

EBITE RESOURCE GUIDE IMPLEMENTATION WITH FIDELITY

Purpose

This guide will help you understand what implementation fidelity is and how to monitor it. Included are step-by-step questions that can be used by school or district teams to guide you as you develop fidelity monitoring processes and tools. Several examples are linked, and you can use these as models if you need to develop your own fidelity monitoring processes.

What is Implementation Fidelity and Why do we need it?

The degree to which an intervention is carried out as intended is known as implementation fidelity. Implementation fidelity is important for interventions within any ESSA evidence level. We choose evidence-based interventions because there is *evidence* that the program has positive effects. If the core components of any evidence-based program are not delivered as they were designed and tested, we cannot expect to get similar positive effects. We often start implementing an intervention with high fidelity, but without monitoring and regular feedback, fidelity can drift over time. Ongoing monitoring of all core components is essential to successful implementation of evidence-based interventions.

Many evidence-based interventions come complete with fidelity monitoring guidelines and tools, while others do not. If you choose an intervention that does not include fidelity monitoring guidelines and tools, it is essential that you develop them. Identifying the elements of the intervention that need to be monitored for fidelity and developing ways to monitor those components is a great activity for grade-level, subject-level, or intervention teams.

Elements of Implementation Fidelity

Components or elements of implementation fidelity include: *Adherence, Exposure/Duration, Quality of delivery, Student Engagement, and Program Specificity*. The National Center on Intensive Intervention developed this research-based model describing fidelity components <https://intensiveintervention.org/resource/five-elements-fidelity>. Identifying ways to monitor each of these dimensions is important when planning to implement any intervention.

Considerations for Effective Implementation

5 Elements of Fidelity



Element	Description	Examples
1. Adherence	Extent to which key intervention components are present and delivered. May be measured through checklists, observations, review of intervention records.	Using a yes/no checklist to confirm if all personnel, materials, and steps to carry out the Check-In/Check-Out ¹ behavioral intervention are present.
2. Exposure	Amount of intervention is delivered as intended. This can include frequency and duration of sessions.	Keeping a recording log to track if the Early Learning in Mathematics ² program's 15-minute calendar activities are being implemented daily and for the intended duration.
3. Quality of delivery	How well a provider delivers the intervention as suggested by guidelines and instructions. Can include interventionist's preparedness, use of modeling, enthusiasm, interaction style, ability to communicate with participants.	Using a direct observation rating scale or checklist to determine if a teacher is providing clear instructions and modeling of Peer-Assisted Literary Strategies. ³
4. Student Engagement	How students/participants react to or engage in an intervention (e.g., perception of intervention relevance, engagement level, willingness to participate)	Asking students to complete a brief exit slip to determine engagement; classroom or one-on-one observation of student responsiveness.
5. Program Specificity	How well is the intervention defined, and how clearly it can be differentiated from other interventions.	Using a direct observation rating scale or checklist to determine if a teacher is providing clear instructions and modeling of Peer-Assisted Literary Strategies. ⁴

¹ Campbell & Anderson (2011). Behavior Education Program (BEP) or Check-in/Check-out (CICIO). <https://charts.intensiveintervention.org/intervention/toolSGL/9596c3b8374ff854>

² Ohio's Evidence-Based Clearinghouse (n.d.). Early Learning in Mathematics. <https://essa.chrr.ohio-state.edu/strategy?id=136>

³ Ohio's Evidence-Based Clearinghouse (n.d.). Peer-Assisted Learning Strategies (PALS). <https://essa.chrr.ohio-state.edu/strategy?id=92>

⁴ Ohio's Evidence-Based Clearinghouse (n.d.). Peer-Assisted Learning Strategies (PALS). <https://essa.chrr.ohio-state.edu/strategy?id=92>

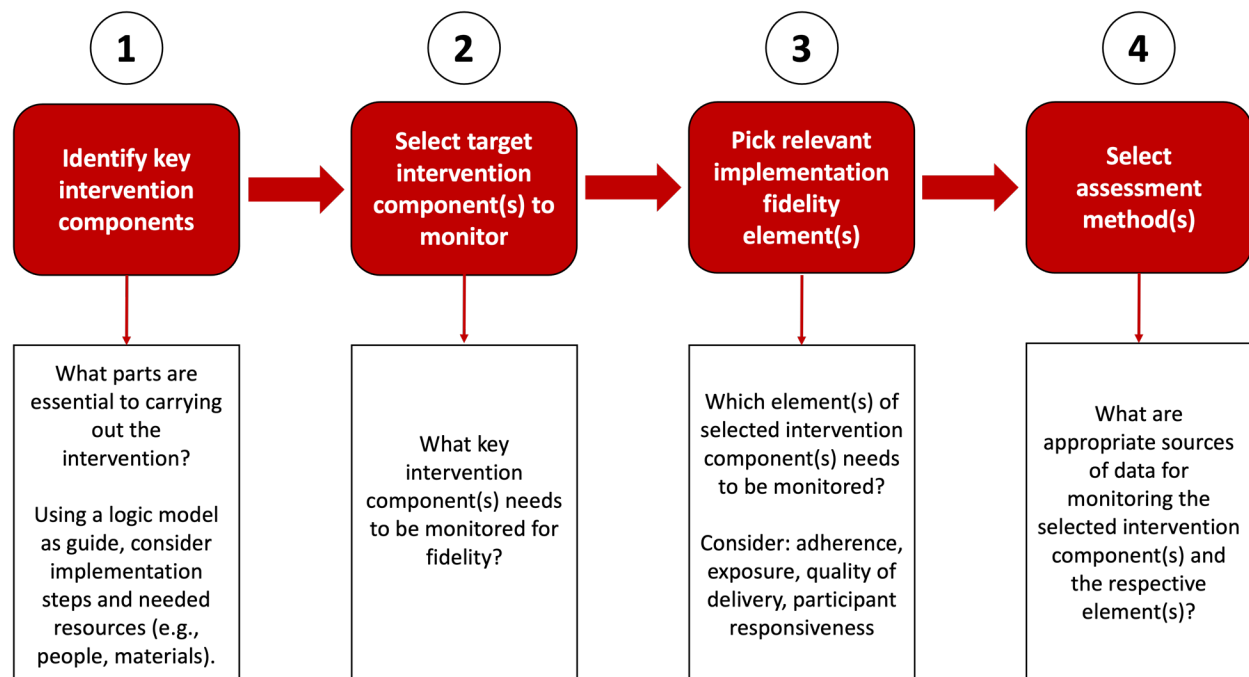
Common Risks to Fidelity

Some common reasons⁵ for lack of fidelity when implementing evidence-based interventions include:

- Eliminating components of the intervention or shortening the implementation time because of time constraints or underestimation of how long it will take
- Implementing the components that are easier or more appealing and eliminating those that are not
- Implementing an evidence-based intervention incorrectly or poorly because of ambiguous or unclear instructions or guidelines
- Attempting to implement an intervention without adequate training or support

Planning for Implementation Fidelity

How to monitor and evaluate implementation fidelity should be planned as part of the implementation planning process for an evidence-based intervention.⁶ Use the outlined steps and guiding questions in the figure below to create your own fidelity monitoring process for your evidence-based intervention:



Implementation fidelity is essential to guiding accurate decision-making throughout several stages of the Ohio Department of Education's (ODE) [Continuous Improvement Process](#). This five-part process guides schools and districts in grounding decisions in a cycle of sustained efforts for improving student

⁵ The IRIS Center. (2014). Evidence-based practices (part 2): Implementing a practice or program with fidelity. https://iris.peabody.vanderbilt.edu/module/ebp_02/cresource/q2/p04/#content

⁶ Collier-Meek, M., (2021). Brief: Fidelity Monitoring & Review. Sustain Collaborative. <https://www.sustaincollaborative.org/resources/fidelitymonitoringandreview>

achievement. Specifically, integrating implementation fidelity into steps 3 ([Plan for Implementation](#)), 4 ([Implement and Monitor](#)), and 5 ([Examine, reflect, and adjust](#)) can enhance an intervention's efficacy.

Additional resources and examples of implementation fidelity tools that can be used or modified for other interventions

The Iris Center at Vanderbilt University has developed a comprehensive module on Fidelity of Implementation for evidence-based practices in K-12 education, complete with step-by-step guidelines, numerous short videos (including classroom examples of fidelity monitoring), examples of fidelity monitoring instruments, etc. You can access the module at https://iris.peabody.vanderbilt.edu/module/ebp_02/cresource/q1/p01/#content

The National Center on Intensive Intervention provides sample fidelity monitoring tools to support implementation of Data-Based Individualization. <https://intensiveintervention.org/implementation-intervention/fidelity>

The [School-Wide Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports \(SWPBIS\) Tiered Fidelity Inventory \(TFI\)](#) (Algozzine et al., 2019) measures the extent to which school personnel are applying core features of SWPBIS.

Example of grades 2-6 Reading PALS Implementation Checklist

<https://mimtsstac.org/sites/default/files/Documents/Presentations/2014%20MiBLSi%20State%20Conference/PALS%20Implementation%20Checklist.pdf>