

Building A Family/School Partnership to Support Your Child's Needs: Demystifying Special Education

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My child seems
“different” from other
kids.

He's been
acting
out in
class
lately.

She hates
to go to
school in
the
morning.

He just doesn't
seem to “get” math
and numbers.

His teachers never see him sitting with anyone at lunch,
and he always sits to the side during recess.

I thought
tantrums were
for
two-year-olds,
not
ten-year-olds.

He can't even
read his own
handwriting.

Our pediatrician suggested that our
child be evaluated for attention issues.

Homework makes her
cry every night.

His older
sister wasn't
like this about
school.

She learns a new concept and is able to
use it, but then she can't remember it the
very next day.



“I’m worried about my
child---now what?”



First steps

Reach out to the teacher

Request counseling services

Reach out to the cluster leaders

Request a meeting with the RTI team

Reach out to administrators

What happens when teachers notice that
a student is struggling in school?

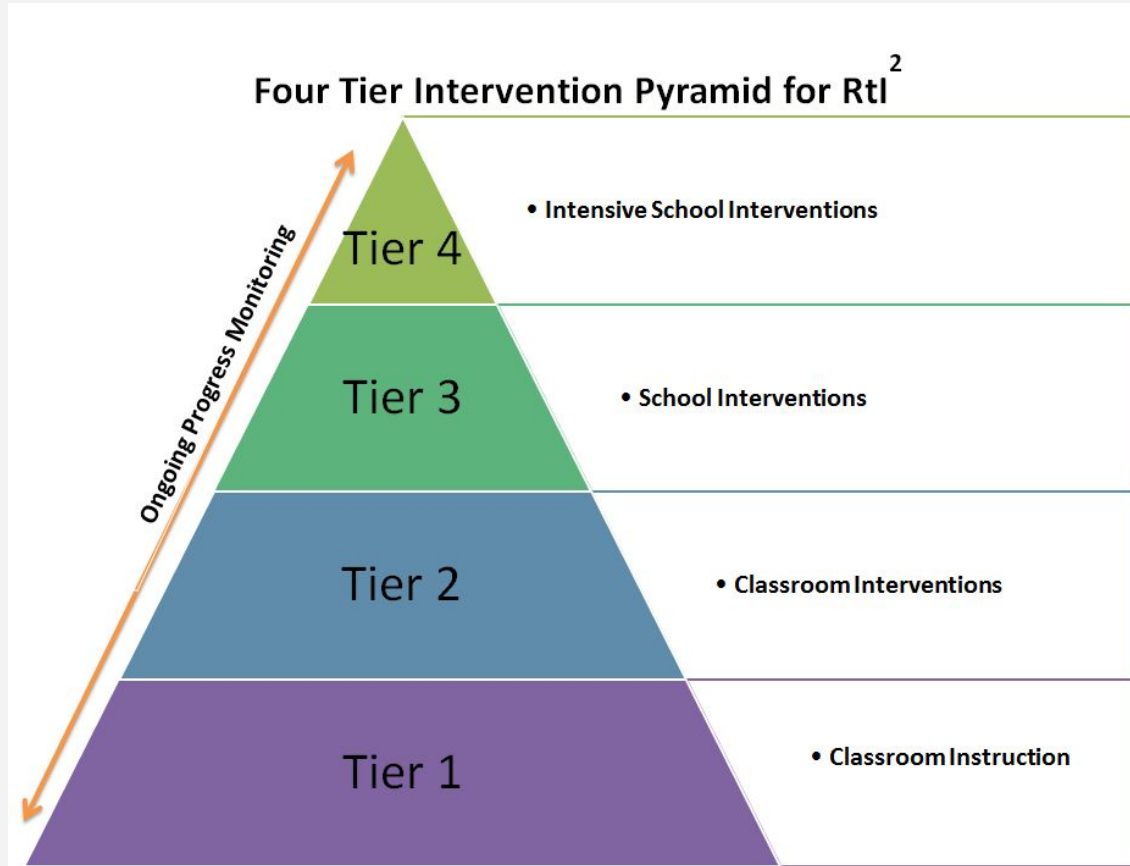
Multi-Tiered System of Support (MTSS)

Targeted Support for Struggling Students

Response to Intervention

Idea 2004 (a revision of the federal law regarding K-12 students with disabilities) changed the way we identify students with possible learning disabilities. It provided a three-tier system through which we gather data regarding the effectiveness of research-based instruction

Response to Intervention



Pre-referral - Tiers One and Two In the Classroom

Students who are identified as struggling in RTI Tier One receive classroom-based interventions that are proven to help all students. For Tier Two supports, students are given more targeted interventions, but remain in the classroom.

Tier One

- Explicit, systematic instruction
- Model learning with meta-cognitive strategies (e.g “I do, you do, we do”)
- Ample opportunities to apply skills and strategies
- Monitor student progress regularly and reteach as necessary

Tier Two

- Grouping per data
- Differentiated instruction (content, product, process)
- Specific classroom resources (e.g., manipulatives, visuals, targeted centers)

Assessing Fluency 2015-2016

Winter (January) 2016			
WPM	Accuracy %	WPM Deficit	
187	99	+47	
160	100	+20	
147	98	+7	
145	99	+5	
136	98	-4	
135	100	-5	
134	95	-6	
134	97	-6	
134	98	-6	
127	96	-13	
127	99	-13	
127	94	-13	
127	98	-13	
123	99	-17	
118	93	-22	
115	99	-25	
113	100	-27	
112	98	-28	
112	99	-28	
103	97	-37	

Independent Group (Tier 1)

Independent Reading including repeated readings or short stories and poetry. This group should have some teacher-selected prompting questions that are self-run in a book club manner. Ideally, there should be a different leader for each group that takes anecdotal notes of the discussion (similar to Shared Inquiry model).

Wide Independent Reading

Selected Partnerships (Tier 2)

This group should be reading appropriate leveled texts that are pre-approved by the teacher in pairs. The listener should be physically tracking with a finger or index card. They should be reading with expression and modeling for each other how to read with prosody. This group will also have prompting questions to quickly respond to at the end.

*Repeated Reading of Familiar Text
Coached or Assisted Reading
Modeled Reading*

Teacher-led Small Groups (Tier 3)

This group will read appropriate leveled texts with repeated readings. The teacher will model how to read with expression and fluency. The group will participate in choral reading. This group will do repeated readings of familiar texts. They will get explicit "how-to's" that are related to the text such as how to approach commas or other punctuation when reading or a particular non-mastered

Data helps us
assess
effectiveness of
interventions and
guide instruction

Pre-referral - Tier Three

If Tier One and Two interventions are not effective, we look at data to determine Tier Three interventions. Tier Three evidence-based interventions use systematic, explicit methods to change student performance and/or behavior.

- Small groups with a specialist
- Short-term (1-3 months)
- Intensive data tracking
- Regular review to determine effectiveness

Referral process

- Either school or parents can initiate the process
- All referrals for charter schools go through the Department of Education's Committee on Special Education
- Parents must provide signed consent to have their child evaluated, and if an IEP is created, must sign consent to the services recommended on the IEP
- Within 45 school days after informed consent is signed, a meeting is held to go over all evaluations

Evaluation

- Psychoeducational assessment
- Social History
- Observation
- Physician's report
- Teacher report
- Other assessments as needed: behavioral, speech, occupational therapy, etc.

Demystification

Knowing can be a relief!

Provides a family with the tools to understand their child's struggles

Individualized Education Plan

If a student determined to have a disability that impacts learning, he or she may be eligible for services and accommodations via an IEP.

What's on the IEP?

Possible services and accommodations:

- Special Education Teacher Support Services--pull out/push-in, generally math and reading/writing
- Integrated Co-Teaching Services--two teachers in the classroom, one general education, one special education (highly qualified in his or her subject)--both teach all students, but collaborate on best instructional practices for the individual students with IEPs
- Related services--counseling, speech, occupational therapy, physical therapy, crisis or health paraprofessional (1:1), etc. These services must be related to the student's disability
- Other placements: (District 75, 12:1+1, 15:1)
- Modified Promotional Criteria, if applicable
- Testing accommodations

Instruction, Modification and Accommodations

504 Plan

Parents may opt to have a child evaluated through another process (e.g., an outside provider).

- Generally entitle students to accommodations/modifications but not services.
- Reviewed by the school every year; we ask for updated documentation every three years unless something changes significantly.

K-8 Supports

- Universal screening of students for learning and behavioral issues (e.g., Fountas and Pinnell Baseline Assessments and Benchmarking, ANet, NWEA MAP for mathematics and literacy)
- Targeted instruction in small groups based on universal screening (TRIP, math interventions, Leveled Literacy Instruction (LLI))

K-8 Supports, continued

- Decoding and fluency measures and interventions (e.g. LLI and Orton-Gillingham)
- Best practices in Tier I: interventions that all students are eligible for/able to benefit from (e.g., grouping, differentiated content/process/product)
- Math tutoring for selected students
- Edgenuity

High School Supports

- Intervention Team--meets regularly in two grade groups to discuss specific student needs and create plans specific to that student. Also meets with students and families and tracks grades/credit accumulation.
- ALSUP for collaborative problem solving
- After School Study Center
- Advisory

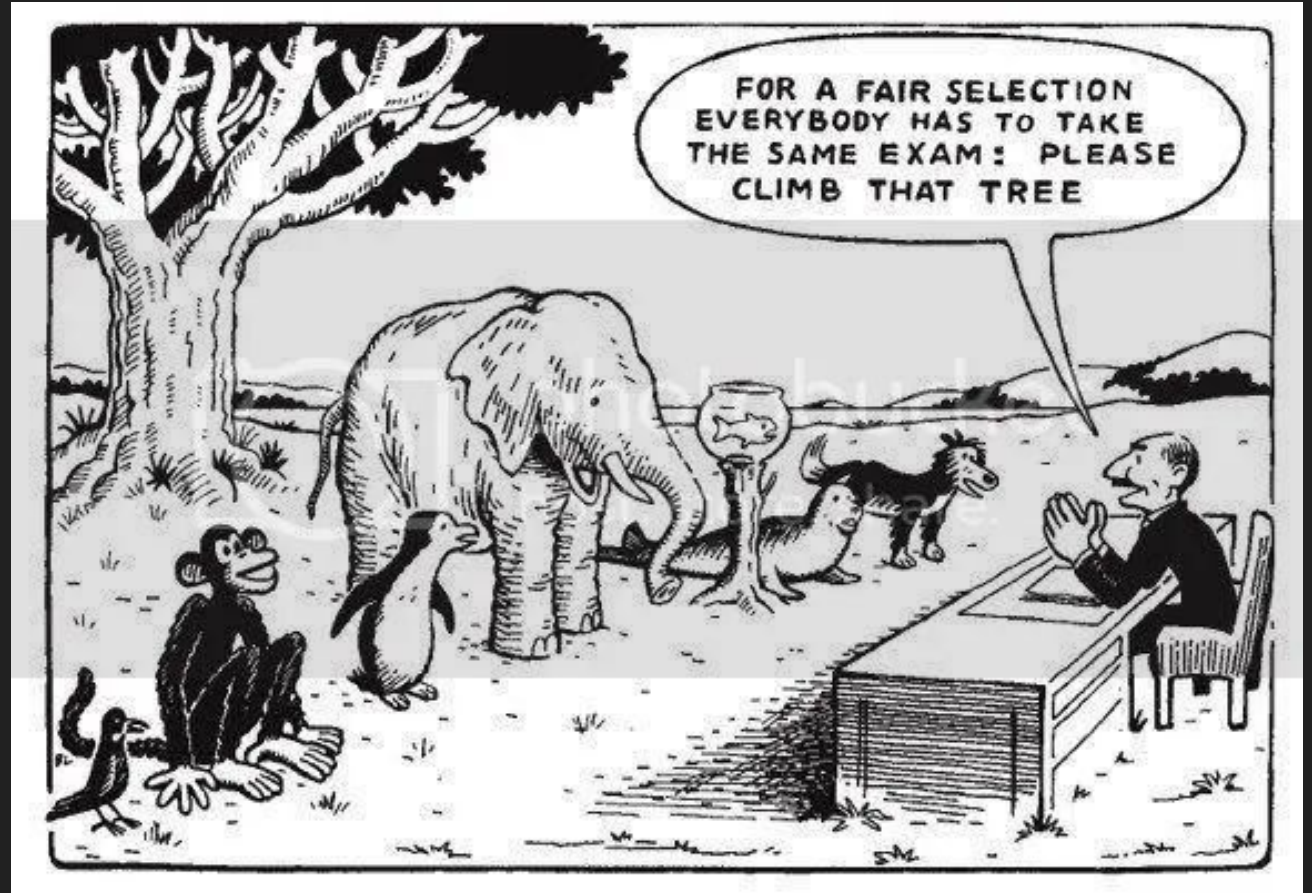
School-wide supports

- Collaboration: student work is discussed with specific protocols designed to help teachers understand the breakdown (“What is contributing to this student’s/class’s lack of success?”)
- Parent-teacher conferences and family conferences (family conferences are extended conferences for selected families where a specific plan is created with follow-up built in).
- PowerSchool--allows staff, parents, and students to gauge progress
- Counseling department (at-risk individual counseling, proactive groups)

School-wide supports, continued

- ICT (co-teaching classrooms)
- Functional Behavior Assessments and Behavior Improvement Plans
- Academic and Social-Emotional Advisories (MS and HS)
- At-risk instructional support
- LEXIA for foundational reading skills

Leveling the playing field



What else can I do?

Continue to talk to us--keep lines of communication open. We need and value your input!

Ask for help! Academic support, counseling.

Support your child at home--reading every night, online practice, good habits.

Talk to your pediatrician about your concerns; get a referral to a specialist if needed.

Be your child's teammate--figure out what is best for your child with the input of professionals. And PLEASE avoid the "L" word ("lazy")!

FAQ

What is a disability?

If she has an IEP, will he have to go to a different school or be in a separate class?

Will they have an IEP forever?

Will he be able to go to college?

How do I avoid keeping my child from feeling different?

(Your question here.)

References and Resources

[Multi-Tiered Systems of Support](#)

[Wrightslaw.com on parent consent](#)

[ADDitude article on demystification for parents](#)

[From NYC DOE: Guide to Special Education Procedures for Students Attending Charter Schools](#)

[Counseling Referral Form for Renaissance Parents](#)

Have specific questions? Let's talk! Email me at lizperez@rencharter.org