

MTSS vs. Special Education

Category	MTSS	Special Education
Purpose	Preventative and proactive approach to support all students	Individualized support for students with identified disabilities
Eligibility	All students	Students who meet specific eligibility criteria under IDEA.
Types of Support	Tier 1 (Universal interventions), Tier 2 (Targeted interventions), and Tier 3 (Intensive interventions)	Individualized Education Program (IEP) based on student's unique needs
Interventions	Evidence-based practices and strategies to support academic, behavioral, and social-emotional needs	Specialized instruction, accommodations, modifications, and related services based on IEP
Progress Monitoring	Regular 6-8 week cycles for assessment and data collection to inform interventions and progress	Regular (frequency per IEP) assessment and data collection to monitor progress toward IEP goals
Team Collaboration	General education teachers, interventionists, and support staff work together to provide support	Special education teachers, general education teachers, related service providers, and parents collaborate to implement the IEP
Legal Requirements	Not mandated by federal law, but often aligned with state and local policies	Mandated by the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)