Response to Intervention in Kindergarten (RTI)

By Leigh Ammeraal

What is Response to Intervention?

RTI is a process of intervention for students who are identified as struggling with certain skills or struggling to meet academic performance targets. RTI consists of a three tiered intervention method. Tier one consists of high quality whole class instruction. Tier two is using differentiated instruction to help small groups of students or individual students who are struggling. Tier three is when individual students are given specialized one-on-one instruction.

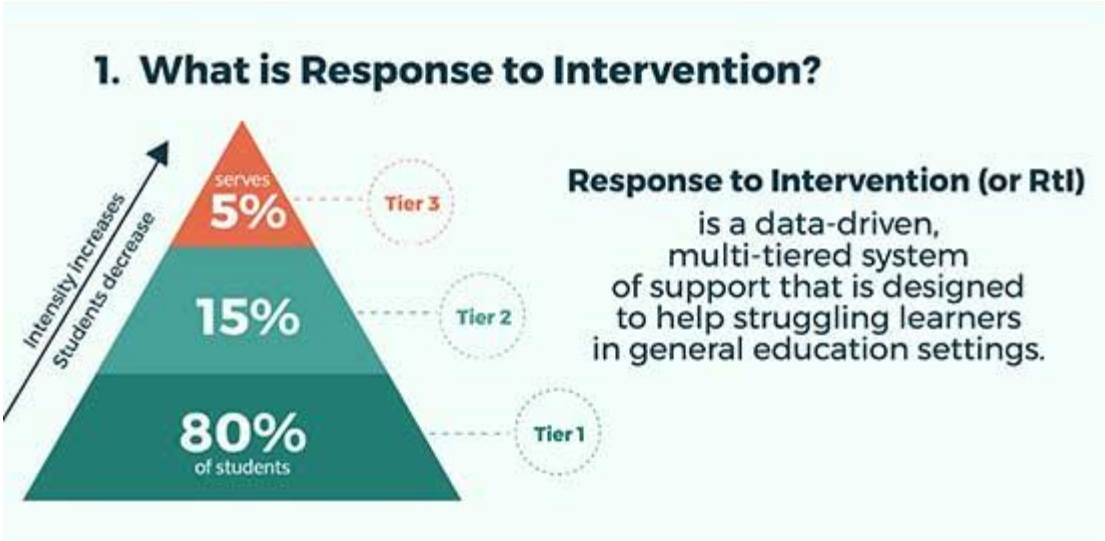


*Figure 1

RTI involves a screening process to identify which students are struggling and may be in need of intervention. Numerous students have shown that reading problems become increasingly more resistant to intervention and treatment after the 3rd grade which is why early intervention is so important (Pool & Johnson)

Early Literacy Screening

It is so important to screen for early literacy skills because it has been proven that early literacy skills predicts their success in reading, therefore, problems with early literacy can predict potential problems with reading. The core literacy skills that should be assessed are:

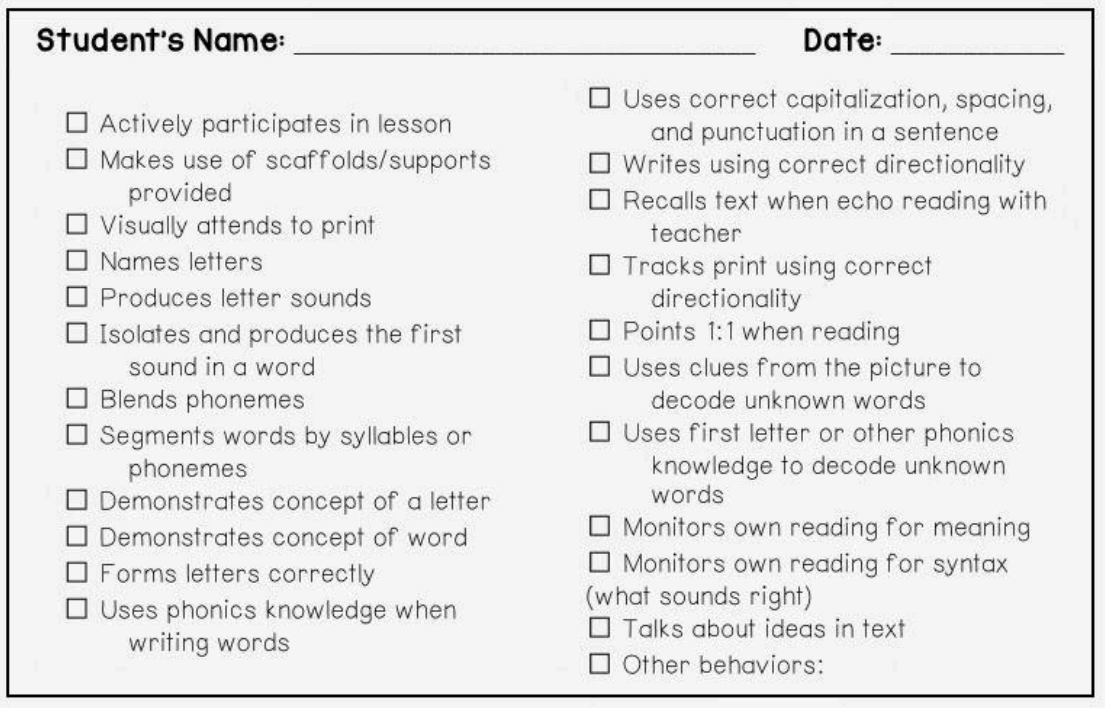
1. Phonological awareness
2. Alphabet knowledge
3. Understanding of the concept of words
4. Ability to correspond letters to sounds

When conducting Universal Screening the instructor should bear in mind four considerations:

1. it must examine children's early literacy skills across the four core skills
2. it must be sensitive—effectively and accurately differentiating between those children who are at risk and those who are not
3. it must be efficient and easily administered
4. it must meet minimum standards of technical adequacy for validity and reliability (Pool & Johnson).

A common screening tool used by early childhood educators is the The Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills® (DIBELS). DIBELS measures phonological awareness, knowledge of alphabetic principles, comprehension, and vocabulary and oral language.

Because DIBELS is not available to every teacher, myself included, I will plan to conduct my own screening assessment based on these screening measures. For the purpose of my case study (see below) I will develop my own version of the DIBELS test. Below is an image of an Early Literacy Assessment I plan to use to screen and assess each one of my students.



Student's Name: _____ **Date:** _____

- ☐ Actively participates in lesson
- ☐ Makes use of scaffolds/supports provided
- ☐ Visually attends to print
- ☐ Names letters
- ☐ Produces letter sounds
- ☐ Isolates and produces the first sound in a word
- ☐ Blends phonemes
- ☐ Segments words by syllables or phonemes
- ☐ Demonstrates concept of a letter
- ☐ Demonstrates concept of word
- ☐ Forms letters correctly
- ☐ Uses phonics knowledge when writing words
- ☐ Uses correct capitalization, spacing, and punctuation in a sentence
- ☐ Writes using correct directionality
- ☐ Recalls text when echo reading with teacher
- ☐ Tracks print using correct directionality
- ☐ Points 1:1 when reading
- ☐ Uses clues from the picture to decode unknown words
- ☐ Uses first letter or other phonics knowledge to decode unknown words
- ☐ Monitors own reading for meaning
- ☐ Monitors own reading for syntax (what sounds right)
- ☐ Talks about ideas in text
- ☐ Other behaviors:

*Figure 2

Process Monitoring

In addition to initial Universal Screening it is important to monitor student performance to determine how well a student is responding to instructional intervention. In RTI, this process is often referred to as **Process monitoring.** The initial screening tests students skills and overall academic performance. Process monitoring will not assess a student's overall academic performance but will only assess the skills in which the student is receiving intervention.

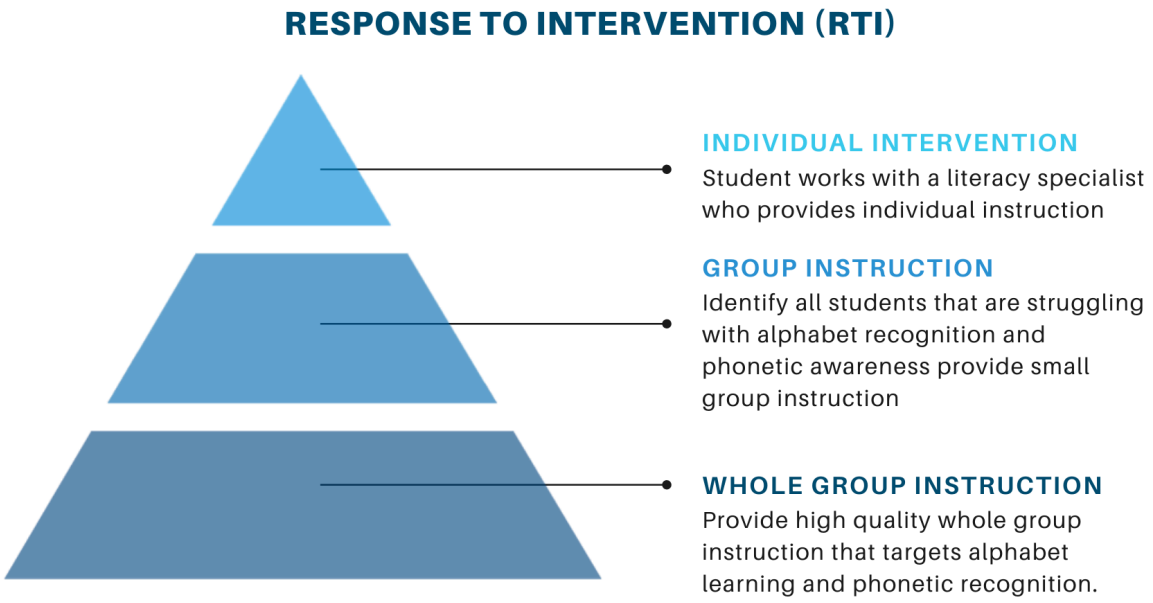
For example, you may test a students early literacy skills early on in the school year, and identify that they are struggling with their ability to correspond letters to words.You will set up an RTI intervention plan for that student and monitor their ability to correspond letters to words on a weekly basis and keep track on a **Progress Monitoring Graph.**

Case Study

Student: Cindy
Age: 4 years old
Grade: Preschool

Scenario
Cindy completed the initial screening assessment (figure 2) a few weeks after school began. According to her initial test results, she was identified as struggling with her alphabet knowledge and phonetic awareness. As a result, we have initiated an intervention plan to help Cindy improve both of these skills.

Intervention Plan



Tier 1: Core Literacy Instruction

This tier in the intervention plan requires that the teacher provides the whole class with high quality instruction. Because CIndy has been identified as struggling with alphabet and phonetic awareness, the teacher will plan multiple whole group lessons aimed at improving the whole classes alphabet and phonetic skills.



Tier One Whole group instruction will focus on both teaching alphabet recognition and teaching phonetic awareness. For alphabet awareness, the goals of the lesson should be to have the children:

1. Recognize individual letters
2. Write individual letters
3. Recognizing multiple letters together

For phonetic awareness instruction will include:

1. Learning initial sounds

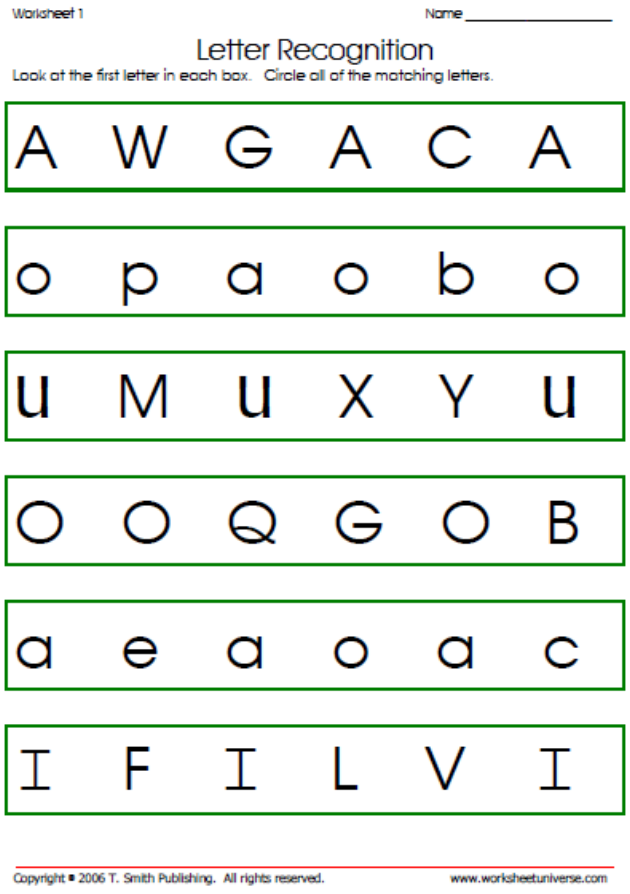
2. Recognize rhyming pairs

Sample Lesson Plan: https://sarahsnippets.com/rti-in-kindergarten-abc-and-phonemic/

Tier 2: Small Group Instruction

After continued monitoring, if Cindy is not responding to Tier 1 intervention, we will continue with Tier 2 instruction, more specialized small group instruction. We will use **Data-Driven Decision Making** to decide what specific skills Cindy still needs intervention with.

We will group students in Homogenous groups, and students will be grouped with their peers who are at similar literacy levels. Over the course of eight weeks, we will provide daily designated class time for small group learning centers. Cindy's group will be given activities that target alphabet awareness and phonetic awareness. For example, Cindy's group will be given a worksheet where they have to recognize and circle individual letters.



Worksheet 1 Name _____

Letter Recognition

Look at the first letter in each box. Circle all of the matching letters.

A W G A C A

o p a o b o

u M u X Y u

O O Q G O B

a e a o a c

I F I L V I

Copyright © 2006 T. Smith Publishing. All rights reserved. www.worksheetuniverse.com

Tier 3: Specialized Individual Instruction

After the eight week Tier 2 intervention program, if Cindy has not responded to small group specialized instruction, she will be given Tier 3 intervention. Cindy will receive specialized one-on-one instruction three times per week for eight weeks.

Her specialized instruction will be conducted by a literacy specialist and their lessons will focus on building the skills that she has been identified as struggling in.

Sample Lesson Plan:
http://www.crtiec.dept.ku.edu/wp-content/uploads/2014/02/DEC_2017_MTSS-Kaminski-Tier-3.pdf

References:

Kaminski, R. A. (2017, October 5). Implementing T3 Intervention in Early Childhood: Challenges and Solutions. Retrieved February 15, 2020, from http://www.crtiec.dept.ku.edu/wp-content/uploads/2014/02/DEC_2017_MTSS-Kaminski Tier-3.pdf

Metcalf, T. (n.d.). What's Your Plan? Accurate Decision Making within a Multi-Tier System of Supports: Critical Areas in Tier 1. Retrieved February 15, 2020, from http://www.rtinetwork.org/essential/tieredinstruction/tier1/accurate-decision-making-within-a-multi-tier-system-of-supports-critical-areas-in-tier-1

Pool, J. L., & Johnson, E. S. (n.d.). Screening for Reading Problems in Preschool and Kindergarten. Retrieved February 14, 2020, from http://www.rtinetwork.org/essential/assessment/screening/screening-for-reading-problems-in-preschool-and-kindergarten

Response To Intervention Explained. (2013). Retrieved February 14, 2020, from https://www.specialeducationguide.com/pre-k-12/response-to-intervention/

RTI in Kindergarten: ABC and Phonemic Awareness to Phonics. (2019, September 4). Retrieved February 15, 2020, from https://sarahsnippets.com/rti-in-kindergarten-abc-and-phonemic/