

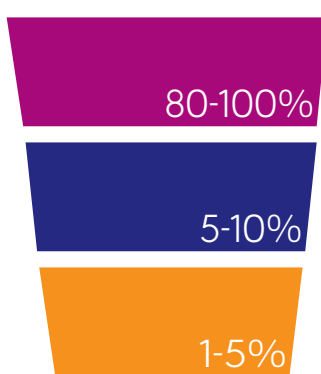


# AUDIOLOGISTS' AND SPEECH-LANGUAGE PATHOLOGISTS' INVOLVEMENT IN MULTI-TIERED SYSTEMS OF SUPPORT

Understanding the roles and funding streams for audiologists and speech-language pathologists in Multi-Tiered Systems of Support

## LEVELS OF SUPPORT

Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS) – a systemic, continuous improvement framework in which data-based problem-solving and decision making is practiced across all levels of the educational system for supporting students. The framework utilizes high-quality evidence-based instruction, intervention, and assessment practices to ensure that every student receives the appropriate level of support.



- TIER 1: Universal**  
High-quality instruction in the general education classroom
- TIER 2: Targeted**  
Academic or behavioral support to students moderately at-risk
- TIER 3: Intensive**  
Academic and/or behavioral support to students significantly at-risk

## COMPONENTS

- A comprehensive MTSS program includes:
- Standards-Based Curriculum
  - Universal Screening
  - Team Collaboration with Parent Involvement
  - Data-Driven Decisions
  - Levels of Support for Academics and Behavior
  - Research-Based Interventions
  - Progress Monitoring

## FUNDING CONSIDERATIONS

- Federal guidelines regarding the following should be considered:
- Supplement vs. Supplant
  - School-Wide or Targeted-Assistance
  - Student Eligibility and Demographics of School Population
  - Disproportionality

## FUNDING CONSIDERATIONS

- TITLE I**
  - Supplemental materials
  - Consulting services
  - Professional development
  - Parent training
  - Core instructional materials
  - School-wide incentives
- TITLE II**
  - Professional development
- TITLE III**
  - High-quality language instruction for English Language Learners (ELL)
  - Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)/Coordinated Early Intervening Services (CEIS)
  - Voluntary use of up to 15% of IDEA funds
  - Mandatory use of 15% of CEIS funds from IDEA allocation if the district is deemed to have significant disproportionality

**REMEMBER**  
MTSS is a general education initiative. Prioritize special education funding for students with disabilities.

## POTENTIAL ROLES FOR AUDIOLOGISTS AND SLPs

- When appropriate and in accordance with the Local Education Agency's (LEAs) practices, school audiologists may:
- Perform or provide guidance on universal screening
  - Assist with difficult assessments
  - Provide guidance on sound field equipment
  - Participate in or coordinate collaboration, consultation, and training with and for teachers, other related service providers, and parents
  - Observe students and recommend classroom sound field amplification systems

- When appropriate and in accordance with the LEA's practices, school SLPs may:
- Conduct or coordinate screening and other informal assessments
  - Design or provide direct or indirect intervention for a short duration
  - Participate in or coordinate collaboration, consultation, and training with and for teachers, other related service providers, and parents
  - Identify, demonstrate, and/or model strategies or skills for teachers or students
  - Observe students in the classroom and make recommendations

## APPLYING FUNDING

Read the following scenarios and see how you can apply funding in different ways

### KINDERGARTEN PHONEMIC AWARENESS SUPPORT

The SLP participates in grade-level professional learning community meetings. Based on review of universal screening data, several students in kindergarten classes are demonstrating weaknesses with phonemic awareness and articulation of later developing sounds and consonant clusters.

**SLP'S ROLE:**  
The SLP demonstrated Lindamood-Bell techniques to teachers on the team and conducted demonstration lessons in each classroom. Teachers expressed hesitance in carrying out strategies independently used to enhance the student's comprehension skills at home and in the classroom. The teacher and SLP agreed to review the student's performance data in six weeks to determine next steps.

**FUNDING**  
Title II professional development funds were used to pay for the three kindergarten teachers to attend Lindamood-Bell training.

### FIRST GRADE COMPREHENSION SUPPORT FOR TEACHER

A first-grade teacher reached out to the SLP for assistance with a student who was exhibiting comprehension weaknesses. A data review of universal screening indicated the child has comprehension weaknesses, but language skills appear otherwise within the normal range.

**SLP'S ROLE:**  
The SLP recommended scaffolding and visual cueing strategies to support the student in the classroom. The SLP also provided the teacher and the student's parents with resources that could be used to enhance the student's comprehension skills at home and in the classroom. The teacher and SLP agreed to review the student's performance data in six weeks to determine next steps.

**FUNDING**  
This student-specific intervention capitalized on the skill set of the SLP but did not require additional funding. General Fund was the funding source.

### MANAGING NOISE IN THE CLASSROOM

Several kindergarten classrooms have EL students and students who are experiencing intermittent otitis media.

**AUDIOLOGIST'S ROLE:**  
The audiologist observed in the classroom, identified classroom noise challenges, recommended sound field hearing assistive technology (HAT), and trained teachers on appropriate use of that technology. The audiologist also shared research about how sound field amplification systems increase students' access to instruction.

**FUNDING**  
General Fund was the funding source.

## SUMMARY

Save your IDEA funds for students who need it! Advocate to use a general education funds to support struggling learners in MTSS programs.

## ADVOCATE FOR YOUR STUDENTS

Advocating for increased funding and funding flexibility will benefit all students including those struggling to keep up with their peers. But advocacy doesn't stop in the schools. Nationwide changes need to be made too. Here's how you can advocate for better resources for your students!

## IN YOUR DISTRICT

- Spread the word that better funding allocation benefits the neediest of students.
- Help the education community understand their role in ensuring that appropriate resources and services are available to every student.
- Work with school staff to make sure that special education referrals are appropriate.
- Advocate for increased funding to ensure that all school professional faculty can participate in professional development activities to improve access for all students.
- Encourage involvement of audiologists and SLPs in the design, coordination, planning, and implementation of MTSS programs.
- Work with school staff to promote the use of general education funds in lieu of IDEA funds to support MTSS programs designed to enhance instruction for all students.
- Encourage MTSS teams to plan for appropriate braiding of funds from multiple funding sources (i.e., Title I, Title II, and Title III) as opposed to relying on the optional 15% CEIS allocation from IDEA as the sole source for MTSS.

## IN YOUR STATE

- Work with the state association and department of education contacts to promote the development of guidance for school districts to encourage the use of general education funds to support MTSS services
- Advocate for increased funding to ensure that all school professional faculty can participate in professional development activities to improve access for all students
- Provide information to state association leaders/State Education Advocacy Leader (SEAL) on the various roles of audiologists and SLPs in all tiers of MTSS
- Advocate with state leaders for the involvement of special education professionals including audiologists and SLPs in MTSS programs
- Share models of successful implementation of MTSS programs involving audiologists and SLPs

## AT THE FEDERAL LEVEL

- Encourage ASHA and its partners to advocate for general education funding of MTSS in the reauthorization of IDEA
- Advocate for ASHA to ensure that audiologists and SLPs are considered essential members of MTSS teams

