

### **Part 3: IDENTIFYING AND EVALUATING STUDENTS**

The Ripley-Ohio-Dearborn Special Education Cooperative (ROD) undertakes specific activities to assure that the location, identification, and evaluation of all students three (3) years of age, but less than twenty-two (22) years of age, who may be students in need of special education and related services, occurs continuously throughout the school year. The child find activities occur for students who have legal settlement within the jurisdiction of ROD, attend a nonpublic school, are served by an agency, or live in an institution located within the jurisdiction of ROD, are homeless students as defined at 511 IAC 7-32-46, are wards of the state, are highly mobile and/or migrant students, and are suspected of being students with disabilities in need of special education even though they advance from grade to grade.

The ROD preschool coordinator communicates with the First Steps administrator to assure continual communication regarding students with disabilities who are served through First Steps. For a child enrolled in the First Steps program, (ages birth to thirty-six (36) months) planning for the preschool program begins at 30 months when First Steps provides basic information to ROD. At least 90 days prior to the child's third birthday a conference convenes to discuss any services the child may need. The transition from First Steps to preschool is to proceed smoothly and services are provided to assure an appropriate program.

The ROD preschool coordinator, or designee, also provides in-service training regarding the identification and potential services for young students with disabilities for persons employed through Head Start. The ROD preschool coordinator also distributes brochures to area pediatricians and hospitals to assure a widespread knowledge of ROD evaluation, identification, and programing opportunities for students with disabilities.

Building principals are responsible for assuring that universal screening using standardized curriculum-based assessment measures identifies students who may benefit from intervention programs in reading or math. Students who are identified "at risk" are referred for intervention and progress monitoring in schools grades K-8. High school students receive monitoring through teachers and referral for intervention and progress monitoring as appropriate. Students may receive ongoing interventions or may be referred for an evaluation by the school. Alternatively, parents may initiate an evaluation. A student who is referred for an evaluation is assigned to a school psychologist who oversees the evaluation and initial case conference committee meeting.

Administrators and special education teachers receive on-going annual in-service training provided by ROD regarding their responsibility to identify all students with disabilities, to make special education and related services available to all students with disabilities, and to provide parents with full notice of their procedural safeguards. ROD provides training on universal screening, response to instruction, progress monitoring, and other topics, as needed, to assure that comprehensive child find procedures can be provided through the local schools.

The ROD Director of Special Education meets annually with administrators of nonpublic schools to

discuss child-find activities and procedures for the identification and evaluation of students who may be in need of special education and related services.

### CHILD-FIND

The Ripley-Ohio-Dearborn Special Education Cooperative (ROD) undertakes specific activities to assure that the location, identification, and evaluation of all students three (3) years of age, but less than twenty-three (23) years of age, who may be students in need of special education and related services, occurs continuously throughout the school year. The child find activities occur for students who are suspected of being students with disabilities who are in need of special education. Such students have legal settlement within the jurisdiction of ROD or have been voluntarily accepted into the school corporation by transfer and:

- attend public school;
- attend a nonpublic school; are served by an agency;
- live in an institution located within the jurisdiction of ROD;
- are homeless students as defined at 511 IAC 7-32-46; are wards of the state; or, are highly mobile and/or migrant students.

The ROD preschool coordinator communicates with First Steps service coordinators to assure continual communication regarding students with disabilities who are served through First Steps. For a child enrolled in the First Steps program, (ages birth to 36 months) planning for the preschool program begins at 30 months when First Steps provides basic information to ROD. At least 90 days prior to the child's third birthday a conference convenes to discuss any services the child may need. The transition from First Steps to preschool is to proceed smoothly and services are provided to assure an appropriate program. By the date of the third birthday of a student who may be eligible for early childhood special education, ROD will complete its evaluation, convene a case conference committee to determine eligibility for special education and related services, and if the student is eligible, develop an IEP for the student, and implement the IEP. If the student's third birthday occurs during the summer and the case conference committee determines the student requires extended school year services, the IEP must state that services will be initiated during the summer months of the student's third birthday. IF ESY services are not needed, the IEP states that services will be initiated at the beginning of the upcoming school year.

The ROD preschool coordinator, or designee, also provides in-service training regarding the identification and potential services for young students with disabilities for persons employed through Head Start. The ROD preschool coordinator distributes brochures to area pediatricians, hospitals, community preschools, and the media to assure a widespread knowledge of ROD evaluation, identification, and programing opportunities for students with disabilities.

Building principals are responsible for providing universal screening using standardized curriculum-based assessment measures to identify students who may benefit from intervention programs in reading, language, math, or behavior. Students who are identified "at risk" are referred for intervention and progress monitoring in schools grades K-8. High school students receive

monitoring through teachers and referral for intervention and progress monitoring as appropriate. Students may receive ongoing interventions or may be referred for an evaluation by the school. Alternatively, parents may initiate an evaluation. A student who is referred for an evaluation is assigned to a school psychologist who oversees the evaluation and initial case conference committee meeting. Administrators and special education teachers receive in-service training provided by ROD regarding their responsibility to identify all students with disabilities, to make special education and related services available to all students with disabilities, and to provide parents with full notice of their procedural safeguards. ROD provides training on universal screening, response to instruction, progress monitoring, and other topics, as needed, to assure that comprehensive child find procedures are provided through the local schools.

The ROD Director of Special Education meets annually with administrators of nonpublic schools to discuss child-find activities and procedures for the identification and evaluation of students who may be in need of special education and related services.

### RESPONSE TO INTERVENTION

Response to Intervention (RTI), a part of the child-find process, is a school-wide process of providing support for all students to achieve their learning goals. The RTI framework includes three tiers of instruction to meet students' needs. At tier I, core instruction is delivered to meet the needs of the students. Students who struggle with the instruction provided at Tier 1 are given additional support in Tier II. Tier II consists of up to 30 minutes of supplemental instruction daily in the area that is targeted. Tier III instruction provides more intense intervention, targeted to individual student needs. Tier III consists of 30 to 90 minutes of supplemental instruction in a small group or individual setting. At both Tier II and Tier III, the supplemental instruction is targeted to the specific area of need for the student indicated by assessment data. The supplemental instruction at Tier III is in addition to the core instruction.

Before referring a student for evaluation for any of the following suspected disabilities, appropriate supplemental targeted and intensive instruction through RTI is provided to the student and the student's response to the instruction is "progress monitored" and revised as needed:

- Specific Learning Disability
- Mild Cognitive Disability
- Emotional Disability (except in cases of a serious mental illness) Other Health Impaired (particularly for Attention-Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder)

For other referrals, specific documentation of supplemental and targeted instruction and the student's response to the instruction is not required.

### Universal Screening

The school gathers information about student progress through a variety of universal screening instruments.

The school administers universal screening measures that may include data from Aimsweb, DIBELS, EasyCBM, NWEA, MClass, Acuity, ISTEP, and other class room based assessments.

Screenings are typically administered at designated benchmark points, such as the beginning and ending of the school year.

### Tier I - Core Instruction

The school uses research-based core curricula and differentiated instructional materials. The instructional environment is designed to meet the needs of most students. Highly qualified classroom teachers deliver instruction using effective instructional practices. Instruction is provided according to Indiana requirements for instructional time. Students are assessed using universal screening measures and other data sources. The school uses data from universal screening measures and other data sources to identify students who may need additional support through comprehensive and coordinated services. When a student needs increased support, the parent is notified in writing regarding:

- the amount and nature of student performance data that will be collected;
- the general education services that will be provided;
- the evidence based strategies that will be used for increasing the student's rate of learning to grade level;
- the parent's right to request an educational evaluation to determine eligibility for special education and related services;
- an explanation that the public agency will initiate a request for an educational evaluation if the student fails to make adequate progress after an appropriate period of time; and an explanation that if/when the public agency initiates a request for an educational evaluation, the public agency will provide written notice to the parent regarding the evaluation before requesting parental consent for the evaluation.

This required information is contained in the RTI Parent Letter which is in the forms section of this manual.

Parental consent is not required to provide supplemental targeted instruction; however, parent involvement throughout the planning and implementation of interventions can provide additional information, support, and resources for the student.

### Tier II - Targeted Instruction

Students who struggle with the core curriculum are provided with up to 30 minutes of supplemental instruction, targeted to the student's area of need. Remember that these needs have been defined during universal screening and then during Tier I. Instruction is research-based, and supplemental to the core curriculum. Student progress is monitored using an assessment tool targeted to the student's area of need. Student progress is typically monitored weekly or every other week. Progress may be monitored by using curriculum based measures or other appropriate means that give information about a student's progress on a specific skill. The school keeps documentation of the supplemental instruction provided and the assessment results. Repeated data measures (at least 6 to 10 data points) are analyzed to determine if the student is making adequate progress. If a student does not show adequate growth in response to the

instruction provided, the instruction should be altered and/or intensified to better meet the student's needs. The student may be considered for Tier 3 instruction.

### Tier III - Intensive Targeted Instruction

Students who continue to struggle with the core curriculum, despite supplemental instruction at Tier II are provided with more intensive support at Tier III.

The *Educational Background Information/Referral Form* ROD 2:3 (see forms section) is completed to gather available information and to aid in development of a more targeted instructional plan for the student.

The student is provided with 30 to 90 minutes of intensive supplemental instruction, targeted to the student's area of need.

The supplemental instruction is provided in a small group or individual setting.

The *Intervention Action Plan* ROD 1:2 (see forms section) is completed as documentation of the instruction used with the student and documentation of the fidelity of instruction.

Implementation fidelity means that the instruction was delivered as it was intended, with the agreed upon frequency and duration and in the manner that has been scientifically proven effective. The ROD 1:2 also records progress monitoring data for the student, however printouts and graphs of the data may be attached.

Progress monitoring data is collected more frequently, once to twice a week.

Progress can be monitored by using curriculum based measures or other appropriate means that give information about a student's progress on a specific skill.

Repeated data measures (at least 6 to 10 data points) are analyzed to determine if the student is making adequate progress. If a student does not show adequate growth in response to the instruction provided, the instruction may be altered and/or intensified to better meet the student's needs.

If, after using scientific, research based instruction for an appropriate period of time, the student does not make adequate progress, a referral for an educational evaluation for special education eligibility should be initiated by the school. Referral for special education should occur only when the student still experiences great difficulty showing educational progress, despite supplemental intensive, targeted instruction.

To make a SCHOOL REFERRAL when the school has determined a student needs an evaluation and the school has gathered the required documentation:

Complete the ROD 2:1 *Notification of Request for Educational Evaluation* and fax it to ROD to the attention of the school psychologist assigned to your building.

A ROD staff member will come to your building and review your data, or will ask you to fax specific items to the ROD office.

If the data are incomplete, you will receive a review letter explaining what needs to be completed.

When you have sufficient data and the required forms are complete, the school will arrange a referral meeting. This meeting could include the ROD staff member, the classroom teacher, the parent, and another representative from the school such as an administrator, counselor, or

intervention coordinator. Bring the following items to the referral meeting:  
the ROD 2:3 *Educational Background Information / Referral Form* (completed);  
work samples that show examples of the student's problem; the student's  
cumulative file; and if the student is in the RTI process, the ROD 1:2  
*Intervention Action Plan* with progress monitoring data included or  
attached.

At the referral meeting the team, with the ROD staff member, will determine whether to proceed with an evaluation, to refuse the evaluation, or to implement other actions including new interventions or revised interventions.

For PARENT REFERRALS, when the parent has made a verbal or written request to a certified staff member for an initial evaluation:

Complete the ROD 2:1 *Notification of Request for Educational Evaluation* and fax it to ROD;

A ROD staff member will contact the school to arrange for a referral meeting within 10 school days of the parent request. This meeting will include the ROD school psychologist, the classroom teacher, the parent, and another representative from the school (administrator, counselor, or intervention coordinator). The following items must be brought to the referral meeting:

the ROD 2:3RG and RS *Educational Background Information / Referral Form*;  
work samples that show examples of the student's problem; the student's  
cumulative file; and if the student is in the RTI process, the ROD 1:2  
*Intervention Action Plan* with progress monitoring data included or  
attached.

At the referral meeting, the team (with the ROD staff member) will determine whether to proceed with an evaluation, to refuse the evaluation, or to implement other actions including new interventions or revised interventions.

## CONFIDENTIALITY

Confidentiality means private or secret. All discussions regarding a student are highly confidential. The importance of strict adherence to confidentiality in RTI team functioning cannot be emphasized enough. School staff, parents and students have to trust that what is said and done within the team meeting will remain there. All public descriptions and discussion about the intervention team should prominently mention the team's confidentiality policy. Should a breach of confidentiality occur, the program would be in jeopardy, employees also could receive disciplinary actions. The team should thoroughly discuss this issue, and the team leader should periodically remind the members of its importance.

There is a statutory exception to confidentiality in Indiana that concerns child abuse and neglect. If within the team discussions it is revealed that abuse has occurred or it is suspected that abuse has occurred, then all team members are obliged to see that the

abuse is reported.

Confidentiality also may be breached if a person has threatened to harm others or him/herself. The professional who learns of this threat must take steps to warn those who are the object of the threat or take steps to protect the student from him/herself.

Violations may result in disciplinary action toward a staff member.