Ascending Levels of Academic Support

Adapted from McAvoy, K., Eagan-Johnson, B., & Halstead, M. (2018). Return to learn: Transitioning to school and through ascending levels of academic support for students following a concussion. *NeuroRehabilitation*, *42*(3), 325-330. Access the abstract by clicking here.

TIER 1 – UNIVERSAL LEVEL

- Students receive informal assistance within the general education setting.
- Students receive quick and early screening.
- Students receive academic adjustments promptly and liberally.
- Students receive academic supports that can be adjusted frequently (hourly, daily, weekly) by the general education teacher.

Universal Level Applied to Post Concussion:

- 70% of students with a concussion recover within 4 weeks, therefor, the Return to Learn plan needs to be immediate and applied in general education.
- General education teachers need to be trained and empowered to front-load academic supports within the initial 4 weeks and fade academic support as the concussion symptoms subside.
- An individualized healthcare plan (IHP) may prove to be an ideal mechanism for use in the Return to Learn (either at Tier 1 or Tier 2) process for students who have sustained a concussion.

TIER 2 – TARGETED LEVEL

If support at the universal is not adequate, an intermediary level of more intensive support may be implemented at the Targeted Level – Tier 2.

- Students may receive academic supports in a more customized fashion. Students may

© 2023 University of Oregon. Use for personal educational purposes only. No further copying or distribution is allowed.

receive academic supports for a longer period of time.

- The most common Tier 2 support is the Section 504 Plan. Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act is a federal civil rights law. A 504 Plan may be considered if a medical condition substantially limits at least one of major life function such as thinking, concentrating, reading, or learning.

- Academic supports provided through a 504 Plan would be referred to as academic accommodations.

Targeted Level Applied to Student Post-Concussion:

- Especially in the case of protracted recovery from concussion (beyond 1 month), a 504 Plan may prove to be an ideal mechanism for use in the Return to Learn process for symptoms that are severe and/or long-lasting resulting in more customized or longer educational needs.

TIER 3 – INTENSIVE LEVEL

If a student is unable to receive reasonable benefit from general education alone and/or requires specialized instruction, placement, programming, Intensive Level – Tier 3 supports may be provided through special education in the form of an Individualized Education Program (IEP).

- Academic supports provided through an IEP may include both *academic accommodation* AND *modification* of the curriculum.

Intensive Level Applied to Students Post-Concussion:

- Since concussions are commonly short-term, transient, injuries that rarely result in a significant disability, it is an exception that a concussion would result in an IEP.

- If an IEP is warranted, due specifically to the concussion, the primary exceptionality category would be Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI).

© 2023 University of Oregon. Use for personal educational purposes only. No further copying or distribution is allowed.