Implementing T3 Intervention in Early Childhood: Challenges and Solutions

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What IS Tier 3 Intervention?

• Supplemental instruction/support that is more intensive and individualized than lower levels of instructional support (i.e., Tiers 1 and 2)

• Compared to Tier 2:
  – smaller group size
  – more time
  – more frequent progress monitoring
  – more frequent use of specialists/special educators for implementation

Connor, Alberto, Compton, & O'Connor, 2014; Jenkins, Schiller, Blackorby, Thayer, & Tilly, 2013
Is Tier 3 Support Needed in EC?

Language Experience

Estimated cumulative words addressed to child

50 million
40 million
30 million
20 million
10 million

Age of child in months

0  12  24  36  48

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Patterns in Performance are Stable Across the Preschool Year...

... unless we DO something (Cabell, Justice, Logan, & Konold, 2013)

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**Fig. 2.** Spring profiles of emergent literacy (N=369). Profile 1: Highest emergent literacy (35.0%); Profile 2: Average emergent literacy (46.3%); Profile 3: Lowest emergent literacy (18.7%).
Tier 3 Overview: Intervention Issues

• Which children need Tier 3 support?
  – Children who are significantly behind their peers in the acquisition of critical early skills (e.g., social/behavioral, early literacy, language skills).

• What do we know about these children
  – Children are behind in the acquisition of skills for a variety of reasons (e.g., ELL, lack of exposure to/experience with print, speech-language delays, other learning difficulties).
Challenges in Implementing T3

- Identifying children for T3 intervention
- Identifying effective T3 interventions
- Managing and implement interventions
- Monitoring progress
Effective Tier 3 Interventions

• The challenge:
  – What *is* an effective Tier 3 intervention?
Tier 3 Overview: Intervention Issues

• The solution:
  – Lowest performing children benefit the most from language and early literacy intervention that is:
    • Focused on a few priority skills (essential skills)
    • More explicit
    • More comprehensive
    • More systematic (optimum sequence at an optimum rate)
    • More individualized

(e.g., Biemiller & Slonim, 2001; Connor et al., 2014; Foorman & Torgesen, 2001; Justice & Vukelich; Simmons, 2015)
Effective Tier 3 Curriculum Example

- Reading Ready activities are designed to be implemented in the classroom by a teacher in small groups or 1-1.
Effective Tier 3 Curriculum Example

• Content
  – Carefully sequenced skills/tasks
  – Clear objectives
  – Small learning units

• Strategies
  – Explicit instruction
  – Consistent and simple instructional language
  – Ample opportunities to respond (6-12/minute)
  – Strategies encouragement and guidance
  – Strategies for providing support (scaffolding)
Lesson 2
Parts of Words: Compound Words

Goal: The child will learn that words can be divided into parts.

Materials:
- L2 Game markers: Sally Seahorse and Sammy Seacow (manatee)
- Optional: Picture cards from set WP1, generic gameboard

Encouragement and guidance:
- When the child correctly says the parts of the word, say, Yes! Back and pack are the parts of the word backpack.
- If the child does not correctly say the parts of the word, say, Watch and listen. Back–pack. Clap once for each syllable. Do it with me. Ready? Back–pack. Say and clap the word. Be sure the child does it with you. Repeat if necessary. Your turn. Say and clap the parts of the word backpack.

If the child has difficulty
- Put a longer pause between the two word parts when saying the word.
- Put the child’s hands over yours while you say and clap the words.
- Have the child do it with you multiple times before doing it independently.
- Build in repetition. Have the child say and clap the same word three or more times in a row.
- Tap the table or do some other gesture as each part of the word is said.
- Use two blocks (one for each part of the word) or some other object to represent each part of the word and have the child tap or move a block for each part of the word.

Variations
- Use picture cards from set WP1 and play one of the game variations for saying parts and first sounds of words.^
- Use word list of WP1 words and do verbal practice without pictures. Listen carefully. I am going to say a word and you say and clap the parts of some words. Ready? Ice cream. Wait for child to respond. Provide encouragement and guidance as needed.^

* You may use generic game boards and markers of your choice for any of the variations listed above.
Effective Tier 3 Curriculum Example

1. Review
   - Last time we learned how we can write and read the words we say. Let’s say some words and I will write the words and read them.
   - My turn first. Say a word and a short sentence about the word. Write the word and the sentence. Read it to the child, pointing to each word as you read it.
   - Your turn. Prompt the child to tell you about something. For example, you might ask, Who is your best friend at school? What do you like to do with your friend? Do you have brothers or sisters? What are their names? Write what the child says. Read what you wrote, pointing to the words as you read them.

2. Introduce
   - Today we are going to learn about parts of words.

3. Demonstrate
   - Point to backpack. This is a picture of a backpack. Say backpack. The parts of the word backpack are back-pack. I can clap the parts of the word backpack. Watch and listen. Back–pack. Clap once for each syllable, pausing between syllables. I will do it again. Back–pack. Clap once for each syllable, pausing between syllables.
   - Point to cupcake. This is a picture of a cupcake. I can say and clap the parts of the word cupcake: cup–cake. Clap once for each syllable, pausing between syllables. I will do it again. Cup–cake. Clap once for each syllable, pausing between syllables.

4. Do It Together
   - Repeat the wording above with the following words. Be sure the child does it with you.
     - cupcake (cup–cake)
     - toothpaste (tooth–paste)
     - raincoat (rain–coat)
     - seahorse (sea–horse)
Effective Tier 3 Curriculum Example
5. Guided Practice (a)

- **Let’s play a game.** Have the child select a game marker and place the marker on the green dot.
- **This is a shipwreck** (point). **We are going to help** (marker) **get to the shipwreck to look for a treasure.** This is the path (marker) needs to follow. Point and move your finger along the path.
- **I will point to a picture and say the word.** You say and clap the parts of the word. Then (marker) can move to that space.
- Point to **airplane. This is an airplane. Say airplane.** Now, say and clap the parts of the word **airplane.** Provide encouragement and guidance as needed.
- After the child responds correctly, either independently or with guidance, say, **Yes! The parts of the word airplane are air-plane.** Clap once for each syllable. Move the game marker onto the space.
- Repeat the wording above with the following words. Provide encouragement and guidance as needed.
  - **flashlight** (flash–light)
  - **swimsuit** (swim–suit)
  - **baseball** (base–ball)
  - **spaceship** (space–ship)

**NOTE:** If the child was able to respond correctly on **four out of five** of the previous words independently, you may move directly to the Checkout. If the child needs more practice, continue with the next game.
Effective Tier 3 Curriculum Example
6. Checkout

To pass the Checkout and move to the next lesson, the child must respond correctly and independently on four out of five words. Do not provide guidance on the Checkout.

- **Here are some sunfish swimming in the sea.** (marker) wants to swim with them. Put (marker) here. Point to the green dot.
- I will say a word. You say and clap the parts of the word. Then (marker) can swim with the sunfish. When (marker) gets to the last sunfish, we are all done with this game.
- Listen. The first word is **rainbow**. Say and clap the parts of the word **rainbow**. After the child responds either correctly or incorrectly, have the child move the marker to the fish.
- Repeat the wording above with the following words. Move the marker forward one fish for each word responded to, whether correct or incorrect.
  - **pancakes** (pan–cakes)
  - **starfish** (star–fish)
  - **toothbrush** (tooth–brush)
  - **seatbelt** (seat–belt)

**NOTE:** When the child has passed the Checkout move on to Put in Context.
In the Sea

The starfish swims in the deep blue sea and plays with the seahorse in the seaweed.
• The challenge: Teacher’s need to:
  – adapt curricula using best practices to meet the needs of children who need Tier 3 support
  – organize and manage their classrooms to support small group instruction
Implementing Interventions

• The solution: Need for teacher training/support in strategic classroom management
  – organize classroom to accommodate small group instruction daily
  – group children intentionally based on child needs
  – have a plan for managing groups
  – maintain flexibility over the course of the year

Wasik, 2008
Small Group Instruction: Getting Started

- Decide on centers and work areas and arrange furniture to create
- Develop a daily schedule that includes small and whole group instruction
- Develop a Rotation Chart for small groups
- Develop a plan for organizing supplies

Gibson, 2011
Considerations

- How many children are in your classroom?
- Is there a teaching assistant or other adult support (e.g., SLP, ECSE consultant, volunteers)?
- Is your program full- or half-day? How many days/week?
- In what skill areas will you provide small group activities, e.g., literacy, language, math?
- What Centers do you already have in your classroom?
Centers or Workstations?

**Centers**

- A collection of materials designed with a broad goal/purpose in mind
- Children choose the center and interact with materials to develop, discover, create, and learn at their own pace
- Theme or skill based (e.g., housekeeping, block center, writing center)

**Workstations**

- Activities designed to help children to become competent in a concept or skill
- May be teacher-facilitated or structured with specific activities and tasks for children to do independently
- Children rotate among workstations
Small Group Instruction: Tips

“Differentiating instruction and student practice requires establishing classroom management routines and procedures so teachers can provide small group lessons with minimal distractions or interruptions.”

- Introduce content and model skills in whole group.
- Explicitly teach content and skills in small group, providing student-focused instruction and feedback.
- Ensure children receive sufficient instruction prior to participating in collaborative practice.
- Ensure children receive sufficient instruction and practice before working independently.

Gibson, 2011
**Sample Daily Schedule: Half-Day**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Activity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8:30</td>
<td><strong>Arrival</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8:30 – 8:40</td>
<td>Opening Circle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8:40 – 9:40</td>
<td>Center time/Small groups I</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9:40– 10:00</td>
<td>Outside</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10:00 – 10:20</td>
<td>Choice/Free play</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10:20 – 10:50</td>
<td>Book time: Quiet reading/Story circles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10:50 – 11:20</td>
<td>Center time/small groups II</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11:20 – 11:30</td>
<td>Closing circle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11:30</td>
<td>Dismissal</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Tier 3 in Early Childhood
References


Resources on Differentiated and Small Group Instruction in EC


Resources on Promoting Language and Early Literacy in EC


Thank you

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