



**A Research-Based View of
the Specific Learning Disabilities
Determination Process:**
Responsiveness to Intervention Overview

*National Research Center on
Learning Disabilities (NRCLD)*
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Overview

Presentation Topics

- Specific learning disabilities (SLD) defined
- A model of responsiveness to intervention (RTI)
 - current "best practices" in the scientific literature
- Getting started in your state education agency (SEA) or local education agency (LEA)
- Overview of NRCLD

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Specific Learning Disabilities (SLD) Defined

"The term *specific learning disability* means a disorder in one or more of the basic psychological processes involved in understanding or in using language, spoken or written, which disorder may manifest itself in [the] imperfect ability to listen, think, speak, read, write, spell, or do mathematical calculations.

"Such term includes such conditions as perceptual disabilities, brain injury, minimal brain dysfunction, dyslexia, and developmental aphasia.

"Such term does not include a learning problem that is primarily the result of visual, hearing, or motor disabilities, or mental retardation, or emotional disturbance, or of environmental, cultural, or economic disadvantage"

IDEA 2004 Sec. 602(30)

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RTI and IDEA 2004 (P.L. 108-446)

New language in IDEA:
"... 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...."

Sec. 614(b)(6B)

- The language of IDEA 2004 does not specifically use the term "responsiveness to intervention (RTI)."
- In the special education research literature, the process mentioned in this language is generally considered as referring to responsiveness to intervention (RTI).
- RTI is not mandated (e.g., "... a local agency may use a process. ...").

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Why RTI?

- IDEA 2004 specifies special rules for eligibility determination (IDEA 2004, B. 614.b.(5)), by stating:
 - In making a determination of eligibility under paragraph (4)(A), a child shall not be determined to be a child with a disability if the determinant factor for such determination is—
 - (A) lack of appropriate instruction in reading, including in the essential components of reading instruction (as defined in section 1208(3) of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965,
 - (B) lack of instruction in math; or
 - (C) limited English proficiency.
- Based on a multi-tiered public health model for providing appropriate learning experiences for *all* students

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Three Models (Uses) of RTI

- Three uses:
 - Prediction & Prevention
 - prediction of at-risk students and preventing students from falling behind
 - Remediation
 - intervention for students with academic or behavioral difficulties
 - Disability Assessment
 - an intensive intervention test that is one component in the SLD determination process

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Research Identifies Critical Elements of RTI

- Implementation of a differentiated curriculum with different instructional methods
- Two or more tiers of increasingly intense, scientific, research-based interventions

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Research Identifies Critical Elements of RTI (cont.)

- Individual problem-solving model or standardized intervention protocol for intervention tiers (possibly in combination)
- Progress monitoring to assess entire class progress and individual student progress
- Explicit decision rules for assessing learners' progress (e.g., level and/or rate)

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What Does RTI Implementation Look Like?

- Students receive high-quality, research-based instruction by qualified staff in their general education setting (primary intervention)
- General education instructors and staff assume an active role in students' assessment in that curriculum
- School staff conduct universal screening of (a) academics and (b) behavior (> 1/yr)
- School staff implement specific, research-based interventions to address the students' difficulties

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EIS and IDEA Reauthorization (P.L. 108-446)

New language in IDEA:

- "A local educational agency (LEA) may not use more than 15% of the amount such agency receives under this part (Part B)... to develop and implement coordinated, early intervening services ... for students in kindergarten through grade 12 (with particular emphasis on students in kindergarten through grade 3) who do not meet the definition of a child with a disability... but who need additional academic and behavioral support to succeed in a general education environment."

Sec. 613(f)(1)

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EIS and IDEA Reauthorization (P.L. 108-446)

- EIS Activities:**
The funds are intended to build school staff capacity for delivering scientifically-based academic and behavioral interventions, including "scientifically-based literacy instruction and ... providing educational and behavioral evaluations, services, and supports, including scientifically-based literacy instruction."

Sec. 613(f)(2)

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EIS Provides an Assessment/Intervention Framework within General Education

- Early intervening services (EIS) is a process for ensuring students receive "appropriate learning experiences" in general education
- EIS is designed to be provided to children who have not previously been identified with an SLD, but who are exhibiting symptoms for being at risk. They can receive secondary levels of instruction in the general classroom.
- EIS provides a framework for prevention and intervention. EIS has staying power within the policy context because it is enacted and funded in IDEA 2004.

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EIS & RTI Comparisons

- EIS and RTI emphasize the use of scientifically based interventions; not "home grown"
- EIS is mandated for districts that have disproportionate over-representation of students with disabilities or of minorities.
- Under EIS, the LEA must annually report on students served; RTI does not have such a provision.
- EIS is not linked with SLD determination procedures. RTI, on the other hand, is.
- RTI is conceptualized as important to all students. EIS is focused as support services to students exhibiting academic and behavioral difficulties.

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Placement and Intervention Coordination

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Parents' Rights

Procedural safeguards language in the law:

"Establishment of Procedures—Any State educational agency, State agency, or local educational agency that receives assistance under [Part B] shall establish and maintain procedures in accordance with this section to ensure that children with disabilities and their parents are guaranteed procedural safeguards with respect to the provision of a free appropriate public education by such agencies."

P.L. 108-446, Sec. 615(a)

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Parent Involvement in Tigard-Tualatin School District

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Where To Begin?

- What is your goal: prediction, remediation, disability assessment?
- What do you do well (e.g., universal screening, early intervening services, progress monitoring, targeting and monitoring effective interventions)?
- What tools/mechanisms do you currently have in place that can assist you with RTI?
- Check the "Getting Started" information, RTI Implementation Tool for Reading, and other resource materials at www.NRCLD.org

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NRCLD SLD and RTI Resource Products

- Executive Summary of the NRCLD Symposium on Responsiveness to Intervention
- Responsiveness to Intervention in the SLD Determination Process
- RTI Implementation Tool for Reading
- Screening Tool for Well-Described Responsiveness to Intervention Models and Comparison Models
- Responsiveness to Intervention: An SLD Determination Resource
- SLD Identification Overview: General Information and Tools to Get Started
- Specific Learning Disabilities and Responsiveness to Intervention Resource List
- A Research-Based View of Specific Learning Disabilities: Implementing Change
- Responsiveness to Intervention in Conjunction with Learning Disability Determination

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Thank you!

Check our website:
www.NRCLD.org

