

What is RTI?

Response to intervention (RTI) integrates assessment and intervention within a multi-level prevention system to maximize student achievement and to reduce behavior problems. With RTI, schools identify students at risk for poor learning outcomes, monitor student progress, provide evidence-based interventions and adjust the intensity and nature of those interventions depending on a student's responsiveness, and identify students with learning disabilities.

Implementation of Rtl

How is it determined who will receive services under Rtl?

A student would not be "referred" to Rtl the same as a student would be referred for a special education evaluation. These are two different processes. A student is identified for Rtl through the data collection and analysis by a building level team. In a three-tier model, a school district should administer a universal screening tool in core academic areas at the beginning of each year to identify a student's strengths and weaknesses and to examine the effectiveness of the core curriculum and instruction. The team would then discuss which students would benefit from supplemental interventions in addition to the core curriculum.

Initially, a building level team consists of building staff members; however, once a student is identified by the team as a student who may need interventions, the parents of the child would become members of the team in order to develop an intervention plan.

What subjects should RTI encompass?

Rtl should encompass the core academic areas, i.e., reading, math, writing, science, and social studies; however, when planning for the implementation of Rtl, districts should focus on reading and math as their starting point and expand to include all core academic areas. Reading should be taught across each content area. *Every* teacher should be reinforcing reading comprehension skills and focus instruction on how students engage with the text to ensure that all students have a full understanding of it. Additionally, differentiated instructional practices need to be emphasized. Classroom teachers must use a variety of strategies to engage all students in active learning practices.

Can students receive Tier II or Tier III interventions as part of the regular literacy block instructional time?

The 90-minute Literacy Block, for example, is for Tier I or core academic instruction only. If a student is in need of Tier II or Tier III interventions those are *in addition to the 90 minutes*. Interventions are to provide *more instruction* for students.

What types of supports are available to develop and implement Rtl (called “Recognition and Response”) in early childhood programs?

State and federal regulations emphasize response to intervention implementation in kindergarten through twelfth grade. However, many districts across Illinois utilize Recognition and Response in their early childhood programs. The state will focus implementation supports on K-12 due to current requirements. Nevertheless, a district may choose to coordinate its early childhood program for Rtl and K-12 programs to ensure a seamless transition between the two programs.

To what degree does a district have to implement an Rtl process and how much latitude is it given to implement at its own pace?

All school districts must implement a scientific, research-based intervention model in order to comply with federal and state regulations. After completing the district self-assessment tool, a district will have a better understanding of what it already has in place and what it needs to fully implement Rtl. The district plan, due January 1, 2009, will list needs and establish a timeline of activities. District plans must explicitly outline the transition phases describing how full implementation for all grade levels and content areas will occur. Full implementation of Rtl is expected by the 2010-2011 school year.

Are different curriculum programs needed for each tier?

Instruction and program content should be aligned to the Illinois Learning Standards and Assessment Frameworks. Interventions provided to a student should match his or her needs, as identified through universal screening and ongoing progress monitoring tools. These tools should utilize curriculum based measures (CBMs); therefore, different programs may not be needed.

When students receive Tier II or III interventions or special education services—what subject area is missed?

This is a scheduling issue that should be determined at the local level. All students receive the core (Tier I) instruction and interventions. Students needing additional support through Tiers II, III or special education, receive these services in addition to the core curriculum (Tier I). Literacy and numeracy intervention blocks are becoming common practice across the state. Time is found by carefully examining current master schedules to determine how time is currently allocated and how to use staff resources flexibly in order to provide interventions for students.

What certification is required for staff who works with students under an Rtl model?

There is no specific certification or endorsement for staff members working with students to provide interventions. The staff member that provides interventions should be trained in the program or curriculum that is used by the district.

In what setting/location can interventions specific to the Rtl model be provided?

According to the federal regulations, 34 CFR 300.309(b)(1):

Data that demonstrate that prior to, or as a part of, the referral process, the child was provided appropriate instruction in regular education settings, delivered by qualified personnel.

Therefore, general education instruction and interventions must be provided in the general education setting. These include interventions specific to the Rtl model since Rtl is considered a general education practice.

Is the implementation of PBIS a mandate?

Positive Behavior Intervention and Supports (PBIS) is not being mandated. However, districts do need to use a district- or school-wide positive behavior intervention system to provide a tiered approach to meeting students' behavioral needs.

There are a number of assessments and screening tools available. A school-wide systems approach could include an analysis of the school data related to behavior and/or the analysis of the results from screening and assessment tools. Illinois is the national leader in the implementation of Positive Behavior Interventions and Support. The Illinois PBIS Network is funded by the Illinois State Board of Education, and is a component of the Illinois Statewide Technical Assistance Center. Data used to determine the need for additional student behavioral support, include office disciplinary referrals, in-school suspensions, out-of-school suspensions, and expulsions.

Parent Involvement

What is the role of parents in the Rtl process?

One of the main components of the Rtl process is the collaborative team effort. Parents as members of this team, will be involved in data sharing and decision-making. Raw score data may be analyzed by building personnel; however, the results or conclusions drawn from this analysis should be shared with the team, which includes the parent. The information shared should be specific to the student's progress and allow the team to make informed instructional decisions in a timely manner. The frequency of the data sharing and decision-making timeline should be established by the team when the student's intervention plan is initially developed.

How does a district/school increase parent involvement and parent education activities to implement Rtl?

Resources are available through local chapters of parent and school partnership entities and on the Internet. The Illinois Statewide Technical Assistance Center for Parents (formerly known as Parent and Educator Partnership) has a variety of resources to assist districts and parents with collaboration and parent involvement activities. Links to parent resources are available at:

www.pepartnership.org

www.illinoisaspire.org.

Data Tools

What are the data collection requirements for RtI?

Decisions about specific data-collection processes and tools will be made at the local level and could be considered as local assessment data for district improvement planning.

Data collection to determine student needs typically involves record reviews (e.g., student work, grades, office referrals), interviews (e.g., teachers, parents), observation of the student and the learning environment and testing (e.g., scientifically, research-based universal screening, curriculum-based measures, classroom tests, district-wide and state tests).

The universal screening tool and the curriculum-based measures should align to the district's curriculum. Additionally, the local assessments, i.e., scientifically, research-based universal screening, curriculum-based measures, classroom tests, department-level tests, and district-wide tests, need to align to the district curriculum to ensure that they can adequately measure student mastery of the core content.

With regard to data collection for progress monitoring, as stated in the State RtI Plan: *Within a three-tier intervention model using RtI, progressively more intensive interventions and supports are coupled with more frequent progress monitoring. At Tier I data are collected and used as a general screening process for all students and to determine effectiveness of core instructional practices. At Tier II data are collected to determine the effectiveness of an intervention and determine if an instructional change is needed. At Tier III, data are collected for the same reasons as Tier II, but are collected on a more frequent basis so that educational decisions can be made in a timelier manner.*

The use of ongoing assessment tools serve three functions, 1) teachers have a consistent and relatively accurate set of goals for students, 2) expectations are consistent for all students, and 3) the data collected allows teachers to continually check on the impact that their classroom instruction has in relation to grade-level standards.

Special Education Evaluation

After the Rtl interventions start, when does the timeline for the referral process begin and how are parents informed of their right to an evaluation?

There is not a specific timeline for implementing interventions prior to referral for special education evaluation. This team decision should be based on student data, and parents may request a special education evaluation at any time during the intervention process. In accordance with the federal regulations at 34 CFR 300.311(a)(7)(ii)(C), districts must be able to document that the child's parents were informed of their right to make such a request, but the regulations do not specify the form of such a notice.

In terms of the 60 school-day timeline for completing a special education evaluation, this timeline does not begin until the district receives informed, written parental consent for such an evaluation.

How does the Rtl process affect the evaluation process?

The Special Education Eligibility Considerations section of the State Rtl Plan states "...eligibility decisions typically occur within Tier III when students do not respond to the most intensive interventions, but may occur at any tier." Additionally, the data collected during the Rtl process can and should be used as part of the evaluation process for determining special education eligibility.

If a student is found to need an evaluation, what are the types of evaluations used to address processing deficits? Is only the Rtl data used, or is other testing included?

Neither federal nor state regulations require assessment of processing deficits when conducting an evaluation to determine eligibility under the category of specific learning disability (SLD). The regulations do, however, require that a full and individual evaluation be conducted before the initial provision of special education and related services. The state special education regulations at 23 IAC 226.130 state the following in regard to determining SLD eligibility: "...each district shall, no later than the beginning of the 2010-2011 school year, implement the use of a process that determines how the child responds to scientific, research-based interventions as part of [emphasis added] the evaluation procedure described in 34 CFR 300.304." Therefore, while a district must utilize an Rtl process as part of the evaluation procedures, it is expected that evaluation data will be collected from multiple sources. The decision about other types of data needed and the evaluation tools used to collect them lies with the building team, which includes the parent.