

# Handy Handouts®

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## The FYI on RTI: What is Response to Intervention?

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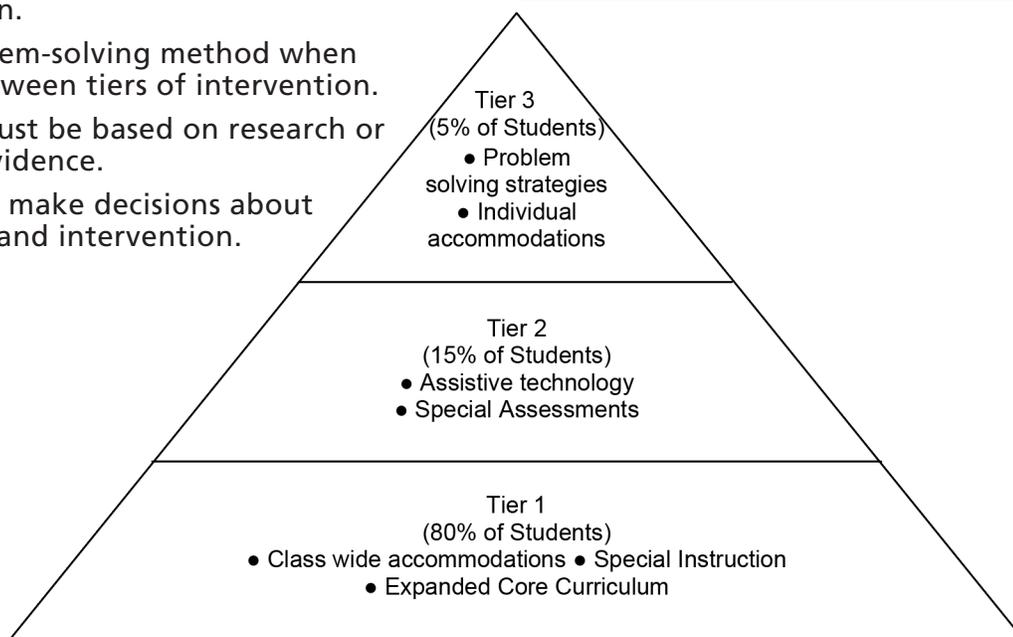
### What is Response to Intervention?

Response to Intervention (RTI) is a three-tiered educational approach that provides short-term, evidence-based services to students before referring them to special education. It is an alternative to using standardized tests to identify students who need special education services. With RTI, students receive systematic instruction for a short period of time. A school team measures students' progress before and after the intervention. The students that learn quickly and "respond to the intervention" need more instruction, not special education. Students who are not successful may require in-depth testing for language and/or learning disabilities (Montgomery and Moore-Brown, 2006). There are six beliefs behind RTI.

1. All children can learn.
2. All interventions (specific services) must happen early.
3. Use more than one tier (level) of intervention.
4. Use a problem-solving method when moving between tiers of intervention.
5. Methods must be based on research or scientific evidence.
6. Use data to make decisions about placement and intervention.

### What are Tiers?

When teachers and specialists talk about RTI, they refer to Tiers of intervention. They are actually talking about the level of teaching support that each student needs. This is important because not all students learn the same way.





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## Tier 1

Most students—80%—fall into Tier 1. This tier includes students in the regular classroom that receive the same instruction (teaching techniques) as the general class.

Intervention is the least intense for this group—teachers do not provide one-on-one instruction or extra accommodations.

## Tier 2

Tier 2 consists of small group evidence-based instruction usually provided by the classroom teacher or teaching assistant. This is in addition to regular instruction.

Tier 2 consists of about 15% of students. The students in Tier 2 need and receive more support than Tier 1 students. This support may include teaching in small groups, having parent-volunteer tutors, or posting visual schedules (giving the student picture cues to help lead him/her through daily activities).

## Tier 3

About 5% of students fit into Tier 3. These students continue to struggle, even with the extra support provided in Tier 2. At this

stage, a specialist—such as a speech language pathologist (SLP) or reading specialist—will work with the classroom teacher to give the student instruction that is:

- Short-term (9–10 weeks)
- Intensive (4–5 days per week, up to a n hour/day)
- One-on-one or small group
- Evidence-based

Throughout the process, teachers and specialists will also problem-solve, take data (keep track of correct and incorrect answers), monitor a student's progress, and make decisions about the student's placement into special education based on the data. That is, a student who makes minimal progress, even with all of the extra attention, intensive instruction, and accommodations, likely would benefit from special education services. Students that exhibit progress in Tier 3 may remain in the general education, but continue to receive Tier 2 services.

### Related Handy Handouts®:

[107 – My Child May Have Difficulties in Educational Achievement](#)

[472 – Special Education Eligibility Categories](#)

[166 – What is a Special Education Teacher?](#)

### Resources

RTI: What is it, What Isn't It? Cheryl DeCone Johnson, Ed.D. Hands & Voices.  
US Department of Education. <http://www.ed.gov/programs/specedintervention/index.html>

Response to Intervention: An Alternative to Traditional Eligibility for Students with Disabilities. Policy Studies Center at Hamline University.  
[www.educationevolving.org](http://www.educationevolving.org)

Montgomery, J.K. & Moore-Brown, B.J. (2006) START-IN: Students are responding to intervention: A response to intervention (RTI) program for reading. Greenville, SC: Super Duper Publications

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