



Response to Intervention

A Parent's Guide to Response to Intervention

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Introduction

This pamphlet provides parents, families and others with information regarding Response to Intervention (RtI). RtI is a process used in schools to provide well-designed instruction, closely monitor all students' progress and provide additional instructional supports to students who are struggling. This additional help is to assist those students to keep up with learning in their classrooms, particularly in the areas of reading and math.

At the end of this pamphlet, there is a reference list which provides sources for additional information for parents and websites where these resources can be found.

What is RtI?

RtI is a school process used to determine if a student is responding to classroom instruction and progressing as expected. In an RtI process, a student who is struggling receives additional instructional support provided by matching instruction to a student's individual needs through a multi-tier instructional model. Each level, also known as a tier, provides instruction with increased intensity such as smaller groups or instructional time focused on specific areas.

RtI focuses on the early prevention of academic difficulty, particularly in the areas of reading and math by:

- ensuring appropriate instruction for all students;
- monitoring students' progress; and
- providing additional levels of instructional assistance (intervention) for students who require support.

What are the steps in RtI?

1. Screening is conducted for all students.

What is screening?

Screening is a quick measure of a student's skills or behaviors expected for his or her grade level. Screenings may be conducted once a year or as many as three times per year.

How are the results of screening used?

Screening for all students helps schools to identify students who are considered at-risk of not learning the necessary skills expected for the student's age or grade level. Depending upon the results of initial screening, a school may recommend that a student be provided additional instructional support to address the student's areas of need.

Will a parent be notified of his/her child's screening results?

Some schools notify all parents of his/her child's screening results, but it is not required. However, if the school recommends that a student receive additional instructional support beyond what is provided to all students in the class, the parent must be notified.

2. All students receive appropriate instruction.

An RtI process begins with providing appropriate instruction to all students by the classroom teacher in the general education class. This is called Tier 1.

What is appropriate instruction?

Appropriate instruction means that the methods and materials a teacher uses are based on research showing that most students will be successful if taught in this manner. Since students learn in different ways, it is important for a teacher to use a variety of effective methods and materials to meet the needs of all students in his/her class.

What is considered appropriate reading instruction?

Reading instruction should include instruction in the essential elements of reading:

- phonemic awareness: the ability to distinguish the individual sounds of language;
- phonics: the ability to understand letter-sound connections;
- vocabulary development: understanding words to communicate effectively, both orally and in print;
- reading fluency: the ability to read orally with speed, accuracy and vocal expression; and
- reading comprehension: the ability to understand the written words.

3. Additional instructional support is provided for students, based upon screening and ongoing measurement of progress.

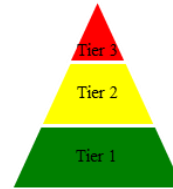
How will additional instructional support be provided?

Students identified through screening as needing additional instructional support, receive assistance designed to meet their needs. This assistance is called targeted intervention.

Within the RtI model, targeted intervention is provided with increasingly intense levels or tiers of support. Increased intensity can mean more time, smaller groups and/or more instruction focused on the specific areas in which the student is having difficulty. Most RtI models provide three tiers of support.

RtI Tiers

- (3) Intensive Interventions
- (2) Small Group Interventions
- (1) Scientific, Research Based Core Instruction



What is Tier 2 intervention?

Tier 2 intervention may be provided within the classroom or in a separate room. Tier 2 intervention usually means that a student is:

- taught in a small group;
- receiving additional instruction time; and/or
- taught using various instructional methods such as more opportunities for practice and more intensive instruction on difficult concepts.

For example, a student having difficulty reading may receive targeted instruction in a small group (3-5 students) for 30 minutes 3-5 times per week with a reading teacher. This Tier 2 intervention may be provided by a reading or math specialist. During this time, a student's progress will be measured regularly (monitored) to see if the intervention is meeting his/her needs.

What is Tier 3 intervention?

For students who are still not progressing with Tier 2 intervention, Tier 3 intervention may be provided. Instruction at this level may be more frequent, smaller group and/or for a longer period of time than that provided in Tiers 1 or 2. Tier 3 may utilize materials or programs which focus specifically on skills with which the student may be having difficulty.

4. Who determines the level of support (Tiers 1, 2, 3) for each student?

If a student is identified as needing instructional support, a team may meet to review information from the student's classroom work, screenings, and State and district-wide assessments. This team typically includes the student's classroom teacher(s) and other staff such as a reading teacher and school psychologist. The team will recommend what type of instructional support the student needs and how often and for how long the instructional support will be provided. The team will also decide on how often the student's progress will be monitored to determine if he/she is responding to the instructional support.

5. What is progress monitoring?

Progress monitoring involves a frequent screening of a student's performance in specific skill areas. Progress monitoring is used to determine whether the specific instructional support is working and to provide information to the student's teacher on how to adjust instruction to meet the student's needs.



How often does progress monitoring occur?

How often a student's progress should be monitored will vary by school, the level of intervention and by the individual student's needs. In many cases, schools will monitor individual student progress once every other week or as frequently as every week. Many schools that use an RtI process will chart the student's progress on a graph to see if progress is being made. This will help identify where there is a gap between how the student is performing and what is expected of other students of the same age or grade.

Progress monitoring also helps school staff know if the instructional support that is being provided needs to be changed.

6. What information will parents receive in the RtI process?

Parents should receive regular updates from the school on his/her child's progress in the classroom. Schools should make progress monitoring information available to parents of students receiving Tier 2 or 3 levels of intervention.

Parents of students requiring Tier 2 or 3 support must be provided with information describing the:

- student performance data that will be collected and the general education services that will be provided;
- strategies for increasing the student's rate of learning (progress notes); and
- parents' right to request an evaluation for special education programs and/or services.

Each parent of a student participating in an RtI process is encouraged to meet regularly with teachers and school staff who are providing instructional support to the student in order to review the student's progress.

Teachers may ask a parent to help support the student's progress in a number of ways. They may ask that the parent read to his/her child, have him or her read to you and/or engage in other activities that promote positive growth in skills.

What if a student is not making progress even when provided with the most intense interventions at Tier 3?

There is a small percentage of students who do not make the expected progress and who may require further evaluation to determine other reasons for the lack of progress. Whenever there is concern that the student might have a disability affecting his/her ability to progress, the school will seek the parent's consent to conduct an individual evaluation to determine if the student needs special education services. The information gathered through the RtI process will be considered as part of this evaluation.

If, at any time, a parent thinks that his/her child may have a disability, the parent should make a written request to the school to have the student evaluated for special education services. This written request could be given to the student's teacher, the school's special education office or the building principal.



Resources

National Center on Response to Intervention, December 2007.

<http://www.rti4success.org/> This website is developed and maintained by the federally-funded National Center on RtI. Among the many resources, there are a number relating to parents and parental involvement. Since it is a new and active website, the number of resources will grow.

National Reading Panel. TEACHING CHILDREN TO READ: An Evidence-Based Assessment of the Scientific Research Literature on Reading and Its Implications for Reading Instruction. Updated 10/06 (materials retrieved 5/08)

<http://www.nationalreadingpanel.org/>

National Research Center on Learning Disabilities (NRCLD). (2006, April). Getting Started with SLD Determination: After IDEA Reauthorization. Johnson, E. & Mellard, D.F.

New York State Education Department (NYSED)- <http://www.p12.nysed.gov/>

NYSED, Special Education Office – Assistance for Parents –
<http://www.p12.nysed.gov/specialed/quality/parents.htm>

New York State Response to Intervention Technical Assistance Center. The NYS RtI-TAC is funded by the NYS Education Department as part of the Department's strategy to promote and build school district capacity to implement a systemic, response to intervention process. www.nysrti.org

Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) Technical Assistance Center on Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports- <http://www.pbis.org/>

Reading First: A Closer Look at the Five Essential Elements of Effective Reading Instruction, Learning Point Associates, 2004

The ABCs of RtI, Elementary School Reading, A Guide for Parents, Mellard, D., McKnight, M., Deshler, D., December 2007