEB skills during targeted social skills instruction and in the natural context (during typical classroom and school routines). Summarize at individual student and group level.

	Make data-based decisions to maintain or modify support	• Based on fidelity and outcome data, adjust implementation and/or type of targeted support to maximize benefit to students.
		• To support targeted practice implementation, consider self-management strategies including (a) increased prompting; (b) self-monitoring implementation of key practices (e.g., increased prompts or praise) with a paper and pencil tally, counter, or app on a smart device (e.g., Be+; Center on PBIS, 2019); and (c) celebrating implementation successes.
			• Based on fidelity and outcome data, adjust implementation support.
			• For individual students, decide to maintain or modify support.
			  • If a student has made consistent progress, consider fading to self-managed CICO and/or Tier 1 support.
			  • If a student is not benefiting from standard CICO, consider adaptations based on function of behavior (e.g., Breaks are Better; Boyd & Anderson, 2013), specific skill needs (e.g., academic/SEB skill support), or other adaptations (Majeika et al., 2020).
			  • If a student continues to display chronic or significant SEB challenges, consider intensive and individualized SEB support (Tier 3).
				• Based on fidelity and outcome data, adjust targeted social skills instruction groups to better meet the needs of all students in the group.
				• For individual students, decide to maintain or modify support.
				  • If students are making consistent progress, consider fading to SEB instruction in Tier 1.
				  • If a student is not benefiting from targeted social skills instruction, consider adjusting elements instruction (e.g., schedule, instructor, focus, peers) and/or introducing a different Tier 2 support (e.g., CICO).
				  • If a student continues to display chronic or significant SEB challenges, consider intensive and individualized SEB support (Tier 3).

Table 3. Tier 3 Classroom Practices

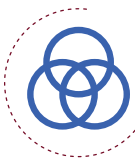| Critical Component	Tier 3 Practice	Considerations for Implementing Tier 3 Practices in the Classroom	Considerations for Individualized Comprehensive Support Plan Development
Prevent	Individualize effective design	• Adapt classroom design, layout, and materials to (a) encourage SEB skills and contextually appropriate behavior and (b) minimize opportunities for contextually inappropriate behavior. For example, design a designated space for students to engage in calming strategies, ensure students have easy access to the space, include accessible visual prompts for calming strategies that have been previously taught, practiced, and reviewed. • Consider other adjustments to physical space to meet the individual needs of students in the classroom.	• Consider student-specific needs for space (e.g., grouping, seating, visual barriers, access to materials) during classroom routines identified during comprehensive assessment. For example, consider whether the student needs additional space, fewer distractions, or other individualized accommodations. • Consider additional individualized adaptations to the sensory environment based on comprehensive assessment (e.g., access to noise canceling headphones, opportunity to increase/decrease sensory stimulation). • Consider modifications to physical environment based on safety (e.g., reduce unsupervised access to sharp objects for student with history of self-harm).
	Individualize predictable routines	• Consider an individualized schedule to enhance predictability throughout a student's day. This can be particularly helpful for students who are anxious, have difficulty with transitions, or whose schedules vary from the class schedule (e.g., due to services such as speech and language, counseling, visits to the nurse for medication, etc.). • When unanticipated changes to the schedule come up, such as a switch to indoor recess, alert students to the change in advance and provide additional support as needed. • Explicitly teach and rehearse specific classroom routines. Create a task analysis of challenging routines (e.g., break routine into smaller steps), and teach the step-by-step sequence. For example, the routine for completing a task can be defined as: 1) Turn your classwork into the "IN" basket at the front of the room. 2) Return to your desk. 3) Choose to read your book or draw quietly. 4) If you need materials or assistance, raise a silent hand. 5) Wait for the teacher to call on you or check in.	• Depending on the needs of the student determined through the comprehensive assessment, incorporate planned breaks, non-contingent attention, or other individualized routines into the student's individual schedule to support engagement and minimize contextually inappropriate behavior. • Consider designing individualized schedule to alternate between easier and more difficult activities (i.e., activities with higher and lower probabilities of success, respectively). • Enhance routines included in Tier 2 supports. For example, access to attention is identified as a reinforcer that is preferred and/or maintains contextually inappropriate behavior, enhance CICO routines to (a) provide more opportunities for check-ins and non-contingent attention or (b) build in check-ins with additional preferred adults and/or peers. • If a student engages in escalated or crisis-level behaviors, define, teach, and practice explicit routines for de-escalation.

Table 3. Tier 3 Classroom Practices *continued*

Critical Component	Tier 3 Practice	Considerations for Implementing Tier 3 Practices in the Classroom	Considerations for Individualized Comprehensive Support Plan Development

Prevent	Intensify connections	• Engage students and families in the Tier 3 assessment and support planning (as members of the individualized team), and establish frequent multidirectional communication to strengthen individualized supports, improve coordinated implementation, and share other important information (e.g., compliance with and changes to medications, success of components of the plan across settings, mood or behavior ratings).
		
		• Intensify connections to develop a strong student-teacher relationship and increase student SEB benefit (e.g., increased student confidence, satisfaction with school, peer relationships, and academic performance; LoCasale-Crouch et al., 2018; Solomon et al., 2000; Wentzel et al., 2010). For example, increase opportunities to discuss high-interest topics and engage with students during preferred activities.
			• Consider more intensive or structured approaches to engage families during planning:
			
			  • Person-Centered Planning (PCP) elevates student and family voice to (a) communicate goals and concerns for the student's future, (b) prioritize quality of life and connection with community, and (c) develop supports specific to identified goals and needs.*
			
			  • Wraparound process incorporates PCP to provide holistic and layered supports that are child and family centered within a system of care. Wraparound results in a strengths-based, flexible service plan that (a) prioritizes student and family voice and (b) integrates and coordinates comprehensive and individualized supports across multiple agencies (e.g., child welfare, schools, individual agencies) and life domains.[†]

	Intensify and individualize prompts and active supervision for SEB skills	• Individualize prompts for SEB skills and classroom norms based on individual student need. • Consider individualizing prompts embedded in Tier 2 supports. For example, if a student participates in CICO, the school norm of responsible may be personalized on the student's DPR to include an individualized SEB skill of asking for a break when frustrated (a Tier 3 modification). • Intensify active supervision during challenging routines. For example, provide increased prompts, proximity, and specific feedback for individual students with intensive needs while actively supervising all students.	• Provide visual (e.g., writing and/or pictures) and verbal reminders of (a) steps of individualized routines and/or (b) key SEB skills (e.g., those skills taught to replace challenging behaviors and/or other contextually appropriate SEB skills). As the student become fluent with routines and SEB skills, fade prompts to promote independence. • Consider individualized adaptations to active supervision (e.g., minimize attention for challenging behaviors that are reinforced by access to attention, ensuring safety during escalation).

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* See Kincaid & Fox (2002) to learn more about person centered planning.

[†] See Eber et al. (1997) and Eber et al. (2014) to learn more about wraparound process.
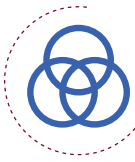
Table 3. Tier 3 Classroom Practices   *continued*

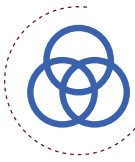| Critical Component	Tier 3 Practice	Considerations for Implementing Tier 3 Practices in the Classroom	Considerations for Individualized Comprehensive Support Plan Development
Prevent	Implement other individualized antecedent interventions	• Consider other factors that may be associated with SEB challenges for one or more students (e.g., hunger, activity level, transitions from preferred to less preferred activities), and develop individualized strategies to address these factors (e.g., snack, activity breaks, careful sequencing of activities).	• Implement additional antecedent interventions to address other factors that predict SEB challenges during comprehensive assessment (e.g., provide non-contingent attention on a fixed schedule to prevent periods of time without attention that predict challenges; intersperse sensory breaks for students who engage in contextually inappropriate behaviors to obtain sensory stimulation; schedule breaks for students who engage to escape instruction).
Teach	Individualize and intensify explicit instruction for SEB skills	• Further individualize and intensify SEB instruction through explicit instruction (i.e., modeling, practice opportunities, and specific feedback), and continue to review and practice until SEB skills meet a predetermined criterion or level of fluency. • For complex SEB skills, perform a task analysis to break a skill, such as "initiate a conversation," into smaller steps (e.g., say peer's name, introduce a topic, ask a question, wait for peer to respond, take turns responding).	• Intensify and individualize explicit instruction on specific SEB skills identified in a student's individualized behavior plan that (a) replace contextually inappropriate behaviors (e.g., hitting teacher when presented with difficult task) with functionally equivalent behaviors (e.g., asking for a break from difficult task) and (b) other contextually relevant SEB skills (e.g., communication).
	Individualize and intensify academic instruction	• Match academic instruction to the student's instructional level, based on comprehensive assessment. • Increase active engagement (e.g., high rates of response opportunities), and consider varying types of opportunities (e.g., closed vs. open choice, simple vs. complex concepts), numbers of respondents (e.g., choral vs individual), and response modes (e.g., written, oral, gestural, response cards, technology). • Modify other task dimensions during instruction and practice activities (e.g., duration) and intersperse brief, easy tasks with longer, more difficult tasks. • Incorporate choice (e.g., among assignments, materials to work with, where they will work, with whom they work, the order of tasks, and what they can do when finished).	• Use diagnostic academic data to target specific skills and/or starting place within an evidence-based program to build upon students' academic strengths and address academic needs. • Prioritize evidence-based practices indicated for specific skill/need areas and use data to guide further adjustments to academic support. • Further differentiate and individualize instructional support to help the student meet individualized academic goals (e.g., IEP objectives) and/or address unique needs.

Table 3. Tier 3 Classroom Practices *continued*

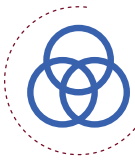| Critical Component	Tier 3 Practice	Considerations for Implementing Tier 3 Practices in the Classroom	Considerations for Individualized Comprehensive Support Plan Development
Teach	Align individualized SEB skills with classroom and school norms or expectations	• Provide more intensive instruction and practice in SEB skills in the context of norms or expectations. For example, if a student has difficulty raising her hand and waiting to be called, initially teach this SEB skill (connected to a classroom norm of "respect" during whole-group instruction) to the entire class (Tier 1). Then, intensify instruction by providing additional practice opportunities that result in positive and supportive feedback.	• When selecting SEB skills to target in an individualized plan, select skills that are (a) valued by student, family member(s), and educators and (b) functionally-relevant (i.e., result in the same maintaining reinforcers as the contextually inappropriate behavior. • Define and teach individualized SEB skills (e.g., ask for a break) in the context of classroom norms (e.g., taking care of self). • During class instruction in SEB skills (Tier 1), make explicit connections to the skills included in individual plans. Consider teaching these skills to all students to enhance supports for all and minimize stigma of students using individualized skills.
Respond	Intensify and individualize specific positive and supportive feedback	• Provide specific praise for individualized SEB skills that are consistent with classroom norms. • Provide specific, calm, respectful, private, and supportive error corrections that include opportunities for re-teaching (e.g., modeling) and practice of contextually appropriate SEB skills. Follow any performance or approximation of the appropriate behavior with specific praise or another form of reinforcement to strengthen the behavior. • Increase ratio of positive to corrective feedback to at least nine praise statements for every correction (Caldarella et al., 2019).	• Provide specific feedback for SEB skills that replace contextually inappropriate behaviors. For example, if a student's individualized behavior plan involves teaching self-calming strategies such as coloring or deep breathing to replace yelling and property destruction, provide explicit feedback and praise for approximating or effectively using any of the self-calming strategies. • Include a plan to shape replacement skills (e.g., ask for a break to escape task) into more contextually appropriate skills (e.g., begin task and ask peer or adult for help when needed) by reinforcing effort and approximations of contextually appropriate skill (e.g., once student fluently asks for a break, request that the student complete 30 seconds of work before taking a break).

Table 3. Tier 3 Classroom Practices   *continued*

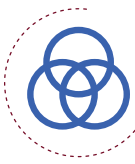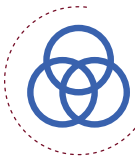| Critical Component	Tier 3 Practice	Considerations for Implementing Tier 3 Practices in the Classroom	Considerations for Individualized Comprehensive Support Plan Development
Respond	Intensify and individualize recognition strategies	• Intensify and individualize the classroom continuum of recognition strategies (e.g., token economy, group contingency) to introduce variety, maintain engagement, and match the value of the reinforcer to the task. • Consider a range of preferences and behavioral functions in selecting recognition strategies to ensure that each student, including a student with intensive needs, is recognized in ways they value, prefer, and experience benefit. • Consider adopting an individualized recognition system, such as a token board or individualized DPR for a student engaged in CICO, to provide more frequent and clear feedback across settings (e.g., classroom, music, cafeteria, speech) and to facilitate generalization.	• Provide function-based reinforcement for SEB skills that replace contextually inappropriate behaviors. For example, if a student asks for a break (instead of hitting) to escape, provide immediate access to the break; if a student appropriately initiates a conversation with a peer (instead of swearing at peer) to obtain peer attention, work with peers to appropriately engage in the conversation). • Assess preferences for additional reinforcers (e.g., reinforcer survey, stimulus preference assessment; DeLeon et al., 2001). Then, organize reinforcers into a hierarchy from most to least potent, and reinforce new or difficult skills with stronger reinforcers (e.g., playing a game with a friend or time with a preferred adult). • Further individualize recognition strategies in the moment by asking the student what they want to earn and/or offering a choice of known preferred items/activities.
	Enhance strategies to decrease SEB challenges	• To prevent escalation, provide a brief redirection to contextually relevant SEB skill (e.g., remember to raise your hand, ask for a break if needed). • Differentially reinforce contextually relevant SEB skills (e.g., raise hand) and withhold/prevent reinforcement for contextually inappropriate behavior (e.g., talk out).	• Prevent reinforcement of contextually inappropriate behaviors that interfere with learning or safety of the student and others (e.g., withhold attention from contextually inappropriate behaviors that function to obtain attention; redirect student to task to prevent escape). • Consider additional functionally-relevant approaches, based on differential reinforcement, to prevent reinforcement of contextually inappropriate behaviors while increasing reinforcement for contextually appropriate SEB skills.

Table 3. Tier 3 Classroom Practices *continued*

Critical Component	Tier 3 Practice	Considerations for Implementing Tier 3 Practices in the Classroom	Considerations for Individualized Comprehensive Support Plan Development
Decide	Monitor fidelity	• Monitor student progress on a regular basis (e.g., daily, weekly) to enable timely consideration of student benefit. Organize progress monitoring data and identify overall patterns of strength and concerns are easily identified. Consider working with your school team to adopt a system that generates effective graphs to facilitate progress monitoring, such as Direct Behavior Ratings (https://dbr.education.uconn.edu) or Individual School-Wide Information System (https://www.pbisapps.org/products/i-swis). • Monitor Tier 3 outcomes for all student subgroups (i.e., race/ethnicity, gender, language status, disability status) to ensure equitable access and benefit.	• Collect data to monitor fidelity of plan implementation, including (a) consistent use of critical features across staff or settings, (b) the quality of delivery of critical features, and/or (c) the frequency of delivery of critical features. • Select a feasible approach for monitoring fidelity across time and settings, including direct observation, self-assessment checklist, and/or permanent products resulting from plan implementation).
	Monitor student outcomes	• Monitor student progress on a regular basis (e.g., daily, weekly) to enable timely consideration of student benefit. Organize progress monitoring data and identify overall patterns of strength and concerns are easily identified. Consider working with your school team to adopt a system that generates effective graphs to facilitate progress monitoring, such as Direct Behavior Ratings (https://dbr.education.uconn.edu) or Individual School-Wide Information System (https://www.pbisapps.org/products/i-swis). • Monitor Tier 3 outcomes for all student subgroups (i.e., race/ethnicity, gender, language status, disability status) to ensure equitable access and benefit.	• Collaboratively with members of the student support team, develop individualized goals to measure progress related to the students' individualized comprehensive support plan. • Select goals for each individualized SEB or academic skill (e.g., performing academic skills, increasing adaptive and prosocial skills, decreasing contextually inappropriate, and/or use of acceptable alternative behaviors). • Ensure goals (a) clearly identify the SEB or academic skill (e.g., ask for help or independently begin work) and relevant features of the context (e.g., during difficult task that involves writing), (b) specify a criterion for meeting goal (e.g., on 90% of observed opportunities), and consider referencing the contextually inappropriate behavior being replaced by the skill (e.g., in lieu of ripping or throwing materials). • Write goals in specific, objective, and measurable language.

Table 3. Tier 3 Classroom Practices *continued*

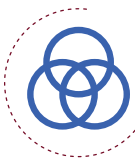| Critical Component	Tier 3 Practice	Considerations for Implementing Tier 3 Practices in the Classroom	Considerations for Individualized Comprehensive Support Plan Development

Decide	Make data-based decisions to maintain or modify support	• Based on fidelity and outcome data, adjust implementation and/or type of individualization of support to maximize benefit.
		• To support implementation of intensive and individualized practices, again consider self-management strategies including (a) increased prompting; (b) self-monitoring implementation of key practices (e.g., increased prompts or praise) with a paper and pencil tally, counter, or app on a smart device; and (c) celebrating implementation successes (as recommended for Tier 2).
			• Summarize and regularly review data with the Tier 3 student support team to inform decisions about maintaining or modifying implementation supports.
			• For individual students, decide to maintain or modify support.
			  • If students are making consistent progress, consider fading to SEB supports in Tiers 1 and/or 2.
			  • If a student is not benefiting from Tier 3 support, consider (a) revisiting the comprehensive assessment, (b) considering adaptations to prevent, teach, and respond practices, and/or (c) further intensifying supports to meet student need.
			  • If a student continues to display chronic or significant SEB challenges, request support from school, district, or external experts with relevant areas of expertise (e.g., applied behavior analysis, mental health, trauma) to support plan revision and consider/implement additional supports.

Table 4. MTSS in the Classroom: Practice Selection Tool

After reviewing the previous tables, use this template to select practices across tiers to implement, strengthen, and monitor for effective use in your classroom. Consider the following guiding questions:

- What Tier 1 practices are already in place in your classroom? Which ones are missing or need to be enhanced?

- How are you providing additional SEB support to students who are not responding to solid Tier 1 support?

- What data are you gathering to identify students who require Tier 2 or 3 levels of SEB support?

- How will you prioritize practices to be added across tiers that are most likely to make the greatest positive impact on your students?

- What support do you need to implement effective SEB practices?

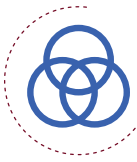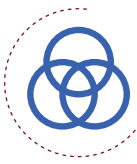| Critical Component	Key Practice	Tier 1 Practices in the Classroom	Tier 2 Practices in the Classroom	Tier 3 Practices in the Classroom
Prevent	Effectively design space	• •	• •	• •
	Develop & teach routines	• •	• •	• •
	Connect with students	• •	• •	• •
	Select & define classroom norms and critical SEB skills	• •	• •	• •
	Prompt Expected SEB Skills	• •	• •	• •
	Actively supervise	• •	• •	• •
	Engage in effective instruction	• •	• •	• •
Teach	Explicitly Teach Positively Stated Classroom Norms	• •	• •	• •
	Explicitly Teach SEB Skills	• •	• •	• •

Table 4. MTSS in the Classroom: Practice Selection Tool   *continued*

Critical Component	Key Practice	Tier 1 Practices in the Classroom	Tier 2 Practices in the Classroom	Tier 3 Practices in the Classroom
Respond	Provide specific positive feedback for SEB skills	• •	• •	• •
	Provide supportive corrective feedback to address SEB errors	• •	• •	• •
	Maintain a high ratio of positive to corrective feedback	• •	• •	• •
Decide	Monitor fidelity	• •	• •	• •
	Monitor student outcomes	• •	• •	• •
	Make data-based decisions to maintain or modify support	• •	• •	• •

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Lane, K. L., Wehby, J., Menzies, H. M., Doukas, G. L., Munton, S. M., & Gregg, R. M. (2003). Social skills instruction for students at risk for antisocial behavior: The effects of small-group instruction. *Behavioral Disorders, 28*(3), 229–248. https://doi.org/10.1177/019874290302800308

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Embedded Hyperlinks

1. https://www.pbis.org/resource/habits-of-effective-classroom-practice

2. https://www.pbis.org/resource/supporting-and-responding-to-behavior-evidence-based-classroom-strategies-for-teachers

3. https://www.pbis.org/resource/pbis-technical-guide-on-classroom-data