



# Response to Intervention (RtI): What it is and what it's not!

## I. Legal Reference

*IN GENERAL - when determining whether a child has a specific learning disability... a local educational agency may use the discrepancy model to take into consideration whether a child has a severe discrepancy between achievement and intellectual ability in oral expression, basic reading skill, reading comprehension, mathematical calculation, or mathematical reasoning...*

*...ADDITIONAL AUTHORITY - In determining whether a child has a specific learning disability, a local educational agency may use a process that determines if the child responds to scientific, research-based intervention as a part of the evaluation procedures. (IDEA 2004)*

## II. Definition

RtI is an **early intervening strategy** and carries dual meaning in Pennsylvania. It is a comprehensive, multi-tiered, standards aligned strategy to enable early identification and intervention for students at academic or behavioral risk. RtI may be considered as one alternative to the aptitude-achievement discrepancy model for the identification of students with learning disabilities after the establishment of specific progress measures.

RtI allows educators to identify and address academic and behavioral difficulties prior to student failure. Monitoring student response to a series of increasingly intense interventions assists in preventing failure and provides data that may guide eligibility decisions for learning disabilities. **The goal of RtI is to improve student achievement using research-based interventions matched to the instructional need and level of the student.**

### RtI is a(n):

- data-driven process to improve reading and math achievement within a standards aligned instructional system.

- general education led effort implemented within the general education system, coordinated with all other services including special education, Title I, ESL, Migrant Education, Reading First, School Improvement.
- system to provide instructional intervention in reading and mathematics, immediately upon student need.
- alternative approach to the diagnosis of a Specific Learning Disability (SLD). Instead of only using the well-known aptitude-achievement discrepancy model, local educational agencies may use this diagnostic alternative to identify SLD.
- process that determines if the child responds to scientific, research-based intervention as a part of the evaluation procedures.

### RtI is Not a(n):

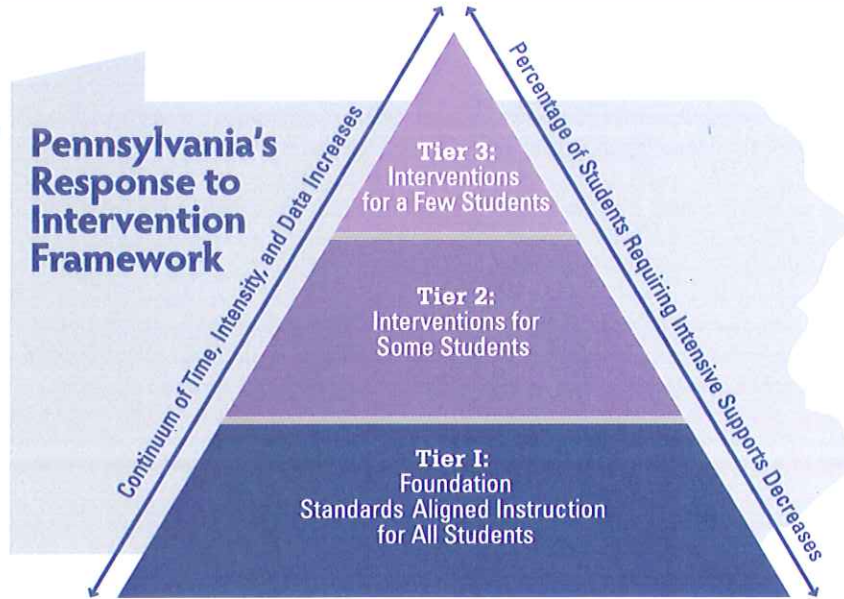
- pre-referral system
- individual teacher
- classroom
- special education program
- added period of reading instruction
- separate, stand-alone initiative

## III. Core Characteristics of RtI

- **Standards aligned instruction:** All students receive high quality, research-based instruction in the general education standards aligned system.
- **Universal screening:** All students are screened to determine academic and behavior status against grade-level benchmarks.
- **Shared ownership:** All staff (general education teachers, special education teachers, Title I, ESL) assume an active role in students' assessment and instruction in the standards aligned system.
- **Data-Based Decision Making:** Student performance data is analyzed to guide school decisions on instructional changes, choices of interventions, and appropriate rates of progress.
  - **Progress Monitoring:** Continuous monitoring of student performance and use of data to determine intervention effectiveness and drive instructional adjustments, and to identify/measure student progress toward instructional and grade-level goals.
  - **Benchmark and Outcome Assessment:** Student progress is assessed periodically throughout the year, and at the end of the year against grade level benchmarks and standards.
- **Tiered Intervention and Service Delivery System:** Some students receive increasing intense levels of targeted scientifically, research-based interventions. Instruction is differentiated to meet learner needs and consists of:
  - **Research-based Interventions:** Interventions with proven effectiveness are matched to students' level of need.
  - **Flexible grouping:** Students move among flexible instructional groups.
  - **Fidelity of Implementation:** Teachers deliver curriculum and program content and use instructional strategies in the same way that they were designed to be used and delivered.
- **Parental Engagement:** Parents receive information regarding their child's needs, including:
  - a description of the specific intervention and who is delivering instruction,
  - clearly stated intervention goals and academic progress expected for their child,
  - regular progress or lack of progress reports, and
  - the right to request a special education evaluation at any time.



# Pennsylvania's Response to Intervention Framework



The National Research Center on Learning Disabilities (NRCLD, 2006) defines RTI as:  
*"an assessment and intervention process for systematically monitoring progress and making decisions about the need for instructional modifications or increasingly intensified services using progress monitoring data."*

## Tier 1: Foundation/Standards Aligned Instruction for All Students

**Definition:** Standards aligned instruction and schoolwide foundational interventions are provided to all students in the general education core curriculum. Tier I also is used to designate instructional interventions for students who are making expected grade level progress (benchmark students) in the standards aligned system and who demonstrate social competence.

### Foundation/Benchmark Interventions

- High quality, effective instruction designed to engage and challenge students
- Clear and high expectations for student learning and behavior
- Effective support to enhance student engagement in the learning process and to promote school completion
- 4Sight benchmark assessments or other periodic progress monitoring benchmark assessments

## Tier 2: Strategic Interventions for Some Students

**Definition:** Academic and behavioral strategies, methodologies, and practices designed for some students who are not making expected progress in the standards aligned system and who are **at risk** for academic and behavioral failure. Students require additional academic and behavioral support to successfully engage in the learning process and succeed in the standards aligned system.

### Strategic Interventions

- Standards aligned instruction with supplemental, small group instruction which may include specialized materials
- Use of standard protocol interventions - A standard protocol intervention is scientifically research-based and has a high probability of producing change for large numbers of students. It is usually designed to be used in a standard manner across students and is typically delivered in small groups.
- Scientifically research-based interventions
  - Academic content areas (reading, mathematics)
  - Behavior
- Specialists assist with strategic instruction in the general education classroom and small group instruction as needed

## Tier 3: Intensive Interventions for a Few Students

**Definition:** Academic and behavioral strategies, methodologies and practices designed for a few students who are significantly below established grade-level benchmarks in the standards aligned system or who demonstrate significant difficulties with behavioral and social competence.

### Intensive Interventions

- Use of standard protocols interventions
- May use supplemental instructional materials for specific skill development
- Small intensive, flexible groups
- Additional tutoring provided by specialists as part of the school day
- Instructional changes based on data based decision making