

Consider the case of Andrew



No MTSS model in place

In kindergarten, Andrew had difficulty with acquiring basic early reading skills and seemed immature; he repeated kindergarten. In first grade, his teacher recognized his serious difficulties with learning basic sight words, decoding, and comprehension. She took his case to the Student Study Team, where she was advised to provide extra support and modify his work. She had several conferences with his mother who worked with him at home. By the end of first grade, he was so far behind that the teacher recommended to his second grade teacher that she consider a referral for special education. In second grade, the testing showed that there was no significant discrepancy between his capacity and academic performance. He did not qualify. When he was referred again in fourth grade, he qualified for special education with a designation of Specific Learning Disability. After five years, Andrew was reading at a beginning first grade level. He had no interest in learning to read.

An Alternative Scenario for Andrew



MTSS Model in Place

Andrew's school has worked to implement a solid core reading program with periodic curriculum-embedded assessments to monitor student progress. In kindergarten, Andrew's teacher found that he had significant difficulty with acquiring vocabulary and phonological skills. He participated in an extended-day intervention program 3 days a week. However, he continued to have serious difficulty. The first-grade assessments showed that he was behind in basic decoding and phonological skills. His teacher confirmed a significant overall reading difficulty as she worked with him in a small-group setting. Though he received supplemental instruction, 30 minutes a day, 5 days a week, he showed minimal response to the whole-class and small-group instruction he received. By the second half of first grade, Andrew was considered for special education. His teachers had adequate documentation of his lack of response to the best of instruction. Because of strong collaboration between general and special education teachers, Andrew made a smooth transition to special education services. By fourth grade, he was less than a year below grade level.