Response to Intervention in Preschool

Special Education Leadership Network

April 12, 2012

Why Preschool RtI?

- Connections between language skills and literacy development

- 40% of preschool children with language impairments develop significant literacy learning difficulties (Aram & Nation, 1980; Rescorla, 2005)

- Successful readers in first grade have a 20,000 word receptive vocabulary – poor readers have less than 5,000 words (Montgomery, 2009)

- Difficulty differentiating language disability from “lack of opportunity”

What is being done nationally?

- National EC RtI Implementation Survey 2009
  - 43 states responded
  - 21.1% have local programs implementing RtI Models in PreK Settings
  - 1.8% have fully implemented RtI programs across the state
  - 15.8% have some professional development on RtI in preschool
  - 31% of curricula focus on language and early literacy
  - Biggest challenges: insufficiently trained personnel, lack of resources, lack of knowledge
• Recognition and Response – University of North Carolina Chapel Hill
  o Key Components
    ▪ Screening (“Recognition”) for difficulties with early language, literacy and math
    ▪ “Response” - effective core curriculum and instruction and the use of targeted interventions linked to assessment to support children’s learning
    ▪ Collaborative Problem Solving – process for teachers, parents, specialists, and others to make informed decisions based on assessment results to plan and evaluate instruction/interventions at all tiers
  o Research
    ▪ 300 students and 24 teachers participated
    ▪ Small group language and literacy intervention 15 min/day, 2 months
    ▪ Showed significantly greater gains in letter naming, vocabulary and sound awareness than peers

What is being done in Texas?

Developing Talkers
• Available in English and Spanish
• Tier I and II program
• Uses readily available storybooks
• Available FREE on the web: www.childrenslearninginstitute.org/our-programs/program-overview/TX-school-ready/developing-talkers
• Pilot Study
  o 4 week study
  o significant differences in receptive target vocabulary scores for children in classrooms randomly selected to use Developing Talkers compared to children in classrooms where the same books were read aloud, but teachers were not trained to use the curriculum supplement
  o Continued to be researched in Texas districts

PANDA (Preschool Accelerated Narrative Discourse Activities)
• Narrative-based language intervention
• Uses readily available storybooks (English and Spanish)
• Targets students who perform poorly on Woodcock Munoz in English and Spanish
• Tier I and II program:
  o SLPs provide 15 minute session to small group 3 times a week
  o Classroom teacher provides 15 minute session to whole class, 2 times a week
  o Classroom teacher sends home weekly family activity
- Pilot year:
  - 18 students participated
  - 2 were identified as SI
  - 7 achieved age appropriate language skills in language of instruction
  - 7 students demonstrated gains in oral language of 12 months
  - 2 did not complete the program

What’s the next step? (Greenwood and Wechsler Linas, 2009)
- Achieve administrative buy-in
- Use PD known to lead to implementation
- Screen all children frequently and increase the strength of treatment (intensity) for those not progressing
- Use interventions with research supporting their effectiveness
- Provide multiple levels of intensity (Tier 1, 2, 3)
- Teach skills known to be precursors of next environment skills
- Measure progress frequently (e.g., monthly, quarterly)
- Base intervention decisions on technically sound progress measures
- Implement with fidelity

Want to know more?


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## Interventions for Speech and Language

### Tier I Interventions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Product</th>
<th>Grades</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Regimen</th>
<th>Implementer</th>
<th>Source</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Developing Talkers</td>
<td>Preschool</td>
<td>• Supports emergent literacy and vocabulary development</td>
<td>15 minute sessions daily</td>
<td>Teacher</td>
<td>Children’s Learning Institute (free) - <a href="http://www.childrenslearninginstitute.org/our-programs/program-overview/TX-school-ready/developing-talkers/">http://www.childrenslearninginstitute.org/our-programs/program-overview/TX-school-ready/developing-talkers/</a></td>
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</table>
| Language Strategies for Children Series | Preschool - Secondary | • Supports literate language development  
  • Developed by Texas SLPs; geared around the TEKS  
  • Support student goal setting  
| Language in the Classroom (LINC) Series | Preschool – Early Elementary | • Supports following directions and recalling personal scripts  
  • Scripted Lessons  
  • Variety of thematic lessons  
| Parent Training                | Kindergarten    | • Provide training for parents during kindergarten night  
  • Create list of language and literacy activities for parents  
## Tier II/III Interventions

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Developing Talkers</td>
<td>Preschool</td>
<td>• Supports emergent literacy and vocabulary development</td>
<td>10-15 minute sessions daily</td>
<td>Teacher</td>
<td>Children’s Learning Institute (free) - <a href="http://www.childrenslearninginstitute.org/our-programs/program-overview/TX-school-ready/TX-school-ready/developing-talkers/">www.childrenslearninginstitute.org/our-programs/program-overview/TX-school-ready/TX-school-ready/developing-talkers/</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>Start-IN (Students are Responding to Intervention)</td>
<td>Grades 3-8</td>
<td>• For students reading 2 or more years below grade level</td>
<td>1 hour session, daily, 9 weeks</td>
<td>SLP and Teacher</td>
<td>Super Duper Publications - <a href="http://www.superduperinc.com/products/view.aspx?pid=START1">http://www.superduperinc.com/products/view.aspx?pid=START1</a></td>
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</table>
| Speedy Speech            | Elementary              | • Addresses speech sound disorders                                             | 5-7 minutes, 3 times a day, four days a week | SLP         | ASHA Article: [http://div16perspectives.asha.org/cgi/framedreprint/7/4/11](http://div16perspectives.asha.org/cgi/framedreprint/7/4/11)  
[www.speedyspeechtherapy.com/](http://www.speedyspeechtherapy.com/) |
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| Bridge of Vocabulary                         | Preschool - Secondary   | • Supports vocabulary development  
• 101 Guided practice activities  
| PANDA (Preschool Accelerated Narrative Development Activities) | Preschool               | • Supports narrative development  
• Developed for bilingual PreK Students  
• Small group intervention by SLP, classroom intervention by teacher | 15 minute lessons, 3 days a week, 9 weeks | SLP and Teacher | Irving ISD - [http://bit.ly/GYJcCv](http://bit.ly/GYJcCv) |
Steps to Implementing a Program-wide Model of RTI in Early Childhood Settings*

1. **Ensure Administrative Support and Commitment** — Every program will need a “champion” to make this work. It is important to recognize that across different types of pre-k settings, administrators will have differing levels of training and experience related to the educational and social/emotional needs of young children.

2. **Establish an RTI Team** — The team should include classroom teachers, administrators, family members, related service providers, and behavior support specialists. This team will be responsible for guiding the adoption and implementation of the program-wide model. Many pre-k programs will not have behavior support staff available. As part of this process, the programs will need to identify a consultant or staff member who can serve in this role. This person may need significant training prior to beginning implementation.

3. **Develop a Plan for Getting Commitment from Program Stakeholders** — Support of all individuals involved in the initiative should be garnered, including administrators, general and special education teachers, related services professionals (e.g., speech-language pathologists), paraprofessionals, and others related to the program.

4. **Develop Opportunities for Family Involvement in All Aspects of the Initiative** — Ensure that families are involved in the plan for adopting the model, identifying strategies for sharing the information with families, and evaluating the success of the model. When working with families of young children, it is important to recognize that this may be the family’s first experience with the educational system and therefore may need more information on the team’s role.

5. **Identify Program-wide Learning and Behavior Expectations for Children** — Identify a small set of realistic expectations that can be implemented across settings within the school. Ensure that they are appropriate for the developmental levels of the children in the program. These expectations should be understandable for teachers, staff, parents, and children.

6. **Develop Instructional Strategies for Achieving Learning Expectations** — Select strategies that are developmentally appropriate and that can be used throughout the program. Strategies should be embedded into ongoing classroom activities such as circle time and centers.

7. **Develop a Process for Addressing the Needs of Children** — Develop a problem-solving process that is efficient, effective, and accessible to teachers and others actively involved in the children’s learning. Consider who will facilitate this process and the training needed to develop the expertise of this individual(s).

8. **Design a Plan for Professional Development and Supporting Faculty/Staff/Families** — This effort should include strategic start-up and ongoing professional development and technical assistance in the classroom that is based on an understanding of participants’ prior training and expertise. Sustained and continued professional development is essential for successful Pre-K RTI implementation and collaboration.

9. **Collect and Use Data for Decision Making** — The RTI team should identify how and when data will be collected to guide implementation efforts, make decisions about child and program needs, effectiveness, and outcomes (i.e., what has happened based on expectations) associated with the model. This process may be complex given the extent to which data are generally collected in early childhood settings. Further, most pre-k settings do not have a common measure that can be used as a gauge of overall program success.

Guiding Questions for Self-Assessment of Readiness to Implement RTI in Pre-K

The following questions can be used to guide the initial process of planning and determining “readiness” for implementing Pre-K RTI.

I. Finding the “Goodness-of-Fit” for Pre-K RTI with Existing Programs and Policies

A. What is your philosophy or vision for Pre-K RTI and how does this fit with existing philosophies for early childhood, school-aged RTI approaches, and special education services?

B. What are your goals for Pre-K RTI and how will these goals fit with other program goals already in place? Are there points of synergy across programs (e.g., parental involvement; enhancing student success; existing school performance standards/benchmarks) that can connect the work?

C. How can the Pre-K RTI approach be integrated into existing structures and policies, what existing structures and policies will have to be modified, and what new structures and policies will need to be created to support Pre-K RTI?

D. How will your Pre-K RTI approach fit with existing special education services? What circumstances will determine the child’s need for comprehensive evaluation?

E. What funding sources will be used to support Pre-K RTI initiatives? How can existing funds be leveraged (e.g., professional development funds, parent support funds) and what new funds can be secured?

F. What is the overall quality of pre-k services and how is this quality measured and monitored? Will this overall quality need to be improved as part of strengthening Tier 1 supports?

G. What kinds of professional development will be needed to help ensure that all teachers, staff, and related services professionals have the knowledge and skills to implement your Pre-K RTI model? How will information be shared with parents?

II. Questions to Consider While Designing the Pre-K RTI Model to Meet Your Needs

A. How many tiers will your approach have and how will supports and services be arranged across these tiers?

B. What screening, assessment, and progress monitoring measures do you currently use and what do you view as the strengths and weaknesses of each?

C. What type of collaborative problem-solving process will be used and who will serve on the problem-solving team?

D. What record keeping procedures will be needed to document the process for the child, family, program, and for overall accountability?

E. What standards-based and evidence-based curricula will be used?

F. What instructional strategies are being used and are these strategies evidence-based?

G. Have responses been identified/developed for children who need additional support to achieve success at each tier?

H. How will parents and families be involved and supported at each tier?

I. How will technical assistance and support be provided to teachers to assist their implementation of Pre-K RTI approaches?

J. Have you developed a strategic plan for this project which includes a focus on sustainability and securing adequate financial and programmatic resources?

K. What evaluation measures will be used to monitor effectiveness and ensure continuous improvement of the program?