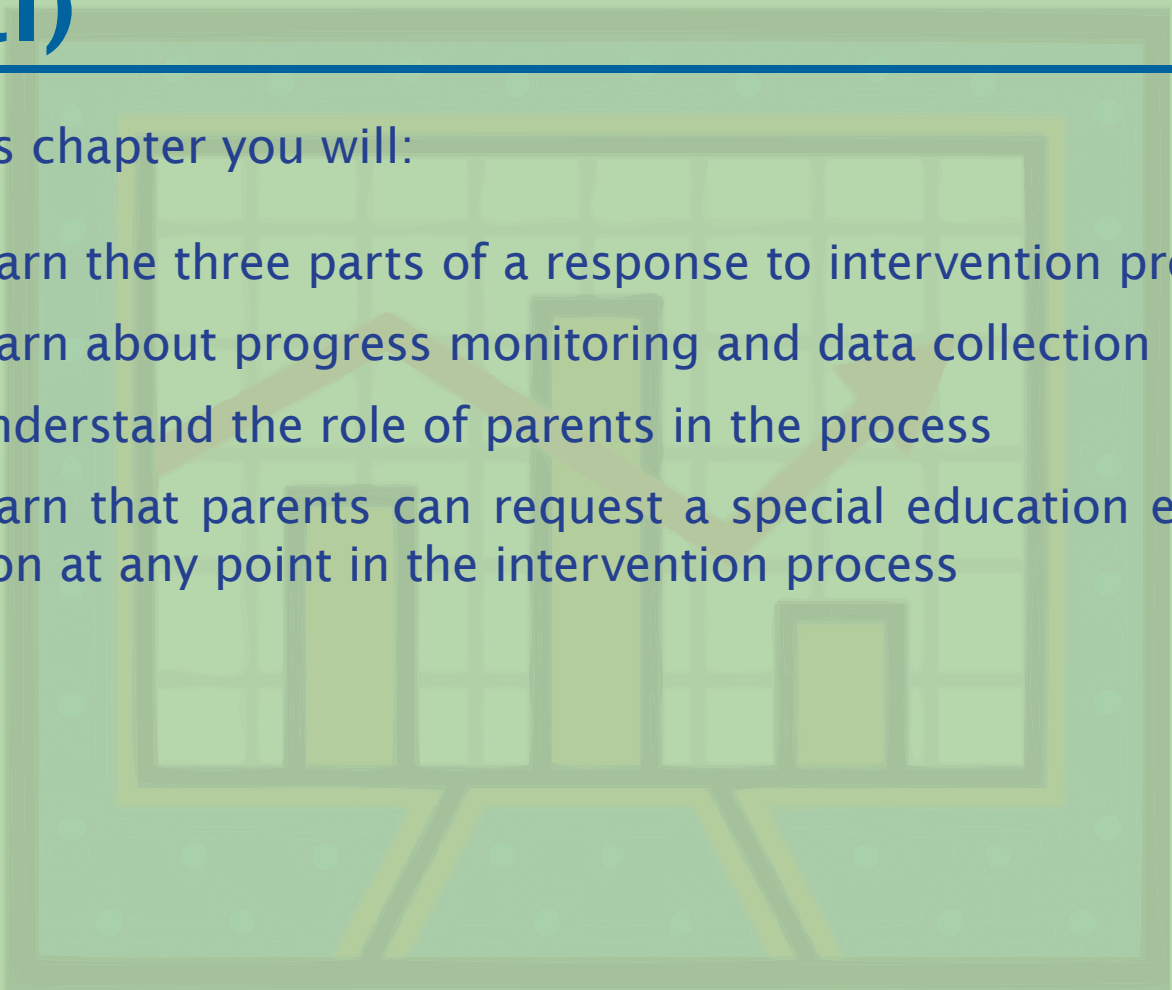# Chapter 2: Response to Intervention (RtI)

In this chapter you will:

- learn the three parts of a response to intervention process
- learn about progress monitoring and data collection
- understand the role of parents in the process
- learn that parents can request a special education evaluation at any point in the intervention process

What is RtI?

Response to Intervention (RtI) is an approach for redesigning and establishing teaching and learning environments that are effective, efficient, relevant and durable for all students, families and educators. RtI is a general education initiative.

Response to Intervention (RtI) is a process designed to help schools focus on and provide high-quality instruction and interventions to students who may be struggling with learning. An intervention is a specific type of instruction that is used to help with a specific type of problem. Interventions are matched to student needs. Student progress is monitored often to check the effectiveness of the instruction and interventions. The data collected on a student's progress are used to shape instruction and make educational decisions. Use of an RtI process can help avoid a "wait to fail" situation because students get help promptly within the general education environment.

RtI has three important parts: 1) using a three tier model of school supports, 2) using a problem-solving method for decision-making, and 3) using data to inform instruction.

Part 1: Three-Tier Model of School Supports:

In an RtI framework, resources are determined by a student's needs. This framework is usually shown as a three-tier model (see Figure 1) that uses more and more intense instruction and interventions. The level of intensity of instruction and interventions is determined by how a student responds to the instruction.

As the diagram on page 10 shows, Tier 1 is the foundation. This is the instruction that all students receive in the general education classroom with their general education teacher. It is called Tier 1 instruction or the core instruction. Schools need to make sure that the materials and instructional practices they use are of high quality and have been shown by research to be effective (research-based). Research based interventions are teaching strategies or methods that have been proven to be effective in helping children

Worth a Look
ISBE has a number of informative resources on RtI. If you're interested in more information on RtI, please go to: *http://www.isbe.net/RtI_plan/default.htm*

learn. Another important issue related to high quality instruction and interventions is the fidelity of using the materials for their intended purpose. Instructional materials are designed and developed for a specific reason and it is important that the materials are used as they are intended.

Schools use a universal or school-wide screening to identify students that are at risk for learning problems with the core instruction and materials. When a screening test shows that a student is at risk for a learning problem, the student may receive extra help in the general education classroom with the general education teacher. The school begins a step-by-step teaching process and uses frequent assessments to determine if the teaching techniques are helping the students. If after a brief period of time, the student does not show enough progress, the teacher will consult with other staff members at the school. Together the team might decide that the best way to help a student who has not progressed in the core instruction, even with extra help, may require Tier 2 interventions.
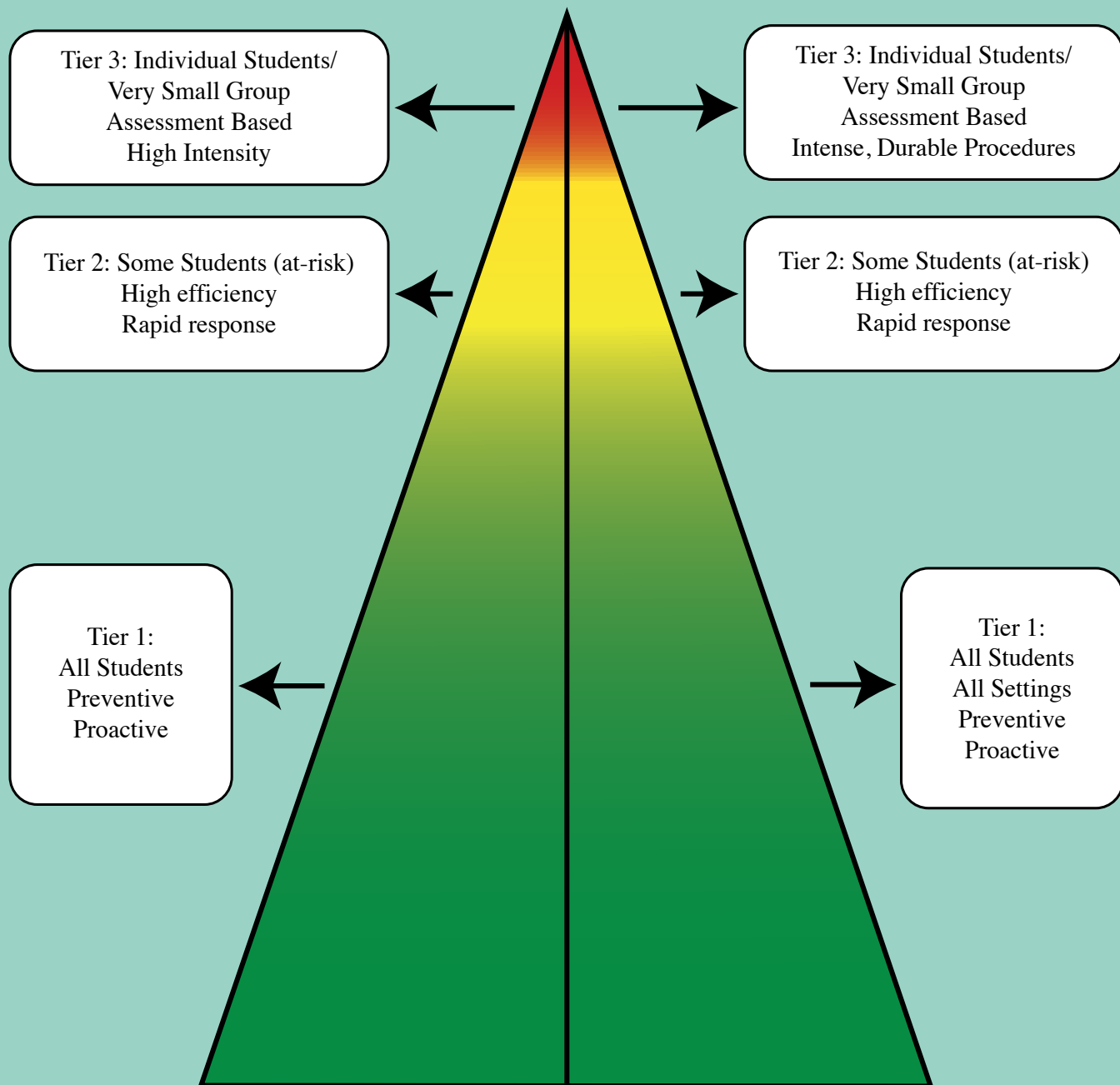
Tier 2 interventions are provided with an increased level of intensity *in addition to core instruction* for small groups of students who show some risk of not meeting grade level standards. With fewer students in a group, an individual student has more opportunities to respond, and the teacher has more opportunities to give immediate and appropriate feedback to each student. The teacher can more easily guide a student along the right course. Tier 2 interventions usually involve additional practice and skill building. There are many different kinds of interventions and instruction that can happen in the classroom, outside the classroom or in small groups.

Tier 3 interventions are an even higher level of intensity from Tier 2 interventions and are also provided *in addition to core instruction*. Tier 3 interventions are typically provided to an individual student or perhaps two to three students at one time by a staff member. Interventions are tailored specifically to meet the needs of each student. Students may move fluidly from tier to tier as a result of their

The Three–Tier Model of School Supports

Academic Systems

Behavioral Systems

Tier 3: Individual Students/
Very Small Group
Assessment Based
High Intensity

Tier 3: Individual Students/
Very Small Group
Assessment Based
Intense, Durable Procedures

Tier 2: Some Students (at-risk)
High efficiency
Rapid response

Tier 2: Some Students (at-risk)
High efficiency
Rapid response

Tier 1:
All Students
Preventive
Proactive

Tier 1:
All Students
All Settings
Preventive
Proactive

Continuum of School–Wide Instructional & Positive Behavioral Support

Adapted from *Reaching All Students: RtI & SWPBS (Eber & Sugai. 2009).*

response to their interventions.

Part 2: The Problem-Solving Method of Decision-Making

In RtI, the problem-solving method is used to match instructional resources to educational need. The problem-solving method (see below) is as follows:
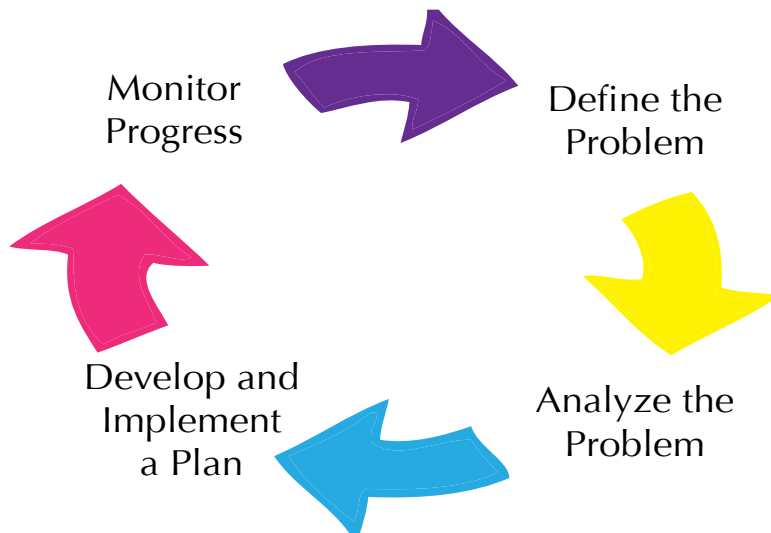
The steps of problem solving

Adapted from *Response to Intervention: Policy Considerations and Implementation (Batsche, et al. 2005)*.

» **Define the problem:** Determine the gap or difference between what the student is expected to do and what the student is actually doing.

» **Analyze the problem:** Use information collected from a variety of sources, such as school work, tests, parents' input, etc. to determine why the student may be having problems with learning or behavior.

» **Develop and implement a plan:**

- Set a goal that describes the expected improvement in the student's learning;

- Choose the intervention(s) specific to the problem;

- Identify how the student's progress will be monitored; and

- Carry out the interventions and check to make sure they are being done correctly.

» **Monitor Progress:** Collect and use student data to determine if the intervention plan is working or if changes are needed.

Part 3: Using Data to Inform Instruction

In an RtI model, as interventions get more intensive, student progress is monitored more often. Knowing if a student's performance is improving helps the team members plan for the student's learning. A small group of educators familiar with the student and the learning and behavioral expectations and the parent(s) of the student are members of the group that participate in the development and ongoing decision-making of the student's learning plan.

At Tier 1, data are collected and used for screening and benchmarking of all students in important areas such as reading, math, writing and behavior. This means that schools use the information to measure where all students are performing and how much progress they are making. The data also helps schools determine if their core instructional practices are effective for most students. At Tier 2, data are collected to determine whether the extra instruction is making a difference. At Tier 3, data are collected for the same reasons as Tier 2, but are collected more often so that decisions and changes to the student's instruction can be made sooner.

In an RtI model, test materials or other tools used to collect data for screening should be in line with the district's instructional materials and practices. Progress monitoring tests should be similar across all three tiers. Additionally all of the screening and progress monitoring tools should be scientifically, research-based. The information collected from the screening and progress monitoring materials are used to help the team answer the following questions about the student's learning:

- Is the student making progress?

- Are the current interventions helping the student

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learn in the identified problem area?

- Is the student making enough progress to close the gap in the identified area?

- If the interventions are no longer provided, is the student able to continue to make progress? If not, can the current interventions be continued with general education resources?

The Role of Parents in an RtI Process

Parents are important partners in all aspects of their child's education. In an RtI process, school teams should involve parents from the beginning. Concerns about a student experiencing academic and/or behavioral difficulties are presented by the child's teacher to a building-level team. The building team consists of school staff who review available student information and collect additional information from the parents to gain a better understanding of the student's needs. As the process continues, parents should be active members of the team and participate in the problem-solving process.

If your child is identified as being at risk for learning or behavioral difficulties, to be involved you can:

- » Attend team meetings. Remember, you are the expert regarding your child!

- » Ask what interventions are being used for academic and/or behavioral problems.

- » When possible, use the same strategies or interventions at home.

- » Ask the school what formal guidelines they are using for progress monitoring.

- » Ask your school to provide you with regular progress monitoring reports.

- » Praise your child for any progress or general improvement in the area(s) of concern.

» When possible, make suggestions for strategies or interventions based on what you know works well at home.

» Always ask questions when things are not clear!

If you believe that your child is in need of special education services, you have the legal right to ask that the school evaluate your child to determine whether he or she is eligible to receive special education services. ***You can ask the school to evaluate your child at any time, regardless of where your child is at in the RtI process.***

Resources

The Illinois State Board of Education offers a wide variety of resources and support on RtI practice. Please go to:

http://www.isbe.net/RtI_plan/default.htm

In addition, we also recommend the following items for further information on RtI:

A Family Guide to Response to Intervention (RtI) *(The Parent Information Center of New Hampshire).*

(Available at http://www.parentinformationcenter.org/images/ RTI%20Booklet%20PQ.pdf)

Response to Intervention: Policy Considerations and Implementation *(Batsche, et al 2005).*

The ABCs of RtI: Elementary school reading, a guide for parents *(Mellard, D., McKnight, M., & Deshler, D.)*

(Available at http://nrcld.org/free/downloads/ABC_of_RTI.pdf)