

WHAT ARE THE PROCEDURES FOR DETERMINING THE NEED FOR SPECIAL EDUCATION SERVICES?

Indiana State Board of Education Special Education Rules Title 511 Article 7 Rules 32 -47, have set forth a new process to determine a student's eligibility for Specific Learning Disability. The regulations state that the determination of a learning disability would be evident through either:

- an assessment of a pattern of strengths and weaknesses in performance, achievement or both, relative to age; state standards or intellectual ability or
- through insufficient progress to meet age or state standards when using a process based on the student's response to scientific, research based interventions.

The latter process referred to as **early intervening services or response to intervention** involves school staff planning and collecting data regarding the student's response to scientific research based interventions. As students participate in this process, it may become apparent that certain students have more significant needs and an evaluation is indicated. The following information outlines this process.

Response to Intervention Defined

Response to intervention (RtI) is a practice of providing high quality instruction or interventions matched to student needs that use learning rate over time and level of performance to make important educational decisions. The following components of RtI are essential to the development of a successful RtI implementation strategy.

1. High quality instruction/intervention is defined as instruction or intervention matched to student need that has been demonstrated, through scientific research and practice, to produce high learning rates for most students.
2. Learning rate and level of performance are the primary sources of information used in ongoing decision making. Learning rate refers to a student's individual growth in achievement or behavior competencies over time. Most students respond to explicit and intense instruction/interventions. Decisions about the use of more or less intense interventions are made using information from learning rates and performance levels.
3. Important educational decisions about intensity and the likely duration of interventions are based on the individual student's response to instruction across multiple tiers of intervention. Decisions about the necessity of more intense interventions, including eligibility for special education and or exit from special education or other services are informed by data based on the student's demonstrated learning rates and performance levels.

The Response to Intervention (RtI) Process

The Lake Central School Corporation and School Town of Munster are utilizing this model to formulate a process to provide support to students when it is needed rather than waiting for them to fail. General education teachers provide core instruction to all students. Benchmark assessments are used to document class performance and determine students who need additional interventions. These interventions are supplemental

to the core curriculum. Data is collected to identify specific student needs and then research based interventions are implemented.

Intervention Assistance Teams

Intervention Assistance Teams are formulated in each school. These problem-solving teams are brought together when the staff determines that the student has not responded to interventions. The Intervention Assistance Team is composed of the parent, school psychologist, classroom teachers and specialists who have expertise in the area of need. The parent will be notified that the team will formulate a specific intervention plan for their child. The purpose of the Intervention Assistance Team is to review the existing data and formulate a plan to address the areas of need. The team determines:

- the specific intervention,
- the method in which to monitor the students' progress,
- who will carry out the intervention and
- the duration of the intervention.

The team will meet at specified intervals to review, and if needed, revise the intervention plan based on the results of continued progress monitoring.

Referral for Special Education Evaluation

If the Intervention Assistance Team determines that the child is not responding to the interventions as set forth in the plan, a referral for special education assessment is initiated and parent permission is obtained. The case conference must commence within 20 instructional days of the parent permission. The case conference will utilize the data that has been collected through the RtI process in order to determine if the student qualifies as a student with a specific learning disability. A multidisciplinary team report is written and the case conference committee determines if the child qualifies. If the student qualifies for services, an individual education plan (IEP) is written.

District Level Planning

Each school district provides guidance and training to staff. Assessment tools and interventions of increasing intensity are available in all buildings. This process increases student outcomes that are crucial to making accurate decisions about the effectiveness of interventions. It also allows for early identification and academic interventions to prevent school failure. The process prevents excessive identification of students with disabilities and enables special education personnel to formulate effective programs for students who need it.