



CENTER ON

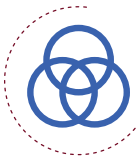
PBIS

Positive Behavioral
Interventions & Supports

A SYSTEMATIC APPROACH FOR FADING TIER 2 SUPPORTS FOR STUDENTS

ANGUS KITTELMAN, ELIZABETH MCCOLLOM,
JESSICA OLSON, MIMI MCGRATH KATO,
KATHLEEN STRICKLAND-COHEN, & KENT MCINTOSH

October 2026



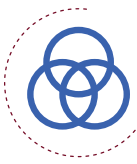
A Systematic Approach for Fading Tier 2 Supports for Students

Authors Angus Kittelman
Elizabeth McCollom
Jessica Olson

Mimi McGrath Kato
Kathleen Strickland-Cohen
Kent McIntosh

Purpose

Once students have responded positively to Tier 2 interventions and have met the desired intervention goals, school-level Tier 2 teams will want to begin preparing to fade supports for students. Gradually fading Tier 2 interventions ensures they successfully transition to a lower-intensity support while retaining their newly learned skills. The purpose of this practice brief is to provide Tier 2 teams with a systematic approach for fading Tier 2 supports for students. This approach includes identifying when to fade, what core features of Tier 2 interventions to fade, and how to gradually fade these core features over a short duration of time.



Defining Fading

Fading is the intentional process of reducing intervention supports as students develop the skills needed to be successful with less assistance. Since a primary goal of providing Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) at Tier 2 is to teach students the skills they need to be successful with less intensive supports over time, fading procedures are an essential element of behavior support planning for students with Tier 2 needs (Kittelman et al., 2023).

Because intervention fading is essential for promoting student independence and long-term success, it may include adjusting multiple Tier 2 intervention components (Estrapala et al., 2018). Therefore, it is critical that fading procedures are carefully planned. Fading decisions must be systematically guided by clear decision rules set by the Tier 2 team using student progress data to determine when students have demonstrated consistent success over a sufficient period. Effective fading is gradual rather than abrupt, which can lead to behavioral challenges returning. A planful fading process allows students the opportunity to practice new skills across school routines and contexts as support is gradually decreased, which can improve student outcomes during intervention and help maintain new skills over time.

By gradually fading supports, educators can scaffold student learning as they begin to rely less on Tier 2 interventions and more on Tier 1 classroom expectations, routines, and reinforcement systems. Effective fading procedures can also help Tier 2 teams maintain the capacity to support more students on Tier

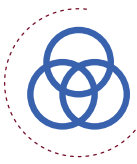
Key Takeaways

- Fading at Tier 2 is a planned and gradual process of reducing targeted supports as students gain new skills and are more likely to be successful with Tier 1 supports.
- Having strong Tier 1 and Tier 2 systems helps to support fading of Tier 2 supports.
- Systematic fading procedures include having clear decision rules for identifying when to fade, what Tier 2 core features to fade, and how to gradually fade supports for those features.

2 interventions throughout the school year. As students successfully transition to Tier 1 supports, Tier 2 teams can re-allocate time, staff, and resources to support additional students on Tier 2 supports.

Importance of Tier 1 and 2 Behavior Systems for Fading

Tier 2 support fading should be integrated within Tier 1 and Tier 2 behavior systems. For example, the same Tier 1 reinforcement systems are often used to acknowledge students for meeting behavior goals on Tier 2 interventions. After students fade off Tier 2 interventions, students can continue to receive acknowledgment for engaging in desired behaviors because they are connected to schoolwide behavior expectations (e.g., Be Responsible, Be Respectful, Be Safe; Center on PBIS, 2025; Kittelman et al., 2023). Similarly, having strong Tier 2 systems in place can help to ensure that fading Tier 2 supports is done systematically and consistently. These Tier 2 systems include a Tier 2 team (e.g., Tier 2 systems coordinator,



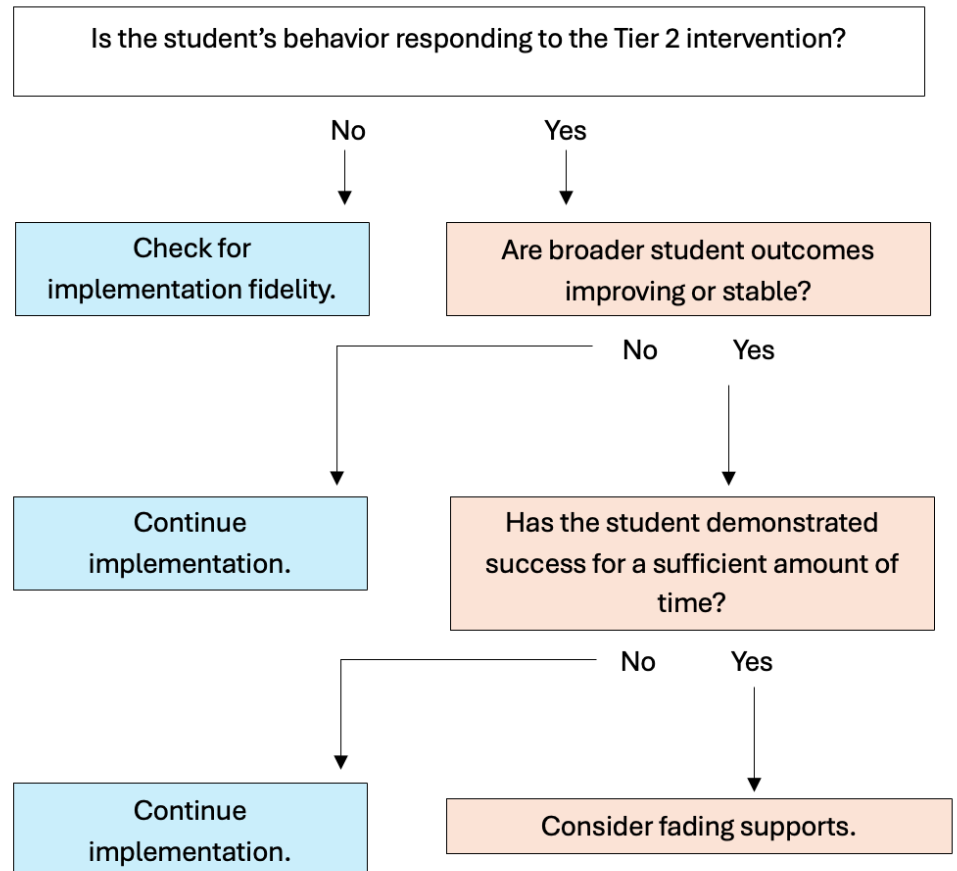
administrator, educators, behavior specialist) that meets regularly, uses data systems, and develops data-driven decision rules for monitoring student performance (e.g., when to intensify, maintain, or fade students from intervention). When it is time to fade Tier 2 supports, data-based decision rules will also be needed to determine when to fade, which Tier 2 components to fade, and how to fade.

Decision Rules for Fading

When to Fade

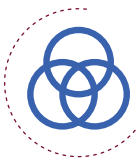
Decisions about when to fade Tier 2 supports are made collaboratively by the team and guided by data. It is important to use multiple sources of information rather than relying on a single data point. For example, Table 1 provides possible data sources useful for determining when to fade students from three common Tier 2 interventions (Check-In/Check-Out [CICO], brief social skills groups, and behavior contracts). In addition, Figure 1 outlines a decision process that teams may use to determine when it may be suitable to begin fading Tier 2 supports, utilizing information about student intervention progress, intervention fidelity, and improvements in student outcomes.

Figure 1. Team Decision Process for Determining When to Begin Fading of Tier 2 Supports



Note. If the answer to any question is “no” (i.e., blue boxes), reference the [Tier 2 School Systems Guide](#) for further support.

Before considering fading Tier 2 supports for a student, the Tier 2 team will want to first consider whether the student is responding favorably from the intervention. These include reviewing data on student intervention progress and student outcomes. Reviewing intervention progress data, such as daily progress report cards or behavior contract data, helps to determine whether students are consistently meeting

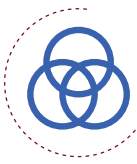


intervention goals and whether their progress is stable or improving over time. For example, a student receiving CICO may be responding positively when they earn at least 80% of their daily points on 90% of possible school days for four consecutive weeks. Or,

for a student receiving a behavior contract, the student could be responding positively by earning eight or more points using their direct behavior rating scale across multiple behavior goals for six consecutive weeks (see Table 1).

Table 1. Examples of Data Sources and Decision Rules for When to Fade Tier 2 Supports for Students Receiving CICO, Brief Social Skills Groups, or Behavior Contracts

Data Type	CICO		Brief Social Skills Group		Behavior Contracts	
	Data Source	Decision Rule	Data Source	Decision Rule	Data Source	Decision Rule
Student Intervention Progress	Daily progress report card	Daily point goal $\geq 80\%$ for at least 90% of the time for the last four weeks	Social, emotional, and behavioral screening measure	Change in risk level from "high" or "moderate" to "low" for past three weeks	Direct behavior rating scale	Daily goal of scoring eight out of 10 for meeting three goals for the past six weeks
Intervention Fidelity	Fidelity checklist, daily progress report card	Intervention implemented with $\geq 80\%$ fidelity for the past four weeks	Social skills group fidelity checklist	Intervention implemented with $\geq 90\%$ fidelity for the past three weeks of intervention sessions	Behavior contract fidelity checklist	Intervention implemented with $\geq 90\%$ fidelity for the past six weeks
Student Outcomes	School data system, School-Wide Information System (SWIS) Self-report survey (teacher reports, student reports)	0-1 discipline referrals for the past six weeks	Discipline referrals Self-report survey (teacher reports, student reports)	0-1 discipline referrals for the past four weeks	School data system, Student information systems (SIS) Self-report survey (teacher reports, student reports)	$\geq 90\%$ attendance over the past five weeks



Another consideration in determining when to fade Tier 2 supports is whether broader student outcomes (e.g., discipline referrals, attendance, academic engagement, grades; Table 1) have also shown improvement. For example, a student participating in a brief social skills group may demonstrate readiness to fade when newly learned skills are being observed across multiple settings and discipline referrals have declined. Last, Tier 2 teams will also want to evaluate the amount of time a student has been making progress on intervention and whether progress has been consistent. In most cases, this involves several consecutive weeks of stable performance, typically lasting four to six weeks.

If a student is not responding positively to intervention (student intervention progress or broader student outcomes), a Tier 2 team will want to determine whether it is due to the intervention not being implemented with adequate fidelity or whether the team needs to modify and/or intensity intervention supports (e.g., adjust CICO components, recommend student for a Tier 3 intervention). It is important to confirm that students have participated in Tier 2 interventions with adequate fidelity throughout intervention, ensuring that components of the intervention are implemented as intended. Data on intervention fidelity can be monitored by reviewing fidelity checklists, point cards, or permanent products (e.g., parent signature on point card). For example, when monitoring fidelity of CICO, Tier 2 teams can evaluate the percentage of time core features of CICO are delivered daily to students (e.g., check-in, teacher feedback, check-out, parent communication; see

Kittelman et al. [2023] for a review on monitoring core features of Tier 2 interventions and behavior systems).

What To Fade

Once Tier 2 teams decide when to begin fading supports, they will need to determine which intervention features to fade. Key Tier 2 intervention features include providing (a) additional instruction on new behavior skills, (b) increased opportunities for feedback, (c) increased structure and predictability for students, and (d) increased communication with families (Center on PBIS, 2025; Kittelman et al., 2023). These key features are often embedded in the components of specific Tier 2 interventions (e.g., point card, behavior contract, social skills lesson). Moreover, it is common for Tier 2 teams to create goals for students as they learn new behavior skills and to incentivize those goals through providing reinforcers aligned to the Tier 1 system. It can be helpful to include students in the decision-making process when determining which intervention components to fade. For example, providing possible a list of possible fading options for the Tier 2 intervention they are receiving (Table 2), can help to ensure students have voice and ownership in the fading process. To ensure Tier 2 teams can implement fading procedures effectively and efficiently, it may be helpful to simplify and provide a brief list of fading options to students to select.

The fading of intervention components, behavior goals, and reinforcers will vary depending on the Tier 2 intervention. Table 2 provides examples of specific intervention components, family communication, intervention goals, and reinforcement systems that

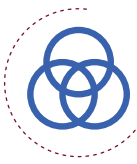


Table 2. Examples of Tier 2 Intervention Components and Features that may be Adjusted for Fading

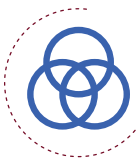
Features	CICO	Brief Social Skills Group	Behavior Contracts
Intervention Components	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Check-ins or check-outs with mentor• Teacher feedback opportunities• Format of point card• Frequency, type of progress updates to family	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Number of lessons and boosters• Adult or student delivery• Frequency, type of progress updates to family	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Number of opportunities for feedback• Number of goals on contract• Format of contract• Frequency, type of progress updates to family
Goals	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Daily or weekly goals	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Daily or weekly goals	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Daily or weekly goals
Reinforcers	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Daily or weekly reinforcers• Types of reinforcers (tangible or non-tangible)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Daily or weekly reinforcers• Types of reinforcers (tangible or non-tangible)• Individual or group reinforcer contingencies	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Daily or weekly reinforcers• Types of reinforcers (tangible or non-tangible)

can be faded across common Tier 2 interventions. For example, specific intervention components of a brief social skills group may include (a) the number of social skills lessons and lesson boosters; (b) whether to transition from adults to students delivering or co-delivering lessons; (c) the frequency of progress updates to family members; (d) the daily or weekly behavior intervention goals; and (e) the frequency, type, contingency (individual or group) of reinforcement for meeting intervention goals. As another example, specific intervention features that can be faded from behavior contracts may include (a) number of opportunities for feedback, (b) number of behavior goals included on the contract, (c) format and amount of content included of a contract (visual or printed), (d) the frequency family members are provided update on student progress, (e) the daily or weekly behavior intervention goals, and (f) the

frequency and type of reinforcement for meeting intervention goals.

How to Fade

Once the Tier 2 team has determined that a student is ready to have Tier 2 supports faded and have selected core features of the Tier 2 intervention to fade, the final step is to define the fading process. Incorporating student self-management strategies within the fading process can be a powerful tool to help students learn to monitor and identify when they are meeting intervention goals and to help students move towards independence when using newly learned skills. The team may begin with fading a single feature or use multiple strategies, based on a student's readiness. In general, strategies to consider can be grouped into three categories: Intervention components (e.g., dosage, intensity), goals, and reinforcement (see Table 2).



DOSAGE AND INTENSITY

Fading the dosage or intensity of specific intervention components generally means fading the opportunities for instruction or feedback on new behavior skills. Students receive adult feedback on their progress as part of Tier 2 interventions, typically receiving more feedback at the beginning of the intervention as they acquire new skills. Fading adult feedback is an important way to help facilitate independence for students. For example, a team fading CICO could reduce the number of times mentors check-in or check-out or teachers (e.g., teacher feedback opportunities) provide feedback to students on their behavior goals. For small social skills groups, a team could reduce the number of sessions per week, decrease the length of sessions, or switch to periodic booster sessions (see Table 2).

GOALS

When fading intervention goals, teams may move students from daily to weekly behavior goals or increase the criteria for meeting behavior goals (e.g., raising daily goal from 80% to 90%). Adjusting goals in this way can help students delay immediate reinforcement and maintain newly learned behaviors for longer periods or at a higher rate. If the student is already meeting those expectations consistently, they could start focusing on new goals if there are other relevant behaviors they are still working toward.

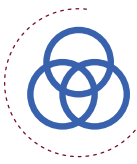
REINFORCEMENT

Like fading behavior goals, fading reinforcement for meeting daily or weekly behavior goals can help

students transition to lower rates of reinforcement more common at Tier 1. This will help students maintain these newly learned behaviors while still receiving reinforcement through Tier 1 acknowledgement system. Moreover, if students participating in Tier 2 interventions were receiving access to highly-preferred reinforcers (e.g., coffee cards, extra recess time), it will be helpful to transition to providing reinforcers that are more readily available through a Tier 1 reinforcements system (e.g., rewards available in the school store in exchange for tokens or tickets) to ensure behavior change persists with a lower level of reinforcement. This may also include transitioning from tangible reinforcers (e.g., special pencil) to more natural reinforcers (e.g., descriptive praise, positive messages to family members, preferred seating on the bus).

DOCUMENTING FADING PROCEDURES AND STUDENT PROGRESS

When fading intervention components and features, it is important to systematically plan not only which components will be faded but also the timeline for fading supports (see Table 3). Given that Tier 2 interventions are meant to be brief, a reasonable timeline for fading interventions and features might span a few weeks. Once Tier 2 teams have identified the components and features to fade and the fading timeline, it is important to continue monitoring student progress throughout the fading process. Students receiving Tier 2 intervention can also be trained and encouraged to monitor their own progress when fading from intervention. If students continue to demonstrate success in meeting their goal with fewer



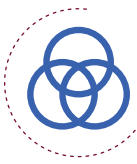
supports, Tier 2 teams may continue to fade supports further. However, if students exhibit a marked decline in success, teams may consider reinstating components of the Tier 2 intervention (Table 3). Teams may also revisit the fading plan and make modifications based on the data. In addition, Tier 2 teams will want to

adjust fidelity measures to account for fading decisions made (e.g., removing core feature of Tier 2 intervention on fidelity form). Once a student meets their goal during the fading window, the team can begin planning their graduation from the intervention.

Table 3. Example of Tier 2 Teams Documenting Fading Decisions

Student	Intervention	Component	Fading Plan	Timeframe	Decision*
Lisa	CICO	Teacher feedback	Reduce to only 1x per day (dosage)	2 weeks	Continue fading
Jess	CICO	Afternoon check-out	Reinstate check-out with mentor (dosage)	3 weeks	Reinstate CICO
John	Social skills group	Adult feedback, family-school communication	Only provide bi-weekly booster, only bi-weekly updates to family (dosage)	4 weeks	Exit intervention
Matt	Behavior contract	Behavior goal	Move to only 1 behavior goal (goals)	1 week	Continue fading
Robin	Behavior contract	Reinforcement	Only weekly incentive for meeting behavior goals (reinforcement)	2 weeks	Continue fading

*Continue fading, reinstate support, modify fading, or exit intervention



Planning for Graduation

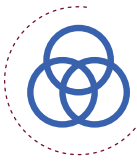
A final consideration in fading Tier 2 supports for students is recognition of the student's successful completion of the intervention and reaching their targeted goals. This "graduation" from Tier 2 supports marks an important transition point for the student, so it is worthwhile to celebrate their success. Graduation should include the acknowledgement that the student has developed new self-management skills and is ready to continue to use these skills and improved teacher relationships to continue to experience success in the future.

How Tier 2 teams celebrate student graduation from Tier 2 supports can vary. It may be helpful to provide a menu of options that students may choose from. Teams will want to consider how to offer options that are feasible, reasonable to implement, cost-effective, and are still meaningful to students. Possible options that can be meaningful across students' developmental ages include letters home to families, lunch with a selected individual (mentor or peer), a certificate of recognition, or a small-group party or event that includes peers or other students who are also graduating. One example may include a positive phone call home from the intervention coordinator, giving the student a certificate of completion, and hosting a quarterly lunchtime party for students who have graduated during that term. This provides a layered approach to graduation, with an immediate recognition (phone call home and certificate) and a group recognition as well (party).



Conclusion

Fading Tier 2 supports is a systematic process resulting in the gradual reduction of intervention components (Estrapala et al., 2018). For students receiving Tier 2 interventions, fading supports ensures that students gradually and successfully transition to receiving only Tier 1 support while retaining newly learned behaviors and skills.



References

Center on PBIS. (2025). *Tier 2 School-Level Systems Guide*.

Center on PBIS, University of Oregon. www.pbis.org

Estrapala, S., Rila, A., & Bruhn, A. L. (2018). Don't quit cold turkey: Systematic fading to promote sustained behavioral change. *TEACHING Exceptional Children*, 51(1), 54-61.

<https://doi.org/10.1177/0040059918790567>

Horner, R. H., Sugai, G., & Fixsen, D. L. (2017).

Implementing effective educational practices at scales of social importance. *Clinical Child and Family Psychology Review*, 20(1), 25-35. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10567-017-0224-7>

Kittelman, A., Strickland-Cohen, M. K., Horner, R. H., Morris, K., Lewis, T., & Flannery K. B. (March 2023). *Measuring Fidelity of Core Features of Tier 2 Systems and Practices in Schools*. Center on PBIS, University of Oregon. www.pbis.org

This document was supported from funds provided by the Center on Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports cooperative grant supported by the Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) and Office of Elementary and Secondary Education (OESE) of the U.S. Department of Education (H326S230002). Sunyoung Ahn PhD served as the project officer. The views expressed herein do not necessarily represent the positions or policies of the U.S. Department of Education. No official endorsement by the U.S. Department of Education of any product, commodity, or enterprise mentioned in this document is intended or should be inferred.

Suggested Citation for this Publication

Kittelman, A., McCollom, E., Olson, J., McGrath Kato, M., Strickland-Cohen, k., & McIntosh, K. (2026). *A Systematic Approach for Fading Tier 2 Supports for Students*. Center on PBIS, University of Oregon.