



Issue No. 3 2009, 2012

RESPONSE TO INTERVENTION (RTI)

INTRODUCTION

Welcome to this issue on **Response to Intervention (RTI)**. This topical e-journal is part of a series published by the Utah Parent Center (UPC). It is our hope that this information will be a valuable resource for both parents and professionals. Thank you to the individuals who have authored articles or given permission to include previously published work. Thank you also to Janet Gibb from the Utah State Office of Education for providing input for this issue. Your donation of time and expertise are true gifts to the families who will read this.

We welcome feedback and suggestions from all readers and your ideas for future issues. Our goal is that this information will help families help their children live included productive lives as members of the community.

We encourage families, students, schools, parent/teacher organizations and other stakeholder groups to become better informed about the issues around Response to Intervention (RTI). We believe that informed conversations at schools will improve outcomes for students as we work together.

Electronic copies of this e-Journal, fact sheets, and materials on related topics are available on or through the UPC's website at www.utahparentcenter.org.

What is RTI?

Response to Intervention is:

The practice of providing high quality, research-based, instruction and interventions matched to the student's needs.

The **Utah Parent Center** has been serving Utah families of children, youth, and young adults with all disabilities since before 1983. We provide free resources such as publications, workshops, and individualized assistance to help families make decisions about education, support services, vocational training, employment, and other services for their child and family.

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What is RTI?*

Learning can be tricky business. Even in the best circumstances, the process by which we gather and understand new information is fraught with peaks and valleys, stops and starts, successes and failures. When complicating factors are present—that reach above and beyond typical two steps forward and one step back—the task of learning becomes even more difficult.

Within this picture, parents and educators must pay close attention to children and notice when additional help is needed in an effort to enhance learning opportunities. At a fundamental level, Response to Intervention (RTI) is a systematic way of determining individual student needs and engaging necessary supports to meet those needs.

RTI is both early intervention strategies within general education and one part in the process by which students may be identified to receive special education and related services within all public schools (includes charter schools) in the United States.

RTI is both early intervention strategies within general education and one part in the process by which students may be identified to receive special education and related services within all public schools (including charter schools) in the United States.

Response to Intervention (RTI) is a multi-step approach to providing services to struggling students. Teachers provide instruction and interventions to them at increasing levels of intensity. They also monitor the progress students make at each intervention level and use the assessment results to decide whether the student needs additional instruction or intervention in general education or a referral to special education.

RTI models have several components in common: RTI uses tiers of intervention for struggling students, relies on research based instruction and interventions, uses problem-solving to determine interventions for students, and monitors students regularly to determine if they are progressing as they should academically and/or behaviorally.

Many models are based on three tiers. Generally, in Tiers 1 and 2 general education teachers provide instruction and interventions. When students fail to respond to a small group and intense individualized interventions, they are referred for special education.** Special education teachers may develop interventions and/or plan assessments for students receiving instructions and interventions in Tiers 1 and 2. They may not typically provide instruction to students until Tier 3, when the student could be referred and identified for special education.***

Some content is from NICHCY www.nichcy.org/Pages/RTI.aspx

*Refer to the Glossary of RTI Terms found on pages 21-24.

**A parent may make a referral at any time they have a legitimate concern.

***Refer to RTI in Utah on pages 5 to 6.

Why RTI?

Response to Intervention (RTI) became part of the special education process with reauthorization of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) in 2004. The regulations for implementing IDEA say that States “must not require the use of a severe discrepancy between intellectual ability and achievement for determining whether a child has a specific learning disability, ...” Also, States “must permit the use of a process based on the child’s response to scientific, research-based intervention.” [34 C.F.R. § 300.307(a)(1) (2006)] RTI can be a part of the process by which children are identified to receive special education and related services.

The Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) of the United States Department of Education has prepared a question and answer document, “Q and A: Questions and Answers on Response to Intervention (RTI) and Early Intervening Services (EIS).” This Q&A document addresses the relationship between RTI and general education and special education, evaluation and eligibility determination.

<http://idea.ed.gov/explore/view/p/%2Croot%2Cdynamic%2CQaCorner%2C8%2C>

OSEP has also posted a technical discussion of regulations and of implications for the implementation of the regulations, and a summary of key issues around early intervening services as they relate to RTI.

<http://idea.ed.gov/explore/view/p/%2Croot%2Cdynamic%2CPresentation%2C28%2C>

From NICHCY www.nichcy.org/Pages/RTI.aspx

Providing Information about RTI to Families

Communicating information about Response to Intervention (RTI) to parents and families is a key role for educators and administrators in an RTI process. Several tools have been created to help with this communication.

The parent primer published by the National Association of School Psychologists (NASP) is a resource that includes specific ways parents can be involved in RTI.

www.nasponline.org/resources/factsheets/rtiprimer.aspx

The National Research Center on Learning Disabilities (NRCLD) authored a report entitled, “*Helping Educators Discuss Responsiveness to Intervention with Parents and Students*”. The report describes RTI and distills aspects of the RTI process that need to be considered by families when participating in RTI.

www.nrcld.org/resource_kit/general/Q&AEducators2007.pdf

From NICHCY www.nichcy.org/Pages/RTI.aspx

RTI IN UTAH

Utah's 3 Tier Model provides a framework for the implementation of Response to Intervention (RTI) in Utah. The model provides Utah educators with a process for delivering quality, research-based instruction using Utah's Core Curricula. The model also provides a foundation for reducing the prevalence of struggling readers by creating a seamless K-12 instructional system aligning with Federal and State legislative requirements. Utah's 3 Tier Model is also a process to provide data to teachers for determining student responsiveness to interventions.

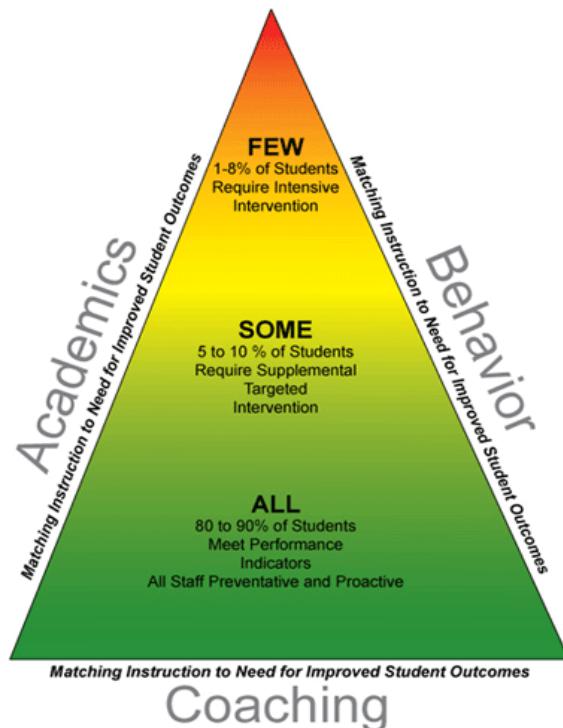
Response to Intervention (RTI) is a *multi-tiered* approach to help struggling learners. Each tier provides increasingly targeted and intensive instruction. The student's progress is closely and continually monitored, and a team decision based on data is made to determine if there is a need for further research-based instruction/intervention in general education.

How Utah's Tier approach looks in general:

- **Tier 1: Core Classroom Instruction (for ALL students)** – High quality research-based instruction and behavioral supports in the general education classroom to teach critical elements of Utah's core curriculum.
- **Tier 2: Supplemental Targeted Instruction (for SOME students)** – More targeted supplemental instruction is added to Tier 1 when adequate progress is not made. In smaller groups, specific needs of students are addressed and provided in the general education classroom.
- **Tier 3: Intensive Targeted Intervention (for a FEW students)** – Intensive, explicit, and specifically designed instruction targeted to meet more individual needs of students that have severe difficulties. Tier 3 Intervention replaces Tier 2 Instruction and is provided by a specialist.

This tiered approach along with the essential components of parent involvement, research-based instruction, ongoing assessment, and monitoring will help to ensure that the RTI process works well.

Dr. Joe Torgesen, Director Emeritus at the Florida Center for Reading Research explains that **explicit instruction** is instruction that does not leave anything to



chance, and it does not make assumptions about skills and knowledge that children acquire on their own. Outstanding and effective teachers understand the following sequential components of explicit instruction:

- * **Direct Explanation:** The teacher names and defines the skill or strategy to be learned. This definition should include explaining why the skill or strategy is important when it is used in reading.
- * **Teacher Modeling:** The teacher overtly demonstrates a skill or strategy that a student will learn. Through modeling, instruction becomes less elusive and more concrete for students. Explicit instruction provides a greater likelihood that students will demonstrate mastery.
- * **Guided Practice:** The teacher provides students with support and guidance as they practice the skill or strategy independently or in small groups. Prompts, specific corrective feedback, and praise related to the new skill or strategy are provided. Teacher support gradually fades as the student takes responsibility for using the skill or strategy independently.
- * **Independent Practice:** Students are provided with multiple opportunities to apply the newly acquired skill or strategy on their own. Through independent practice, students continue to review and practice the skills and strategies learned.
- * **Progress Monitoring:** The teacher monitors and evaluates student mastery of the new skill or strategy. Future instruction is designed to target skills and strategies that require additional review and practice.

A student's move through the 3 Tiers is a fluid process based on student assessment data and collaborative team decisions. At any time during this process, a student may be referred for consideration of eligibility for a Section 504 plan and/or evaluation for special education eligibility. (Information about Section 504 plans is available from the Utah Parent Center, the Utah State Office of Education, your local school, or district.) Tutoring may be necessary in any of the tiers to provide extra practice and support to help students maintain benchmark progress.

For more in-depth information regarding Utah's 3 Tier Model of Reading Instruction, please refer to: www.schools.utah.gov/sars/DOCS/resources/3-tierread.aspx

Schools and Districts are using various approaches when implementing this model. Some may use different terminology to describe the process they are implementing. Technical assistance is provided to school districts and charter schools by the Utah State Office of Education.

If, as a parent, you would like to be involved in the decision making processes in your school or district or if you want more information about how RTI is being implemented, contact your local school or district administrators.

WHAT?? HOW?? WHERE??

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS FOR PARENTS ABOUT RTI IN UTAH

By: **Janet Gibbs, Education Specialist, Utah State Office of Education and Jody Jones, Parent Consultant, Utah Parent Center**

When academic concerns about a child appear, it can be very frustrating for students, parents and schools. The number one thing a parent wants is help for his/her child. Traditionally general education teachers, regardless of age or grade, have often referred a child struggling with academics for an evaluation for special education services. However, there is a growing effort in education to provide additional instruction and interventions in the general education classroom. Before making a referral, a process has been strongly recommended for all students in all grades that schools improve instruction and ensure that instruction and interventions are targeted to meet the specific need(s) of a child, earlier rather than later. This process is response to intervention/instruction or "RTI" in the general education classroom.

Here are some questions a parent might ask to understand RTI:

What is Response To Intervention or RTI?

Response to Intervention (RTI) is the practice of providing high-quality, research-based instruction and interventions matched to the student's needs and using a learning rate over time and level of performance to make important educational decisions.

What is research-based instruction?

Research-based instruction is based on research that shows the effectiveness of the instruction/intervention and is reported in a peer-reviewed journal. The research must be conducted by outside individuals and not the company which publishes the material.

Which is the correct term; "RTI schools" or "RTI process"?

The correct terminology is "RTI process". RTI is a process that uses:

- * school wide screening,
- * research-based instruction in general education provided with fidelity by a qualified teacher,
- * measuring and monitoring progress of all students, and
- * a multi-tier process of intensity, duration, explicitness and targeted instruction/intervention.

What are the potential benefits of RTI?

The potential benefits are to:

- * catch struggling students promptly within the general education class before they fall too far behind,
- * provide instructionally relevant information beyond traditional assessments, and
- * reduce the number of inappropriate referrals for special education evaluation.

Are schools/districts required to use an RTI process?

No. Schools/districts are encouraged to develop a multi-tier process that provides instructional interventions for all students.

What if I ask my school personnel about RTI and they don't know what I am talking about?

Be aware that your school may not use the term "RTI". It might use "problem solving process", "instructional support teams", "tiered instruction", or another unique title. The title isn't the issue. The issue is the components. In Utah, schools may be familiar with tiered instruction as outlined in **Utah's 3 Tier Model of Reading Instruction**. This document can be accessed at the following website:

- * www.schools.utah.gov/sars/DOCS/resources/3-tierread.aspx

How can I tell if a school uses an RTI process?

A school should inform all parents at the first of the school year about using an instructional intervention process to ensure academic success for all students. This information may be presented at Back to School night, in letters to parents, at PTA meetings, at community councils, or through any other process the school uses to inform parents. Ask your school how it provides this information to parents.

What should I look for?

There should be school wide screening or universal screening to identify students who may be at risk for not meeting grade level standards. As a general rule, Utah schools use DIBELS or AIMSWEB for their school wide screening process; however, they may use another tool. Students' progress should be monitored. The school should have in place some method for monitoring the progress of all students. Some schools used DIBELS as student progress monitoring, and others use CBM's (curriculum-based measurements). Ask your school what method it has in place.

How does the school decide if a student may need support?

The decision is based on DATA-- information gathered through:

- * a school wide screening, intended to catch any student who is struggling,
- * informal observation, or
- * examples of student work.

It is most often the child's classroom teacher who initiates the process; however a general educator, a special educator, a parent, a specialist, or an administrator may also notice the needs of a child.

My child's teacher says my child isn't doing well. What does that mean and what should I ask?

Questions a parent could ask include:

1. *What is the specific concern?*
2. *What is the targeted deficit?*
3. *What does the data say?*
4. *What intervention/instruction has been tried?*

Parents should always ask to see the data on the specific deficit showing progress or lack of progress to identify the specific need(s) of the student. If there is no data showing progress or lack of progress, the school is not using the RTI process.

When should parents be involved in the RTI process?

One of the essential components of RTI is parent involvement; therefore, the sooner the better. The first conversations regarding concerns about student performance should be with the student's family. The more the family can be involved in the discussions and the interventions, the better the prospect for steady progress.

"The way schools care about children is reflected in the way schools care about the children's families.

If educators view children simply as students, they are likely to see the family as separate from the school. That is, the family is expected to do its job and leave the education of children to the schools.

If educators view students as children, they are likely to see both the family and the community as partners with the school in children's education and development. Partners recognize their shared interest in and responsibilities for children, and they work together to create better programs and opportunities for students."

Dr. Joyce Epstein, "Caring for the Children We Share"

When is parent permission required in the RTI process?

Parent **involvement** is recommended from the beginning, but during the instructional intervention and progress monitoring process **parent permission is not required**. This is because the assessments are focusing on improving instruction, not on determination of a disability. If the child is referred for special education evaluation, parent permission is required as part of the usual procedural safeguards. See the Utah Parent Center's parent handbook "Parents as Partners in the IEP Process" or contact the Center for more information.

What about tutoring? Is that an "intervention" or is it "instruction"?

It is neither. It is practice. Many students need additional practice to be proficient in a skill. The Utah State Office of Education has a research-based tutoring program called STAR. It is free to schools that participate in training. Ask your school if the teachers have been trained in STAR tutoring or ask if they use other programs or resources. Also ask if there are other tutoring programs available at your school.

What is an instructional intervention?

An instructional intervention may be a current action(s) that differs from activities that normally occur in the student's general education classroom/program.

An instructional intervention **may be:**

- * small group instruction
- * teacher modeling
- * re-teaching outside of the initial instruction
- * using research based supplementary activities

An instructional intervention **is not**:

- * a change in seating
- * shortened assignments
- * retention
- * suspension
- * parent contacts

What is high quality classroom instruction?

- * Teachers administer curriculum as designed by the program.
- * Teachers select and administer assessments to identify targeted student needs.
- * Teachers deliberately plan instruction.
- * Teachers align materials and instruction with the Utah Core Curriculum.
- * Teachers provide explicit and systematic lessons/instruction.
- * Teachers differentiate instruction to meet student needs.

What role does special education have in an RTI process and who should support the classroom teacher?

The role of special education is one of support/supplementary services. People such as speech-language pathologists, psychologists, reading specialists, special educators, counselors, etc., as well as other teachers, support team members, administrators, volunteers, and paraprofessionals may all provide assistance and support. The responsibility for implementing an RTI process is general education's because the aim is to improve instruction and interventions within general education. Support is not considered to be "special education".

Should a full plan be implemented with the changes for a student?

There will **not** be an education plan written up. That would fall under special education should the student later qualify. Each school or district has policies and procedures regarding plans that should be followed. Documentation is needed during this phase, but it is not necessary to be extensive or formal. It is useful later on should more extensive interventions and more formal procedures be needed.

Can RTI be used for all subjects or behavioral issues?

Yes, it works the same way for any subject, skill, or performance area, and for students of any age including adults.

Ask:

- * What is the target performance/behavior?
- * What intervention might be most successful?
- * Who will carry it out?
- * When?
- * Where?
- * How will progress be measured?
- * When?
- * By whom?
- * What does the data tell us?
- * Do we need another intervention to reach the target?

And so on ...

Schools working with the Positive Behavioral Intervention and Support (PBIS) approach will find these strategies to be familiar.

My child's teacher said they "RTI'd" my child. Now does he qualify for special education services?

RTI can be a part of the process for determining eligibility for special education and related services. It cannot and does not stand alone. An RTI process does not take the place of a comprehensive evaluation. Your local school district can help you understand the full process. The Utah State Office of Education has developed guidelines for schools for determining if a student is eligible for services under the specific learning disability category. This guide is available at: www.schools.utah.gov/sars/DOCS/resources/sld.aspx

Can a school use RTI only for special education eligibility?

No. A school must have fully implemented RTI for ALL students before they can consider using an RTI process for determining eligibility.

What does "fully" mean?

A school must have in place the essential components of RTI for ALL children. Historically, it takes a school/district 3-5 years to fully implement RTI.

Can I request a special education evaluation if my child's school is using an RTI process?

A parent has the legal right to request a special education evaluation at any time during any process. The school does not have to provide the evaluation, but if it doesn't, it must provide you with written prior notice as to why not.

How does RTI work at the secondary level?

The RTI process of assessment, intervention and progress monitoring is applicable at any age and in any subject area. Learning issues emerging for the first time for a student at the secondary level are more likely to be related to study skills, focus, motivation, etc., than to a difficulty in reading or math, for example. The process is also well suited to providing appropriate interventions for students who are learning beyond the general curriculum. This might include students who need additional challenge, higher-level thinking skills, etc.



A Parent's Guide to Response to Intervention (RTI)

The National Center for Learning Disabilities (NCLD) has written a guide to provide an overview of the RTI process, describe how it is implemented in schools and offer questions that parents can ask. This guide can be accessed at:

www.ncld.org/publications-a-more/parent-advocacy-guides/a-parent-guide-to-rti



Lighten Up!

HORSE SENSE

Common advice from knowledgeable horse trainers includes the adage, “If the horse you’re riding dies, get off!” Instead, some riders may choose from an interesting array of other alternatives:

- * Buy a stronger whip
- * Try a new bit or bridle
- * Switch riders
- * Move to a new location
- * Ride the horse for longer periods of time
- * Say things like “This is the way we’ve always ridden this horse.”
- * Appoint a committee to study the horse
- * Arrange to visit other sites where they ride dead horses more efficiently
- * Increase the standards for riding dead horses
- * Create a new test for measuring our riding ability
- * Compare how we’re riding now with how we rode ten or twenty years ago
- * Complain about the state of horses these days
- * Come up with new styles of riding
- * Tighten the cinch
- * Blame the horse’s parents (the problem is often in the breeding)

Knowing what to change when our efforts aren't working makes creative thinking a necessity!

The Best Solution?? Change Horses!!!*



In the complex enterprise of educating children with a wide range of abilities, potential, competence, and unique needs, making changes is not a simple thing to do!

Adjusting what we do and how we do it can be challenging.

Knowing what to change when our efforts aren't working makes creative thinking a necessity!

Changes in the field and the multifaceted relationships among parents, educators and professionals will cause us to be thoughtful as we analyze what to do “when the horse is dead”! Let’s remember to rely on one another’s good “horse sense” to work together on choosing effective, research based interventions as we implement RTI!

(*Original source unknown - Adapted from PAVE Pipeline, Tacoma, Washington)

On a Personal Note

R,T,WHAT?? ONE LITTLE GIRL'S STORY

By Jody Jones, Kallee's Mother and Parent Consultant, Utah Parent Center

With her bright blue eyes and her hair down to her belt, she could steal your heart with one glance. Kallee at 5 years old was smart, happy, always surrounded by friends and at the top of her class academically. Her only struggle seemed to be "baby talk" or the way that she pronounced some of the letters and sounds in her large vocabulary. She loved meeting with the speech pathologist and was making great improvements. I knew that her school years would be a breeze!

Kindergarten started out great. Kallee's pre-kindergarten testing showed that she was with the top of the class and she was excited to go to school. This didn't last long.

Within 2 months, Kallee began to hide under her desk, "space out", or cry on an almost daily basis. Not understanding what was going on, I worked with the teacher and I volunteered in the classroom on a regular basis. Kallee's teacher put into place a few accommodations such as moving her to the front of the class and having a good student sit by her to help her with the work and to stay on task. Kallee also got reading interventions by going to the reading specialist one day a week. I can now see that this was the first of the many "Response to Intervention" (RTI) strategies tried for Kallee.

First grade brought out a little girl who would draw horses, angels and unicorns on all of her partially finished assignments. Art was her favorite subject. Kallee was now falling behind her peers in the core subjects like reading, spelling, math and science, and she seemed to be losing interest in friends or maybe it was that she just didn't have many friends. Kallee now went to the reading specialist a couple of times a week and she worked with a volunteer parent as part of her increased interventions. In addition to last year's accommodation of sitting in the front of the class, her teacher also required her to stay in from recess on a regular basis.

Struggling, we felt like the teacher didn't understand her or her needs. We met on a regular basis to ask what more could be done for Kallee. After being told at SEP conference that Kallee was just "lazy and manipulative", I began to request interventions and strategies that could help her. I requested that Kallee not miss recess since she needed this break. I suggested that a soft tap on her desk could remind her to focus and work on the assignment and that individual instruction be given again if Kallee seemed to not understand the work.

In second grade Kallee seemed to slip into her own educational and social world. She was now in the lowest groups for reading and math and her spelling tests always had more words spelled wrong than right. She was unable to read a kindergarten level

book without mistakes and she could not successfully complete an AR (accelerated reader) test independently. Kallee now only had one regular friend. Day after day she struggled to understand the instructions of the teacher, to stay on task and to complete her work.

By October, Kallee's teacher was using specific "Response to Intervention" strategies that included: **direct explanation** including separate, individual instruction of each assignment being given, **teacher modeling** where her teacher showed her what was to be done and how to do it in some cases, **guided practice** where an aide, parent or support staff would take her with a small group and give added help (I started to go in twice a week to help with reading and AR testing. I would read the question and the possible answers to Kallee's small group), **independent practice** to see if Kallee was understanding and retaining certain skills and knowledge, as well as **progress monitoring**, where very specific data was kept to track Kallee response to each intervention and her progress. She was also going to the resource room a couple times a week for added support with her school work. In early December, Kallee's loving and perceptive teacher approached me and asked if I would agree to have her evaluated for a higher level of specialized instruction and support that could only be given if she qualified for Special Education. She explained that after weeks of watching Kallee's response to interventions and collecting data, she now felt this was the best and most appropriate next step. I cried as I readily agreed to the evaluation, explaining that I had been concerned for years. This seemed to be the answer to my heartache for Kallee.

Kallee was evaluated following my signed consent and at the completion of the various testing procedures, a meeting was set to discuss the results. Kallee qualified for Special Education under the classification of Specific Learning Disability (SLD) based on a combination of the Discrepancy Method (the student's scores demonstrate that a severe discrepancy exists between the student's achievement and intellectual ability in one or more area) and her Response to Intervention results. An Individualized Education Program (IEP) for Kallee was developed and put into place immediately.

During 3rd grade, Kallee again participated in the RTI process when her lack of on-task behavior became a concern and an educational road block. Again she was given specific supports, interventions and instruction while the needed data were collected and discussed. We experienced another successful outcome as a result of the RTI process and she now has a Behavioral Intervention Plan (BIP) in place that, along with her IEP, has allowed her to have success, joy and self-confidence.

Kallee is now in 5th grade. She still has an IEP and is having great success. One important part of this experience that stands out for both Kallee and me was the endless love, support and praise from teachers that truly cared about her.

SPECIFIC LEARNING DISABILITIES (SLD) UNDER THE INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES EDUCATION IMPROVEMENT ACT (IDEA) 2004

By Linda Smith, Parent Consultant, Utah Parent Center

A specific learning disability (SLD) is a neurological disorder that affects the brain's ability to receive, process, store and respond to information. The student with a specific learning disability may have below-average to average to above-average intelligence. However, the student has problems obtaining academic knowledge and understanding specific skill areas, which causes the student to struggle in school and not keep up with his/her peers. Learning disabilities are not visible so they often go unrecognized. Having a specific learning disability does not mean a student can't learn. It just means the student may have to learn in different ways from peers and with specific instruction and strategies. Research has shown that the use of short ongoing assessments of the student's response to high quality, research-based general education instruction, matched with increased intensity of services as needed, along with accommodations, can help students succeed.

In education, one area where the term "specific learning disability" is used is to describe a group of problems that a student has with understanding or using language, spoken or written. A student with a specific learning disability may have difficulty with reading, writing, spelling, or doing math problems. "Specific learning disability" refers to several disorders. You may have heard of dyslexia, a term sometimes used for a specific learning disability that affects reading.

Utah follows the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEA 2004) description of specific learning disability. In IDEA 2004, the definition of specific learning disability and the methods for determining eligibility are important in that they affect who is eligible for special education services, what those services will be, and who will pay for them. Before IDEA 2004, schools based specific learning disability determination on the difference between a student's IQ level and the level of achievement in specific academic skill areas such as math or reading. This "discrepancy requirement" has been questioned for some time, because students must struggle or fail for long periods of time before the student shows sufficiently large deficits in academic achievement to satisfy the "severe discrepancy" requirement and begins to receive special education services.

Recent research and practice now encourages schools to take a broader look at the student when determining whether the student has a specific learning disability and to use Response To Intervention (RTI) methods in the regular classroom. RTI allows the school to act immediately if a student is struggling. The RTI model encourages the school team, which includes the parents, to ask several questions before determining if the student has a specific learning disability such as:

- * What is the student's attention span and behavior?
- * Is English the student's primary language?
- * Was the curriculum research based and proven to work with students?
- * Is the teacher using the prescribed materials?
- * Does the student make progress when provided proven instructional practices?

- * What interventions were added and did the student make progress?
- * What data has been collected to show if the student has made or has not made improvement?

Following is the definition of Specific Learning Disabilities from IDEA 2004:

**Specific Learning Disabilities – Definition
§300.8(c) (10)**

(No change from the 1997 reauthorization of IDEA)

"A disorder in one or more of the basic psychological processes involved in understanding or in using language, spoken or written, that may manifest itself in the imperfect ability to listen, think, speak, read, write, spell, or do mathematical calculations.

Specific learning disability does not include learning problems that are primarily the result of visual, hearing, motor disabilities; intellectual disability; emotional disturbance; or of environmental, cultural, or economic disadvantage."

Utah's Special Education Rules can be found on the Utah State Office of Education (USOE), Special Education website. These revised and approved rules incorporate the changes in the federal law and regulations. The USOE has also issued guidelines to assist educators and parents when addressing the needs of students suspected of having a specific learning disability. These guidelines can also be found on the USOE website.

**Utah State Board of Education
Special Education Rules**

English Version:

www.schools.utah.gov/sars/DOCS/law/finalrules.aspx

Revised 8/2007

Spanish Version:

www.schools.utah.gov/sars/DOCS/law/finalrules-sp.aspx

This link takes you to Utah's Special Education Rules. Here you will find references to RTI and see how it applies to eligibility for services under the category of Specific Learning Disabilities (SLD).

Information about SLD begins on page 46.



**Utah State Office of Education –
Specific Learning Disabilities Guidelines
www.schools.utah.gov/sars/DOCS/resources/sld.aspx**

These guidelines were developed and published by the Utah State Office of Education, Special Education Section. They are intended to provide guidance to school districts and charter schools as they write, develop and implement their policies and procedures for the evaluation and identification of a child suspected of having a specific learning disability. The guidelines also help educators and parents understand the evaluation and identification process.



For more information on SLD go to the websites listed below:

- * **IDEA Partnership – IDEA Regulations, Specific Learning Disabilities**
www.ideapartnership.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=844&oseppage=1

Document prepared by the Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services (OSERS) in the U.S. Department of Education, that addresses the changes from preexisting regulations to the final regulatory requirements regarding the identification of specific learning disabilities.
- * **Utah State Special Education Rules and Regulations – Specific Learning Disabilities (SLD)**

English Version: www.schools.utah.gov/sars/DOCS/law/finalrules.aspx
Pages 46-52 – Information on SLD and Procedures for Identifying Students with SLD.

Spanish Version: www.schools.utah.gov/sars/DOCS/law/finalrules-sp.aspx
Pages 59-66 – Information on SLD and Procedures for Identifying Students with SLD.

Vietnamese Version: www.schools.utah.gov/sars/DOCS/law/finalrules-viet.aspx
Pages 49-55 – Information on SLD and Procedures for Identifying Students with SLD.
- * **Utah State Special Education – Specific Disability Guidelines**
www.schools.utah.gov/sars/DOCS/resources/sld.aspx
- * **Lyon, G. Reid Lyon and Jack Fletcher. (2001) Early Warning System.**
<http://educationnext.org/early-warning-system/>

The authors describe three factors that caused a dramatic increase in children identified with LD. (1) Remediation is rarely effective after 2nd grade. (2) Measurement practices work against identifying LD children before 2nd grade. (3) Federal policy and the sociology of public education allow ineffective policies to continue. The authors make a case for implementing effective early intervention programs.
- * **National Joint Committee on Learning Disabilities. (2005) Responsiveness to Intervention & Learning Disabilities**
www.ldanatl.org/pdf/rti2005.pdf

This report was prepared by the National Joint Committee on Learning Disabilities representing eleven national and international organizations. The report examines concepts, potential benefits, practical issues, and questions associated with responsiveness to intervention (RTI) and learning disabilities (LD). It includes questions about implementation, eligibility, parent participation, structure and components, professional roles and competencies, and needed research.

RTI Resources and Information

INTERNET RESOURCES AND ORGANIZATIONS:

* www.nrclld.org/free/downloads/ABC_of_RTI.pdf

This link takes you to the “ABC’s of RTI - Parents Guide to RTI” (PDF download). This resource is found under the “Parents” section of the National Research Center on Learning Disabilities (NRCLLD) website at www.nrclld.org/topics/parents.html. There is other information as well as video clips and downloads of conference presentations.

* www.nasponline.org/resources/handouts/revisedPDFs/rtiprimer.pdf

This link takes you to **Response to Intervention: A Primer for Parents**, an excellent resource for families on RTI. The National Association of School Psychologists (NASP) website also includes numerous other resources on RTI.

* www.nichcy.org/Pages/RTI.aspx

This link takes you to the **Response to Intervention** section of the NICHCY website. NICHCY stands for the *National Dissemination Center for Children with Disabilities*, the federally funded source of a wealth of information on disabilities. NICHCY serves the nation as a central source of information on:

- disabilities in infants, toddlers, children, and youth,
- IDEA, which is the law authorizing special education,
- No Child Left Behind (as it relates to children with disabilities), and
- research-based information on effective educational practices.

* www.rti4success.org

The **National Center on Response to Intervention (NCRTI)** provides technical assistance to states and school districts to build capacity in implementing proven models for Response To Intervention and Early Intervening Services. **The RTI Responder** is an electronic newsletter published by NCRTI addressing RTI. Issues are archived at: www.rti4success.org/newsletter

* www.rtinetwork.org/parents-a-families

This link takes you to a **list of Parent and Family Resources** on the RTI Action Network website. The Network is dedicated to the effective implementation of Response to Intervention (RTI) in school districts nationwide. Their goal is to guide educators and families in the large-scale implementation of RTI so that each child has access to quality instruction and that struggling students – including those with learning disabilities – are identified early and receive the necessary supports to be successful.

- * [**Questions and Answers On Response to Intervention \(RTI\) and Early Intervening Services \(EIS\) January 2007**](http://idea.ed.gov/explore/view/p/%2Croot%2Cdynamic%2CQaCorner%2C8%2C) on the IDEA – Building the Legacy, U.S. Department of Education website. The final regulations for the reauthorized Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) were published in the Federal Register on August 14, 2006, and became effective on October 13, 2006. This is one in a series of question and answer documents prepared by OSERS to address some of the most important issues raised by requests for clarification on a variety of high-interest topics from the final regulations for the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). The responses presented in this document generally are informal guidance representing the interpretation of the Department of the applicable statutory or regulatory requirements in the context of the specific facts presented and are not legally binding. The Q&As are not intended to be a replacement for careful study of IDEA and the regulations. The statute, regulations, and other important documents related to IDEA and the regulations are found at <http://idea.ed.gov>.
- * [**www.ideapartnership.org/report.cfm?reportid=247**](http://www.ideapartnership.org/report.cfm?reportid=247)
This link takes you to links within an **alphabetical list of citations from web-based journals and other periodicals on RTI, Problem-Solving Approaches, Early Intervening Services, and Identification of Learning Disabilities**. The IDEA Partnership reflects the collaborative work of more than 50 national organizations, technical assistance providers, and organizations and agencies at state and local level. The Partnership is funded by the federal Office of Special Education Programs.
- * [**www.ideapartnership.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=1295:together-on-rti-a-collection-of-free-resources-selected-by-national-organizations-for-their-members&catid=17:cross-sectioncategory-pages&Itemid=108**](http://www.ideapartnership.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=1295:together-on-rti-a-collection-of-free-resources-selected-by-national-organizations-for-their-members&catid=17:cross-sectioncategory-pages&Itemid=108)
This link takes you to **Together on RTI: A Collection of Free Resources Selected by National Organizations for Their Members** which is a webpage on the IDEA Partnership website that lists various free sources of information and resources on RTI.
- * [**www.ldonline.org/article/c775/**](http://www.ldonline.org/article/c775/)
This link takes you to **a list of 8 links to articles on RTI**. LD OnLine seeks to help children and adults reach their full potential by providing accurate and up-to-date information and advice about learning disabilities and ADHD. The site features hundreds of helpful articles, multimedia, monthly columns by noted experts, first person essays, children's writing and artwork, a comprehensive resource guide, very active forums, and a Yellow Pages referral directory of professionals, schools, and products.
- * [**www.cecsped.org**](http://www.cecsped.org)
This link takes you to the homepage for the Council for Exceptional Children. Search for RTI to find a number of resources.

JOURNALS:

- * http://essentialeducator.org/?page_id=112 The Utah Special Educator is a professional journal published by the Utah Personnel Development Center (UPDC) for special educators, administrators, general educators, and other stakeholders. Many issues include articles about RTI for professionals.

Two recommended issues:

- September 2007. Vol. 28 No. 1 -- RTI and the Utah ABC Triangle: Matching Instruction to Student Need
- November 2007. Vol. 28 No. 2 -- RTI On the Front Lines: Top 10 Lessons from the Trenches & RTI and Preschool

- * www.ascd.org

Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development Journal: Educational Leadership

Two Recommended Issues:

- Teaching to Student Strengths. September, 2006. Vol.64. No.1
- Improving Instruction for Students With Learning Needs. February, 2007. Vol.64 No.5. Note: An outstanding issue on all aspects of special education issues.

BOOKS:

- * **Response to Intervention, Policy Considerations and Implementation,** National Association of State Directors of Special Education (NASDSE), Inc. PNA-0525 \$15.00 Other publications on RTI \$7.50 - \$15.00
www.nasdse.org/Default.aspx?TabID=450&Search=rti&langId=0
- * **RTI: a Practitioner's Guide to Implementing Response to Intervention**
“An invaluable resource that helps administrators increase the likelihood of success for students at risk and meet the requirements of NCLB, Reading First, and the reauthorization of IDEA 2004.”
ISBN-13:9781412957724 ISBN: 1412957729
- * **Schools That Learn, A Fifth Discipline Fieldbook for Educators, Parents, and Everyone Who Cares About Education.** Peter Senge 2000: Doubleday, NY.
ISBN-10: 0385493231 | ISBN-13: 978-0385493239

Words Out!

GLOSSARY - RESPONSE TO INTERVENTION (RTI):

Accommodations: Accommodations are practices and procedures in the areas of presentation, response, setting, and timing/scheduling that provide equitable access during instruction and assessments for students with disabilities/Section 504/English Language Learners (ELL). Accommodations are intended to reduce or even eliminate the effects of a student's disability; they do not reduce learning expectations. Accommodations provide access to buildings, curriculum, and assessments.

Alignment: The process of matching instruction and materials to the Utah State Core Curriculum.

Behavioral Intervention Plan (BIP): A written plan for changing a student's behavior, including target behavior, strategies for teaching replacement behavior, reinforcers, and a schedule for review of intervention effectiveness data. A BIP can be part of the IEP.

Collaboration: A systematic process of cooperation between two or more people with shared goals and perceived outcomes occurring in a climate of trust.

Collaborative team: A group of two or more people with shared goals and perceived outcomes who meet on a scheduled or as-need basis and fill a specific function or purpose. Collaborative teams can be formed both at the district and school levels. School-based teams are developed and sustained as determined by need and are accessible to any administrator or teacher concerned with the educational needs of students.

Differentiated instruction: The matching of instruction with the different needs of learners in a given classroom by modifying delivery, time, content, process, product, and the learning environment. One or more of these elements can be modified to provide differentiation.

English Language Learners (ELLs): English Language Learners (ELLs) are students whose first language is not English and who are in the process of learning English.

Evaluation: Summarizing assessment results, then making decisions based on these results.

Explicit instruction: Instruction that is clear, overt, and visible.

Extended school year services: Special education and related services that:

- a. Are provided to a student with a disability:
 - (1) Beyond the normal school year of the LEA;
 - (2) In accordance with the student's IEP;
 - (3) At no cost to the parents of the student, and
- b. Meet the standards of the Utah State Office of Education (USOE).

Fidelity: A teacher demonstrates that instructional programs, strategies, and materials are implemented with intensity and accuracy, and consistently delivered as they have been designed and validated, as directed in teacher's guides available from publishers.

Functional Behavioral Assessment (FUBA): A systematic process of identifying problem behaviors and the events that (a) reliably predict occurrence and nonoccurrence of those behaviors, and (b) maintain the behaviors across time.

IDEA: The Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act 2004. IDEA governs the provision of special education. This Act strengthens academic expectations and accountability for the nation's 5.8 million children with disabilities and bridges the gap that has too often existed between what children with disabilities learn and what is required in regular curriculum.

Instructional intervention: Explicit and systematic instruction delivered by highly skilled teachers tailored to meet the identified needs of students who are struggling.

Intense intervention: Explicit and systematic instruction delivered by highly skilled teacher specialists. This instruction is targeted and tailored to meet the needs of struggling readers in small groups or one on one, with increased opportunities for practice and teacher feedback.

Literacy coach: A coach who provides ongoing, consistent support for classroom implementation and the instructional components of literacy. A literacy coach supports teachers in their daily work to instruct all readers, but particularly struggling readers.

Modifications (assessments): Changes in the test or assessment conditions that fundamentally alter the test score interpretation and comparability. Providing a student with a modification during a state accountability assessment constitutes a test irregularity because it invalidates the student's test score.

Multisensory: Simultaneously engaging the visual, auditory, and kinesthetic modalities.

Reading Specialist: Reading specialists provide expert classroom instruction and assessment particularly for struggling students. They may also provide literacy leadership within the school in addressing the needs of all readers.

Scaffolding: Support given to assist students in learning a skill through explicit instruction, modeling, questioning, feedback, etc., to ensure student performance. Scaffolding should gradually be withdrawn as students become more independent of teacher support.

Scientifically based: Based on empirical research that applies rigorous, systematic, and objective procedures to obtain Reading Research (SBRR) valid knowledge. This research:

- * Employs systematic, empirical methods that draw on observation or experiment. Has been accepted by a peer-reviewed journal or approved by a panel of independent experts through a comparably rigorous, objective and scientific review.
- * Involves rigorous data analyses that are adequate to test the stated hypotheses and justify the general conclusions drawn.
- * Relies on measurements or observational methods that provide valid data across evaluators and observers and across multiple measurements and observations.
- * Can be generalized.

Section 504: A student may be eligible for accommodations under Section 504 if the student has a mental or physical impairment that substantially limits one or more of the student's major life activities that affect education. The Utah Parent Center's website includes information and training video's on Section 504 and can be found using the following links.

Section 504 Information: www.utahparentcenter.org/publications/infosheets/what-is-a-section-504-plan-does-my-student-qualify-for-one

Training Videos: www.utahparentcenter.org/training/videos/section-504-training-modules

Skill: Something a student knows how to do expertly and automatically.

Special education: Specially designed instruction, at no cost to the parents, to meet the unique needs of a student with a disability, including instruction conducted in the classroom, in the home, in hospitals and institutions, and in other settings; and instruction in physical education. The term includes speech-language pathology services and may include other related services, travel training, and applied technology education, if they meet the definition of special education.

Strategy: The conscious use of a specific method.

Supplemental intervention: An addition to Tier 1 classroom instruction targeted to meet specific needs of students in one or more of the five critical elements of reading instruction.

Supplemental materials: Materials that are aligned with and support the core instructional program.

Systematic instruction: A carefully planned sequence for targeted instruction.

Team members (IEP): At least one regular educator of the student, special education teacher, LEA representative, special education student when appropriate, and person to interpret data, as well as others as needed.

Targeted: Focused instruction on an identified skill.

Tutoring: Additional practice for struggling students provided by trained individuals. Tutoring does not serve as an intervention. USOE-published tutoring programs include:

- * STAR tutoring program
- * Cross-age tutoring program
- * Parent STAR tutoring program
- * STAR advanced tutoring program

Utah Core Curriculum: The curriculum adopted by the Utah Board of Education that is required for all students.

Utah Parent Center Information Disclaimer

Utah Parent Center • Serving Utah families since 1983!

Utah Family Voices - Family to Family Health Information Center

Autism Information Resources at the Utah Parent Center

Family to Family Network – A Network Supported by the Utah Parent Center

Phone: (801)272.1051 • Toll Free Utah: (800)468.1160 • Fax: (801)272.8907

Email: info@utahparentcenter.org • Website: www.utahparentcenter.org

Our Mission: To help parents help their children with disabilities to live included, productive lives as members of the community. We accomplish this through the provision of information, training, and peer support.

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