



MY CHILD NEEDS HELP IN SCHOOL. I WONDER IF MY CHILD HAS A DISABILITY?

Sometimes teachers or parents believe that getting a label through a special education evaluation is the only way to help a child, when, in fact, finding out what instruction works best for your child is the key to helping him or her have a successful school experience. Schools have a responsibility to provide effective instruction and behavioral supports to all students. When a student needs more help, a team of people use a problem-solving process to find ways to improve learning. The team may include teachers, administrators, and other types of specialists who may be able to help find solutions. Parents are also part of the problem-solving team and are encouraged to work with the school to help find solutions.

During the problem-solving process, assessments are used to help the team find out what works best. The most important goal of any type of assessment is to help the school know how to better help your child. If a team loses sight of that goal and begins to focus on how to "get a label," then decisions are made based on the assumption that a special education label alone will show what type of help your child needs. If this assumption is made, then the team loses focus on achieving the shared goal: finding out what instruction your child responds positively to and then taking responsibility for providing that level of instruction for as long as your child needs it. This approach to helping students is usually referred to as response to instruction/intervention or "RtI."

WHAT IS RTI?

Response to Instruction/Interventions (RtI) refers to a way to help all children be successful in school. Measuring how your child responds to instruction and interventions is a part of the problem-solving process schools use to improve instruction and interventions for all students. Your child will benefit from the school's RtI system, whether or not he/she is evaluated or found eligible for special education services.

What can I expect with RtI?

- You will be informed and involved in planning and providing interventions for your child.
- You will see levels of support (academic and behavioral) that increase or decrease in intensity depending on your child's needs.
- You will receive frequent progress monitoring data about how your child responds to the intervention provided.
- You will be involved in a team that uses information gathered from your child's response to instruction and intervention to make important decisions regarding your child's educational needs.

This may include decisions about special education services. Visit <http://www.florida-rti.org/> for more information, including a parent brochure about RtI.

