

The LADSE Spotlight

Highlighting Important Issues in Education

The Spotlight is on Rtl and Related Services

A Publication of The LaGrange Area Department of Special Education

From the Desk of the Executive Director

ISBE Provides Guidance on Special Education Eligibility and Entitlement within a Response to Intervention (Rtl) Framework

The formal incorporation of Response-to-Intervention (Rtl) models in the 2004 reauthorization of the Individuals with Disabilities in Education Act (IDEA 2004; USDOE, 2004) and the Illinois special education rules at 23 Illinois Administrative Code 226.130 provide the legal basis for the required use of Rtl in the identification of learning disabilities.

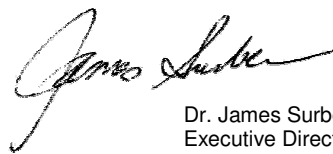
Beginning no later than the 2010-2011 school year, school districts in Illinois are required to use a process that determines how a student responds to scientific, research-based interventions when determining whether that student is or continues to be eligible for and entitled to special education under the category of specific learning disabilities (ISBE Guidance Document – January, 2010).

In response to this new mandate, LADSE and its member districts are gearing up to put in place a structure that can be successfully utilized at the building level. Dr. Sue Gallagher and the LADSE school psychologists will be working with individual buildings throughout LADSE to complete a self-assessment survey that will provide the structure for the development of their individual staff development plans.

In addition to Sue's work at the district and building level, the Illinois State Board of Education has issued two guidance documents designed to assist school districts with the implementation of the new Rtl/SLD eligibility and entitlement procedures. The first document issued this past January was the: "*Illinois Special Education and Entitlement Procedures and Criteria within a Response to Intervention (Rtl) Framework: A Guidance Document (ISBE, January 2010)*." This publication was designed to provide school districts throughout Illinois with a structure for using Rtl to determine eligibility for special education services. Although the mandate is specific to special education entitlement, it is important to keep in mind that Rtl is about creating opportunities and interventions that lead to data-based improved outcomes for all students.

The second document: "*Frequently Asked Questions about Special Education Eligibility and Entitlement within a Response to Intervention (Rtl) Framework (ISBE, March 2010)*" is a companion to the Guidance Document and provides additional detail and examples in the areas of data collection, scientifically-based curriculum interventions, special education evaluations, and eligibility. The questions contained in this document were developed from issues that were raised by several statewide groups and individuals during review and development of the ISBE Guidance Document.

Both of these documents are available on the ISBE website at: http://www.isbe.net/pdf/rti_state_plan.pdf. Districts should not hesitate to call if we can assist you with the implementation of your Rtl plans.



Dr. James Surber
Executive Director

"In a coordinated, multi-tiered system we provide students the services they need as soon as they need them"

Rtl and Related Services

Written by: Deb Daniel, Lead Occupational Therapist
Mary Jane Nelson-Stitt, Lead Physical Therapist

Rtl provides an opportunity for occupational therapists and physical therapists to contribute to early intervention strategies for all students in general education curricula, blended early childhood classrooms, and/or special programming.

The use of evidence-based practices and data driven decision making is basic to our effectiveness as OTs and PTs and is vital to participating in the Rtl process. In our role as school therapists, we are called upon to identify the unique qualities of the learning



environments in each of the districts in which we work and to integrate the perspectives of our respective disciplines in ways to support students' participation and success. We are challenged in our collaborative efforts to

respect the problem-solving approaches unique to each building. OTs and PTs bring a functional perspective to enhance the learning experience of students. LADSE's winter Institute Day program, *Rtl for Related Services*, provided therapists with the

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Rtl and Related Services

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opportunity to discuss issues and topics relevant to all students at different ages and ways to offer interventions such as: in-services to building staff at the beginning of the school year on items of general interest (eg, ways to accommodate students' sensory processing needs in the classroom or using gross motor movement in academic sessions to enhance the learning curve), a building walk-through to determine appropriateness of students' positioning at their desks, or a tool kit for improving fine and gross motor skills. A summary of the *Rtl for Related Services* presentation follows.

The LADSE Institute Day on February 16th, 2010 featured the topic, *Rtl for Related Services*. Wendy Robinson, Assistant Director of Learning and Leadership Development at Heartland Area Education Agency in Johnston, Iowa, gave a presentation and facilitated several break-out sessions for participants who were assigned to groups according to their discipline areas. Ms. Robinson identified challenges for support personnel in Rtl models, including the need for "a more systemic approach to serving schools and students, including a flexible workload that reflects less individual pull-out support and more consultation and collaboration in core and supplemental instruction." Rtl was described:

- not as an instruction program, but instead *a framework to implement effective practices*,
- not intended to encourage placement of students, but instead *a matching of needs and resources*,
- not to be implemented by any one person, but instead *a collaborative effort*,
- not the same for every school, but instead *uniquely designed for each building*,
- not a special education or general education or Title I or Talented and Gifted Initiative, but instead, *an "Every" Education Initiative*.

Guiding principles of Rtl were reviewed as providing:

- a proactive system (use of data for early intervention) as opposed to reactive (ie, after failure),
- scientific/research-based instruction,
- instructionally relevant assessments (screening/diagnostic/progress monitoring),
- a problem-solving method in decision making,
- use of data to guide instructional decisions,
- quality professional development, and
- strong administrative and educational team leadership.

Domains of influence in problem solving incorporate Instruction (how we teach), Curriculum (what is being taught), Environment (context where learning is to occur), and Learner (characteristics of the individual in relation to the concern). School-wide systems for student success encompass academic systems and behavioral systems including the three tiers of Rtl intervention levels (universal, targeted group, and intensive individual) with a goal of achieving a full continuum of support for all students. The role of support personnel in Rtl is linked to program design, collaboration, as well as direct service to IEP students. The program design area includes explanation of the role of various domain areas in curriculum, instruction, and assessment. Specific tasks in this area consist of assisting in the selection of evidence-based interventions, planning for and participating in professional development, and interpreting progress in meeting the needs of students. Collaboration tasks consist of working with other support personnel in implementing Rtl models, assisting building leadership teams, communicating with families, and using flexible service delivery options for students. Tasks related to delivery of IEP services include linking targeted skill areas to curriculum and classroom performance, bridging gaps between IEP services and general education services, determining nature of services needed, and collaborating with educational teams to provide necessary supports using evidence-based practices or accommodations. Wendy Robinson stressed the need for an intensive cycle of exposure for students: smaller instructional groups, more instructional time, more detailed modeling and demonstration of skill, more extensive opportunities for guided practice, and more opportunities for error correction and feedback.

Ms. Robinson concluded, saying that Rtl has provided "a vehicle for general and special education to operate as a seamless unified system - not the dual system currently in operation in most schools. It allows districts to focus more on results and outcomes and less on eligibility and process."

Check back often for 2010-2011 professional development activities and register ONLINE through our website, www.ladse.org.



Resources to assist you and your students...

Rtl Action Network
www.rtinetwork.org

LADSE

The LaGrange Area
Department of Special Education

1301 W. Cossitt Avenue

LaGrange, IL 60525

Phone: 708.354.5730

Fax: 708.354.0733

TTY: 708.352.5994

www.ladse.org