

Building a Stronger MTSS Continuum: How Footsteps2Brilliance Supports Tier 0, Tier 1, Tier 2, and Tier 3

A Connected Literacy System for Prevention, Instruction, Intervention, and Acceleration

Districts are investing significant time, staffing, and funding into Multi-Tiered Systems of Support, yet many literacy challenges begin long before students are formally identified for intervention. By the time students struggle in kindergarten, third grade, or upper elementary, the system is often responding to gaps that have been developing for years.

Footsteps2Brilliance helps districts move from a reactive model to a connected, proactive literacy system. The curriculum supports children from birth through eighth grade by strengthening family engagement, early language development, foundational literacy, reading comprehension, writing, vocabulary, and real-world literacy application. Within MTSS, Footsteps2Brilliance can be used across Tier 0, Tier 1, Tier 2, and Tier 3 to help districts prevent gaps earlier, strengthen core instruction, provide targeted support, and extend learning beyond the school day.

This approach does not replace a district's MTSS framework. It strengthens it. Footsteps2Brilliance gives leaders, teachers, families, and community partners a shared set of tools, content, and data to help more students build the literacy foundation they need to succeed.

Understanding the Full MTSS Continuum

Traditional MTSS frameworks often begin with Tier 1 core instruction and move students into Tier 2 or Tier 3 intervention when data show they need additional support. This structure is essential, but it is incomplete when districts are trying to improve kindergarten readiness, third-grade reading proficiency, and long-term literacy outcomes.

A stronger system begins even earlier.

Tier 0 adds an upstream readiness layer before formal school entry. It reaches families, caregivers, childcare providers, community partners, and young children before gaps become visible in kindergarten screening data. When Tier 0 is connected to Tier 1, Tier 2, and Tier 3, districts create a more complete

literacy infrastructure: one that prevents more gaps, identifies needs earlier, supports instruction more coherently, and extends practice into the home.

Footsteps2Brilliance supports each tier with digital curriculum, bilingual resources, teacher tools, family-facing activities, progress data, and implementation support.

Tier 0: Upstream Readiness Before Students Need Intervention

What Tier 0 Means

Tier 0 is the prevention layer of MTSS. It begins before kindergarten and focuses on the early language, literacy, cognitive, social-emotional, and family engagement foundations that help children arrive at school ready to learn.

Tier 0 recognizes that families are children's first educators and that language development begins at birth. Long before a child is assigned to a kindergarten classroom, they are building vocabulary, listening comprehension, oral language, attention, confidence, and early print awareness through everyday interactions. A district's readiness strategy is strongest when it equips families and community partners with simple, accessible tools that make those interactions intentional and joyful.

Tier 0 is not intervention. It is not remediation. It is the system's earliest opportunity to build capacity before students fall behind.

How Footsteps2Brilliance Supports Tier 0

Footsteps2Brilliance provides a Birth–PreK readiness layer that reaches families and young children before kindergarten entry. Through Little Bees and the Emerging Language and Literacy Curriculum, families access interactive stories, songs, rhymes, language-building routines, and off-device activities that support development across key early learning domains.

Children hear rich language, build vocabulary, engage with books, practice early literacy behaviors, and participate in playful learning experiences that strengthen readiness. Families receive simple guidance that explains what to do, why it matters, and how everyday moments can become learning moments. The curriculum supports language development, thinking, movement, feelings, early literacy, and foundational concepts across math, science, social development, and more.

For district leaders, Tier 0 implementation creates a way to reach children who may not be enrolled in district preschool or formal early learning programs. It also creates a shared readiness strategy across families, schools, libraries, childcare providers, early learning coalitions, community agencies, and local partners.

Tier 0 Outcomes Districts Can Strengthen

With Footsteps2Brilliance, districts can use Tier 0 to:

- Increase family capacity before kindergarten.
- Build early language, vocabulary, and listening comprehension.
- Strengthen early literacy routines at home and in the community.
- Expand access to high-quality readiness resources for children not enrolled in formal PreK.
- Create a smoother transition into kindergarten.
- Reduce the number of children entering school with significant readiness gaps.
- Tier 0 gives districts a way to stop waiting for gaps to appear and start building readiness earlier.

Tier 1: Strong Core Literacy Instruction for All Students

What Tier 1 Means

Tier 1 is the foundation of classroom instruction. It includes the core curriculum, grade-level standards, high-quality teaching, classroom routines, and universal supports provided to all students.

In literacy, Tier 1 must give every student access to explicit, systematic, and engaging instruction in foundational skills, vocabulary, comprehension, writing, oral language, and knowledge-building. Strong Tier 1 instruction reduces the number of students who require additional intervention and ensures that all students receive consistent exposure to grade-level content.

How Footsteps2Brilliance Supports Tier 1

Footsteps2Brilliance strengthens Tier 1 by giving teachers a cohesive digital literacy curriculum that supports whole-group instruction, small-group practice, independent learning, writing, vocabulary development, and home extension. The curriculum helps students engage with high-quality books, songs, games, writing activities, and interactive literacy tasks aligned to foundational reading and language development.

In PreK through grade 3, Footsteps2Brilliance supports the foundational literacy skills students need to become confident readers. Students practice phonological awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, comprehension, listening, speaking, and writing through engaging, interactive content. The content in Footsteps2Brilliance is aligned to a district's core curriculum. This provides a cohesive experience for teachers and students from core instruction to deliberate practice. Teachers can use the curriculum during classroom centers, literacy blocks, small-group rotations, independent practice, and family extension. Students are always practicing the actual skills and concepts being taught in the core curriculum that week. This formative assessment data is then used to make intervention decisions in real-time, rather than after a weekly or quarterly benchmark assessment is given.

In grades 4 through 8, Footsteps2Brilliance extends literacy into real-world application through financial literacy and career-connected learning. Students read, write, reason, and apply ELA skills in meaningful contexts such as budgeting, saving, decision-making, entrepreneurship, and economic choices. This gives older students opportunities to strengthen reading comprehension, vocabulary, writing, and critical thinking while connecting literacy to life.

Tier 1 Outcomes Districts Can Strengthen

With Footsteps2Brilliance, districts can use Tier 1 to:

- Support consistent literacy practice for all students.
- Reinforce core ELA instruction through engaging digital content.
- Build vocabulary, comprehension, writing, and foundational reading skills.
- Increase student motivation and independent practice.
- Extend learning beyond the classroom through family access.

- Give teachers real-time visibility into student engagement and progress.
 - Tier 1 is strongest when students receive high-quality instruction during the school day and meaningful literacy practice beyond it. Footsteps2Brilliance helps connect both.
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Tier 2: Targeted Support for Students Who Need More Practice

What Tier 2 Means

Tier 2 provides targeted, supplemental support for students who need more time, more practice, or more explicit instruction than Tier 1 alone provides. These students may be slightly below benchmark, missing specific foundational skills, struggling with vocabulary or comprehension, or needing additional repetition to master grade-level expectations.

Tier 2 is typically delivered through small groups, intervention blocks, tutoring, targeted digital practice, after-school programs, summer learning, or additional guided instruction. The goal is to close skill gaps quickly before students require more intensive intervention.

How Footsteps2Brilliance Supports Tier 2

Footsteps2Brilliance supports Tier 2 by providing targeted literacy practice that can be assigned, monitored, and used flexibly across settings. Teachers and interventionists can use student data to identify areas where additional practice is needed and then provide students with aligned books, activities, games, writing opportunities, and skill-building lessons. These learning experiences provide the teachers with real-time formative assessment data to determine the effectiveness of the intervention.

For younger learners, Tier 2 use may include extra practice with phonological awareness, letter knowledge, decoding, vocabulary, oral language, and comprehension. Students can work independently or in small groups while teachers monitor progress and adjust support.

For students in grades 4 through 8, Footsteps2Brilliance can be used to support reading comprehension, academic vocabulary, writing fluency, and real-world literacy application. The financial literacy curriculum gives students authentic reasons to read complex text, respond in writing, analyze information, and apply comprehension skills in practical situations.

Because students can access Footsteps2Brilliance at school and at home, Tier 2 support does not have to stop when the intervention block ends. Families can reinforce learning with accessible, engaging activities that extend practice beyond the classroom.

Tier 2 Outcomes Districts Can Strengthen

With Footsteps2Brilliance, districts can use Tier 2 to:

- Provide additional literacy practice aligned to student needs.
- Support small-group instruction, tutoring, intervention blocks, and after-school programs.
- Increase time-on-task without adding disconnected materials.
- Reinforce specific skills through engaging, repeatable activities.
- Give teachers and leaders data on usage, progress, and growth.
- Extend targeted practice into the home in a family-friendly way.

Tier 2 works best when support is timely, focused, and connected to what students are learning in the classroom. Footsteps2Brilliance helps make that connection easier to manage and easier to scale.

Tier 3: Intensive Support for Students with Significant Literacy Needs

What Tier 3 Means

Tier 3 provides intensive, individualized support for students with significant and persistent literacy challenges. These students require more explicit instruction, more frequent progress monitoring, smaller instructional groupings, and carefully matched practice based on their specific needs.

Tier 3 does not mean students are removed from Tier 1 instruction. Students receiving Tier 3 support still need access to grade-level learning, rich language, books, writing, and meaningful content. The difference is that they also receive more intensive, individualized intervention designed to accelerate growth.

How Footsteps2Brilliance Supports Tier 3

Footsteps2Brilliance can support Tier 3 as a supplemental practice and engagement tool within a broader intervention plan. Teachers, interventionists, reading specialists, and support staff can use the curriculum to provide additional exposure, repetition, and reinforcement in targeted skill areas.

For students with significant foundational skill gaps, Footsteps2Brilliance offers opportunities to revisit essential language and literacy concepts through interactive books, songs, games, and activities. Students can hear text read aloud, engage with vocabulary, practice comprehension, build confidence, and complete literacy tasks at a pace that supports repeated exposure.

For multilingual learners and students who benefit from bilingual access, Footsteps2Brilliance can help reduce barriers by supporting language development and family participation. Families can understand and participate in the learning process, which is especially important for students who need consistent support across settings.

At the Tier 3 level, Footsteps2Brilliance should be used as part of a coordinated plan that includes diagnostic information, teacher-led instruction, interventionist support, progress monitoring, and family communication. Its value is in providing meaningful, motivating, data-informed practice that reinforces the intensive instruction students receive.

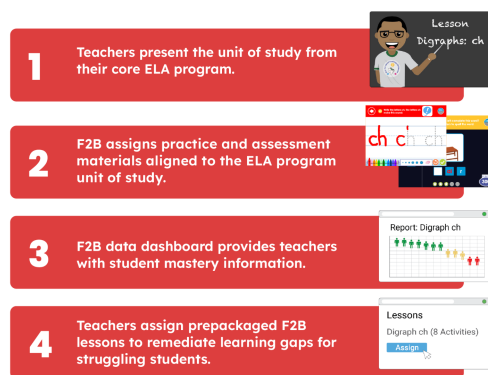
Tier 3 Outcomes Districts Can Strengthen

With Footsteps2Brilliance, districts can use Tier 3 to:

- Provide individualized supplemental practice for students with significant needs.
- Reinforce intervention goals through engaging literacy activities.
- Increase repetition and exposure without relying only on worksheets or isolated drills.
- Support multilingual learners and family participation.
- Monitor engagement and progress over time.
- Help students build confidence, stamina, and literacy identity.

Tier 3 students need intensive support, but they also need joyful access to books, language, writing, and meaningful content. Footsteps2Brilliance helps ensure that intervention remains connected to engagement.

Seamlessly Integrate Footsteps2Brilliance into Your Daily Lessons using Our Core-Aligned Routine and Flexible Implementation Models



Support multiple tiers of instruction:

- ✓ **Tier 1**
facilitates whole group instruction and differentiation, using Essential Lessons and resources
- ✓ **Tier 2**
engage in small group supplemental instruction based on students' needs as identified by flexible grouping reports
- ✓ **Tier 3**
provide intensive individualized support that focuses on pre-teaching and/or reinforcing targeted skills

At home, families can access the program on any device, promoting engagement and deliberate practice.

A Coherent MTSS Literacy Model

When used across all tiers, Footsteps2Brilliance helps districts create a more coherent literacy system.

- Tier 0 builds readiness before kindergarten.
- Tier 1 strengthens core instruction for all students.
- Tier 2 provides targeted support for students who need more practice.
- Tier 3 reinforces intensive intervention with individualized, engaging literacy experiences.

This connected approach gives districts a stronger way to align early learning, classroom instruction, tutoring, intervention, family engagement, summer learning, and community partnerships. Instead of managing separate programs that do not talk to one another, leaders can build a shared infrastructure that supports students from their earliest learning experiences through middle school application.

Leadership Implications

For superintendents, curriculum leaders, early learning directors, and MTSS teams, the central question is no longer whether students need intervention. The more strategic question is how early the system can respond.

Footsteps2Brilliance helps districts act earlier, teach more coherently, engage families more meaningfully, and use data more consistently. It supports the full MTSS continuum by combining curriculum, practice, family access, bilingual resources, reporting, and implementation support in one connected system.

The result is a stronger pathway from early readiness to reading proficiency to real-world literacy.

Districts do not have to wait for children to struggle before offering support. With Footsteps2Brilliance, they can build a literacy system that reaches upstream, strengthens the classroom, supports intervention, and helps every student move forward with confidence.

Summary: Footsteps2Brilliance Across the MTSS Continuum

MTSS Tier	Primary Purpose	Footsteps2Brilliance Role
Tier 0	Prevent gaps before kindergarten by building early language, literacy, family capacity, and readiness.	Provides Birth–PreK family and community readiness tools, early language activities, interactive books, songs, rhymes, and off-device learning routines.
Tier 1	Deliver strong core literacy instruction for all students.	Supports classroom literacy instruction, independent practice, writing, vocabulary, comprehension, foundational skills, and home-school connection.
Tier 2	Provide targeted supplemental support for students who need more practice.	Offers focused literacy practice, data-informed assignments, small-group support, tutoring alignment, after-school use, and extended home practice.
Tier 3	Reinforce intensive intervention for students with significant and persistent needs.	Provides individualized supplemental practice, repeated exposure, accessible content, bilingual family support, and engagement tools aligned to intervention goals.

Footsteps2Brilliance helps districts make MTSS more than a response system. It helps make MTSS a readiness, literacy, and acceleration system from birth through eighth grade.