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Data-Based Decision Making for Check-In/Check-Out and Breaks are Better: Part 3

Tennessee Tiered Supports Center
January 15, 2026

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Tennessee Technical Assistance Network (TN-TAN)

provides school districts, administrators, educators, and families access to free high-quality training, resources, and supports designed to improve outcomes for students with disabilities, ages 3-22. See below for more information about our areas of support.

Intensive Behavior

TRAD at Vanderbilt University Medical Center provides technical assistance for complex behavior support needs and associated training. Supports include direct instruction for staff on behavior assessment and intervention implementation, as well as ongoing coaching to help students engage within their least restrictive environments.

Autism

TRAD at Vanderbilt University Medical Center provides training, consultation, and coaching services designed to support educators in their classrooms and develop school and system-wide supports to address needs specific to students with autism spectrum disorder (ASD).

RTI-A + RTI-B

Tennessee Tiered Supports Center assists districts and schools as they build and implement an aligned student support system. The center provides training, coaching, and resources for building an aligned framework for tiered academic and behavioral supports.

Assistive Technology

The Assistive Technology Project for Education (ATPE) assists districts and staff in building capacity to provide assistive technology supports for students with disabilities. Supports include strategic action planning, professional development, direct coaching for staff, and access to AT equipment-lending libraries for assessment trials.

Secondary Transition

Transition Tennessee provides a range of services to transition stakeholders to improve in-school and post-school outcomes for transition-aged students (14-22) with disabilities. Supports include tiered technical assistance for in-school transition stakeholders and resources and services specific to educator and family needs.

Family Engagement

The Arc Tennessee partners with schools and caregivers of students with disabilities. Family Engagement provides educator training and technical assistance to schools, integrates family supports into existing school initiatives and strategic plans, and connects families to available services and family-friendly special education resources in order to ensure a successful school experience.

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About Us



Vanderbilt University - West TN Team

Vanderbilt University - Middle TN Team

University of Tennessee, Knoxville - East TN Team



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Agenda

- Check-In/Check-Out and Breaks are Better Review
- Data-Based Decision Making
- Resources
- Wrap-Up



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Learning Objectives

1. Utilize a problem-solving process for making data-based decisions involving Check-In/Check-Out and Breaks are Better.
2. Evaluate progress monitoring and fidelity data to determine the effectiveness of the intervention.
3. Examine approaches to intensifying and fading components of Check-In/Check-Out and Breaks are Better.

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Reviewing Check-In/Check-Out and Breaks are Better

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What is Check-In/Check-Out and Breaks are Better?

- **Check-In/Check-Out** is a Tier II intervention designed to reinforce expected school behaviors that students are capable of demonstrating.
- **Breaks are Better** is a modified version of Check-In/Check-Out, in which break opportunities are built into the intervention for task-avoidant behavior.
- Both interventions are ideal for students who continue to demonstrate challenging behavior even when Tier I instruction and supports are provided with fidelity.

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How does Check-In/Check-Out work?

Students participate in a **daily cycle** that involves:

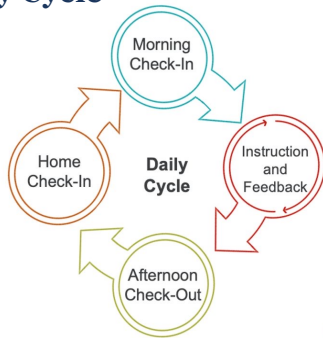
- a morning check-in with a mentor,
- use of a daily progress report,
- teacher feedback throughout the day,
- an afternoon check-out with a mentor,
- a reward for meeting a daily point goal, and
- communication with home.

(Hawken et al., 2021; Majeika et al., 2022)



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Daily Cycle



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How does Breaks are Better work?

Students participate in a **daily cycle** that involves:

- selecting adult mentor,
- meeting with mentor for morning check-in,
- using a daily progress report,
- receiving teacher feedback across the day,
- meeting with mentor for afternoon check-out,
- receiving rewards for meeting daily point goals,
- sharing parent communication, and
- **taking scheduled breaks.**

(Hawken et al., 2021; Majeika et al., 2022)



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Similarities and Differences

Intervention Component	Check-In/Check-Out	Breaks are Better
Adult mentor	✓	✓
Morning check-in with mentor	✓	✓
Use of a daily progress report	✓	✓
Structured and scheduled opportunities for feedback	✓	✓
Afternoon check-out with mentor	✓	✓
Family communication	✓	✓
Progress monitoring	✓	✓

(Majeika et al., 2022)

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Similarities and Differences

Intervention Component	Check-In/Check-Out	Breaks are Better
Expectations on the daily progress report link to behaviors promoting academic engagement		✓
Procedures for taking a pre-determined number of breaks provide access to pre-determined activities		✓
Points earned for taking breaks appropriately		✓

(Majeika et al., 2022)

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Data-Based Decision Making

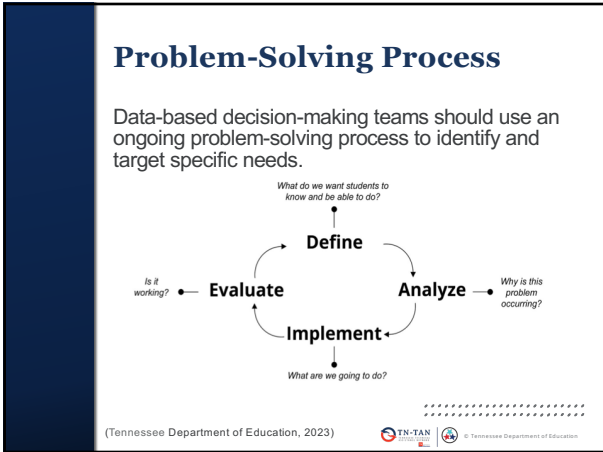
Identifying Risk and Matching Intervention to Student Need



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Using a Team-Based Approach

- A team-based approach must be used when making decisions about appropriate interventions.
- The team must ensure that interventions:
 - address specific skill deficits and behavioral areas of need, and
 - support grade-level proficiency.
- The team must include an interventionist.

(Tennessee Department of Education, 2023)

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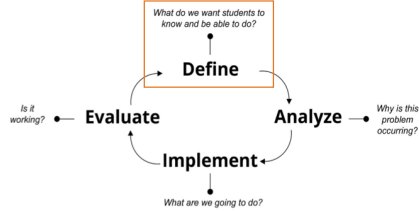
School and District Curricula and Intervention Alignment Tools

(Tennessee Department of Education, 2023)

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Problem-Solving Process

Data-based decision-making teams should use an ongoing problem-solving process to identify and target specific needs.



(Tennessee Department of Education, 2023)



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Identifying Risk

- Use **multiple data sources** and consider a student's comprehensive data profile when identifying students who need additional support.
- Data sources may include but aren't limited to:
 - office discipline referrals,
 - behavior screening scores,
 - attendance records,
 - student observations,
 - academic scores, and
 - work samples.



(Tennessee Department of Education, 2023)

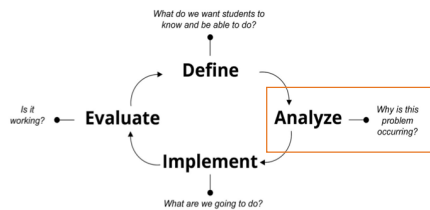


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Problem-Solving Process

Data-based decision-making teams should use an ongoing problem-solving process to identify and target specific needs.



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Drill-Down Assessments

(e.g., Diagnostic and Survey-Level Assessments)



Assessments that identify skill-specific strengths, needed skills, and environmental factors that may influence student performance

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Prioritizing an Area of Need

With Universal Behavior Screening Scores

Universal Behavior Screener



Externalizing Score: 13
Internalizing Score: 4



Item Analysis + Additional Data Sources: Aggression



Area of Need:
Interfering Behaviors

Without Universal Behavior Screening Scores

Multiple, Relevant Data Sources (e.g., ODRs, Suspension Records, Attendance Records, Teacher Report)

Aggression



Area of Need:
Interfering Behaviors

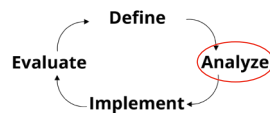
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Analyze Data to Identify Appropriate Interventions

To match interventions to a student's needs:

1. Use screening data to identify critical areas of need.
2. Match the least intensive interventions to the critical areas of need.
3. Analyze other data sources to make initial adaptations to the interventions to ensure it meets student needs.



(McDaniel et al., 2024)

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Matching Interventions to Needs

Area of Need	Intervention Options
Interfering behaviors	• Check-in/Check-out (CICO) • Check and Connect • Check, Connect, Expect
Self-regulation	• Goal setting • Self-monitoring • Self-graphing
Social interactions and problem solving	• Behavior contract • Social skills group • Restorative meetings or circles

(McDaniel et al., 2015; McDaniel et al. 2024)



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Matching Interventions to Needs

Area of Need	Intervention Options
Emotional regulation	• Small-group counseling • Individual counseling • Check, Connect, Expect
Co-occurring academic and behavior skill needs	• Intensified academic instruction on needed skills • Breaks are Better (BrB)

(McDaniel et al., 2015; McDaniel et al. 2024)



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Check-In/Check-Out and Breaks are Better

Ideal for behavior that is:

- externalized,
- low in intensity,
- within the student's skill set or demonstrated competencies, and
- observed across multiple environments.

Not for behavior that is:

- internalized,
- dangerous,
- related to inattentiveness or impulsive tendencies, or
- in need of individualized support.

(Hawken et al., 2021; McDaniel et al., 2024)



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Data-Based Decision Making

Implementing Intervention

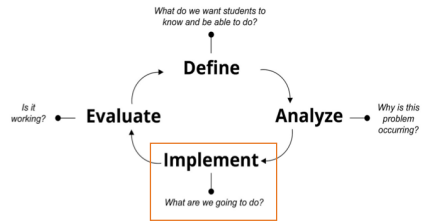


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Problem-Solving Process

Data-based decision-making teams should use an ongoing problem-solving process to identify and target specific needs.



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Steps to Select and Manage Interventions

1. Consider how validated interventions meet student need.
2. Match area of need to intervention.
3. Adjust environment to support desired behavior.
4. Adapt intervention to meet student need.
5. Group students for intervention delivery.
6. Plan for intervention management.



(McDaniel et al., 2024)



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Initial Intervention Adaptations

Nonacademic Examples

If necessary, make initial adaptations to ensure the intervention teaches needed skills and supports desired behavior.

Example adaptations:

- Skills to target
- Context for practicing new skills
- Feedback method
- Feedback schedule
- Goals
- Reward type
- Reward frequency
- Materials
- Group composition

(Majeika et al., 2020; McDaniel et al., 2024)



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Behavior Progress Monitoring

Guidelines

- Identify skill(s) that will lead to goal attainment.
- Align skill(s) to the schoolwide expectations.
- Identify **multiple data sources** that can inform the targeted skill(s).
- Use formative sources that are sensitive to small changes in the behavior/skill(s).
- Monitor regularly, and consider monitoring more often when:
 - there is a change in the Tier 2 intervention status, and/or
 - sufficient progress has not been demonstrated.



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Elements of Intervention Fidelity



(Graphic adapted from National Center on Intensive Intervention, 2021)



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Data-Based Decision Making

Evaluating the Intervention

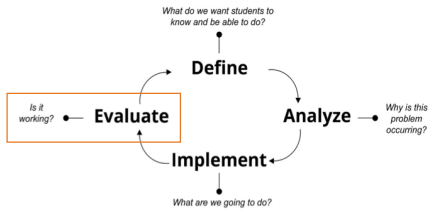


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Problem-Solving Process

Data-based decision-making teams should use an ongoing problem-solving process to identify and target specific needs.



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Assessment Data Needed



Progress Monitoring



Intervention Fidelity



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Progress Monitoring

- Progress monitoring allows us to make decisions about:
 - student growth,
 - intervention effectiveness, and
 - how and when instructional changes are needed.
- When monitoring progress, the team must consider **multiple data sources**, which may include both quantitative and qualitative data.
- When monitoring progress for behavior interventions, changes in a student's performance of **target** and **replacement** behaviors should be considered.

(Bruhn et al., 2018; Christ et al., 2009; National Center for Intensive Intervention, 2022)



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Analyzing Daily Progress Report Data

- Daily progress report data is **one** data source that can be used to evaluate a student's response to intervention.
- At least every other week, **use other data sources** with daily progress report data to determine a student's response to intervention.
- Analyze data collected during baseline and intervention phases relative to the goal.
 - **Baseline:** before the intervention
 - **Intervention:** during the intervention

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Intervention Goals

- There are no standard growth rates or mastery criteria for behavioral progress monitoring.
- Measurements of target and replacement behaviors can be used to set intervention goals, against which progress can be assessed while also considering other data sources.

(McDaniel et al., 2024)



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Intervention Goals

Goals should be:

- set slightly above or below a student's current performance, depending on the nature and desired outcome of the behavior,
- set relative to behaviors expected of peers, and
- reviewed regularly so that adjustments can be made as needed.

(McDaniel et al., 2024)

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Determining Response to Intervention

There are **no set requirements** for the number of data points, time in intervention, or tier of intervention required to make progress monitoring or instruction and intervention changes.

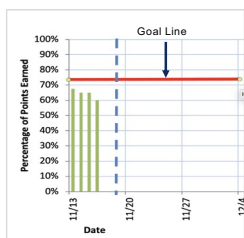


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Reflecting on Behavior Goals



Initial goals should come from baseline data and should be:

- established slightly above or below the student's baseline performance of the expected behavior,
- reviewed regularly and adjusted as necessary, and
- relative to peers' expected behavior goals.

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Interpreting Progress Monitoring Data

- Compare the student's current performance to their goal using **multiple data sources**.
- Confirm the intervention is being implemented with fidelity.



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Response to Intervention *Possible Outcomes*

- Positive Response
- Poor Response
- Questionable Response



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When the Response is Positive

When there is a **positive response**, a team may decide to:

- Continue with the current intervention.
- Gradually fade or modify elements of the intervention to decrease the intensity of the intervention.

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Positive Response Adequate Progress



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Actions for Questionable or Poor Response

Check fidelity of intervention, and:

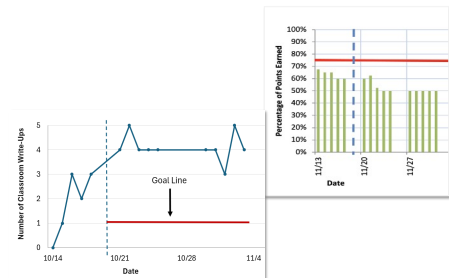
- if the intervention **is not being** implemented with fidelity, use strategies to increase fidelity.
- if the intervention **is being** implemented with fidelity, teams must decide whether to:
 - a. modify the current intervention;
 - b. select a different Tier II intervention;
 - c. intensify support through a Tier III intervention; or
 - d. refer the student for a special education evaluation alongside a, b, or c listed above.

(Majeika et al., 2020; Tennessee Tiered Supports Center, 2023)

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Poor Response Limited or No Progress



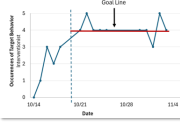
(FL PS/RTI, 2021)

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Questionable Response

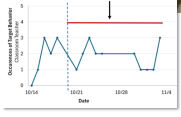
Conflicting or Unclear Data



Interventionist
Observations



Teacher
Observations



(FL PS/RTI, 2021)

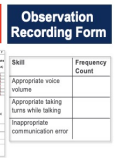



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Determining Response

When deciding whether student response is positive or poor, **teams** should make decisions **based on a wealth of data** and with consideration given to the unique circumstances of the student.







(Fuchs & Mellard, 2005)




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Intervention Fidelity

- When evaluating a student's response to intervention, a team needs evidence to confirm that the intervention was implemented as intended.
- Evidence may include:
 - daily progress reports,
 - fidelity checklists, and
 - other data sources.



(Tennessee Department of Education, 2023)




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Intervention Fidelity Tools

Fidelity Checklists

Check-In/Check-Out (CICO) Fidelity of Implementation Checklist for CICO Mentors

Purpose: This is an editable template that can be used to monitor CICO Mentors' fidelity of implementation. This can be completed by CICO Mentors as a self-rating, or it can be completed by CICO Coordinators as they observe a CICO Mentor during daily check-ins and check-outs.

Daily Check-In/Check-Out	Yes	No
Greet the student in a positive manner.		
Provide the student with a Daily Progress Report (DPR) every morning.		
Stated the student of expectations and daily goal.		
Align comments and language with schoolwide expectations.		
Provide acknowledgement (e.g., ticket) for attending check-in.		
Review DPR with the student.		
Fill in the Home Communication Card in the afternoon.		
Have conversation about "stars" (i.e., things that went well) and "stans" (i.e., things to improve) when reviewing the DPR.		
Use a positive tone throughout the interaction.		
Provide acknowledgement for accomplishments like attending check-out, making a goal, or earning full points for a day.		

(Tennessee Tiered Supports Center, 2023)



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Intervention Fidelity Tools

Daily Progress Report Review Forms

Daily Progress Report (DPR) Review

Purpose: This is an editable template that can be used to monitor fidelity of implementation for Check-In/Check-Out.

Student: _____ Date: _____

CICO Mentor: _____

Directions:

- Examine three to five of the student's most recent DPRs.
- For each DPR, mark "Y" (yes) if the intervention component is evident on the DPR.
- For each DPR, mark "N" (no) if the component is not evident on the DPR.
- Calculate the DPRs' component integrity by counting the number of "Y" marks in for each column and row and completing the final calculations in the "Total" section.

Intervention Components	DPR 1 Date	DPR 2 Date	DPR 3 Date	DPR 4 Date	DPR 5 Date	Component Integrity
Daily Check-In	Y N	Y N	Y N	Y N	Y N	.../5
Regular Teacher Feedback	Y N	Y N	Y N	Y N	Y N	.../5
Data Collection and Entry	Y N	Y N	Y N	Y N	Y N	.../5
Daily Check-Out	Y N	Y N	Y N	Y N	Y N	.../5
Parent Signature	Y N	Y N	Y N	Y N	Y N	.../5
Daily DPR Integrity	.../5	.../5	.../5	.../5	.../5	
Totals	Component Integrity: .../25 x 100% = ...%					
	Daily DPR Integrity: .../25 x 100% = ...%					

(Tennessee Tiered Supports Center, 2023)



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Increasing Fidelity

Ways to increase fidelity:

- Reteach key collaborators, including students.
- Increase implementation support.
- Communicate trust in the intervention.
- Reinforce student participation in the intervention.
- Interview key collaborators to identify implementation barriers and needs.
- Plan for continued monitoring.

(Tennessee Department of Education, 2023)

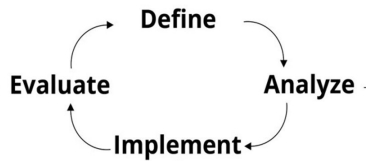


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Ongoing Problem Solving and Support

Data-based decision-making teams should use an ongoing problem-solving process to identify and target specific needs.



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Ongoing Problem Solving and Support

- If a disability is suspected, a request for a special education evaluation should be made.
 - The request can occur at any time.
 - There is no amount of time, data points, or cut scores that must be met.
 - The evaluation must be completed within 60 days of signed parental consent.
- The student does not have to receive more intensive intervention (e.g., Tier III) for the evaluation to occur.
- The student must continue receiving intervention while the evaluation is conducted.

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Data-Based Decision Making

Intensifying and Fading Support



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Changing the Intensity of the Intervention

- Use **multiple data sources** to inform adjustments to the intervention.
- Make low-effort adjustments that require few additional resources.
- If a larger adjustment is needed, consider a different intervention.
- Review the intervention response of all students and consider if intervention changes would benefit the group.



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Increasing Intensity

- Intervention components can be added or modified to **increase** the support a student receives from an intervention.
- To **increase** intervention intensity, a team can:
 - Tailor expectations on the daily progress report to align with specific behaviors a student struggles to perform.
 - Increase the number of teacher feedback opportunities.
 - Add a mid-day check-in with the mentor.
 - Increase a student's contact with reinforcement for desired behaviors.
 - Incorporate a peer mentor.

(Majeika et al., 2020)



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Intensification of Breaks



Provide more break opportunities to the student on the daily progress report.



Increase the duration of the break (how long the break lasts).



Decrease the length of the 'wait time' before the student can re-ask for a break.



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Let's Practice!

How could you **increase the intervention intensity** in these scenarios?



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Decreasing Intervention Intensity

Intervention components can be faded, modified, or removed to **decrease** the support a student receives from the intervention.

To **decrease** intervention intensity, a team can:

- Increase the requirement for earning an incentive.
- Reduce the number of intervals in the daily progress report.
- Transition to student-led feedback sessions.
- Incorporate self-management strategies, such as self-goal setting, self-graphing, and self-monitoring.

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Incorporating Self-Monitoring

- The teacher and student independently rate the student's behavior and compare their ratings during the feedback sessions.
- The goal is for the student to independently and accurately rate the student's behavior over time.

Elementary School Daily Progress Report - EXAMPLE as Being the Learning Target

Progress: This is an editable template that teachers can use as a daily progress report for implementing Check and Feedback (C&F).

Checklist: Yes No Checked Out: Yes No Goal: 80% 85% 90% 95% 97% 98% 99%

A. Monitor student behaviors

Target Behaviors	Be Safe	Be Respectful	Be Responsible	Total
Engaged reading 9:30-10:00	2 1 0	2 1 0	2 1 0	
Classroom 9:30-10:00	2 1 0	2 1 0	2 1 0	
Working 10:10-11:00	2 1 0	2 1 0	2 1 0	
Classroom 11:30-12:00	2 1 0	2 1 0	2 1 0	
Working 12:00-12:45	2 1 0	2 1 0	2 1 0	
Working 1:00-1:45	2 1 0	2 1 0	2 1 0	
Working 2:00-2:45	2 1 0	2 1 0	2 1 0	
Goal Met? Yes No today	Total points for today: out of _____%			

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Incorporating Self-Monitoring

- | | |
|----------------|--|
| Phase 1 | Point goal attainment is based on the teacher's ratings. |
| Phase 2 | Point goal attainment is based on the student's ratings once the student can independently rate with accuracy. |
| Phase 3 | Other components of the intervention are faded. |

(Miller et al., 2015; Tennessee Tiered Supports Center, 2023)



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Fading

- Self-monitoring should be taught **prior** to fading intervention components.
- **Fading** refers to a process of gradually removing intervention components for students who have met program goals.
- Fading should occur in a **systematic** and thoughtfully planned approach.

(Majeika et al., 2020; Tennessee Tiered Supports Center, 2023)



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Let's Practice!

How could the intervention component be faded or modified to **decrease** the intervention intensity?



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Graduation

- Once all components of Check-In/Check-Out or Breaks are Better are removed, the student graduates from the intervention.
- Graduating students can be celebrated with their teachers, mentors, family members, and other key collaborators.



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Resources

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Resources



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Resources



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Thank you!

- Questions?
- Contact Information
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TN-TAN End-of-Session Survey

Please complete the evaluation survey using the following link or scanning the QR code:

https://kusuvey.ca1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_085eZrS8I4jZIIIC



Project Provider: *Tennessee TSC*

Event Title: *Data-Based Decision Making for Tier II Behavior Interventions*

Learning Objectives:

1. Utilize a problem-solving process for making data-based decisions regarding Check-In/Check-Out and Breaks are Better.
2. Evaluate progress monitoring and fidelity data to determine the effectiveness of the intervention.
3. Examine approaches to intensifying and fading components of Check-In/Check-Out and Breaks are Better.



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