

Recognition and Response in Early Childhood

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As administrators, educators, parents, researchers,...the list goes on, we know there is an increased focus on ensuring that all young children experience positive outcomes and enter school ready to learn. This can begin at the preschool level and sometimes even earlier. Our focus in this bulletin is on Recognition and Response (R&R) and what does it look like in Preschool? Can teachers and parents of preschool age children recognize early warning signs of learning problems and intervene early enough to prevent or lessen problems later in school? The Recognition and Response model, led by the Frank Porter Graham Child Development Institute (FPG), is a dynamic systemic approach to addressing the needs of young children. R&R is a tiered instructional model based on the principles of Response to Intervention. It is a model that helps adults know what to look for and respond in ways that help children experience early school success. A major assertion is that, intervening early, recognizing those warning signs and responding in ways that positively affect a child's early learning success are key. This can also help to determine which of those children actually have learning disabilities and which can be attributed to other factors, such as the curriculum. Therefore, a question we can ask ourselves might be, is it possible for a child to avoid a label and special education altogether by intervening early rather than waiting?

R & R in the Preschool Environment

What is Recognition and Response? Let's define these terms. Recognition refers to gathering formative assessment information by screening all of the children and monitoring their progress. Response is providing an effective core curriculum, intentional teaching, and targeted interventions linked to formative assessments. Lastly, collaborative problem-solving is used to support data-based decision-making, plan interventions and assess how well children respond to them.

There are three main features to the Recognition and Response model; teaching and caregiving practices; ongoing assessment and continuous progress monitoring, which all include collaborative problem-solving among team members. The goal of this framework when using it with young children is to become aware of areas (academic, behavioral, etc.) in which each child has differing needs. Then, we can match the instructional and behavioral systems of support to meet those individual needs. The R&R model specifically addresses academic learning for young children (e.g., language, literacy, math) and includes all of the key components mentioned above. Teachers, specialists, and parents are often the first to recognize that some young children may need additional supports to learn academic skills in the areas of literacy, language, and math. However, they may lack the direction in which to best respond to those children. The R&R model is designed to help early educators and parents address these issues. The features of this Recognition and Response model make it developmentally appropriate to use with children as young as 3 or 4 years of age.

Although additional research is needed to evaluate the effectiveness of this model for this age group, experts have concluded that this is a promising practice and positive outcomes can be made for young children who are at risk for learning disabilities.

SOURCE: Early Childhood Education Journal, 2010; FPG Child Development Institute, Young Exceptional Children, 2010, DEC, NAEYC, NHSA.



The Preschool R&R "Team"

The R&R "team" should consist of but not be limited to:

- * the early childhood educators
- * special educators
- * developmental psychologists
- * family members

Family members make a critical contribution to the success of the child. They should be involved in the problem-solving process from the beginning. This process requires collaboration among all of the members.

"Children's needs are better met if we pool resources rather than fragment them"

~Mary Ruth Coleman, Ph.D.

Recognition and Response: A Three Tiered Approach

A Breakdown of the Tiered Model

What is Tier 1: All Settings, All Students, Preventive and Proactive

- Core Curriculum—the components of the educational program which are the foundation, prerequisites and are mandatory
- Intentional teaching—catching teachable moments and using them to your advantage, teaching beyond or integrating something more into the lesson, uses behavioral issues as another means of teaching a valued lesson, and being involved in educational change, striving to make a difference in the lives of your students
- Universal Screening—the administration of an assessment to all students in the classroom; the first step in identifying the students who are at risk for learning difficulties

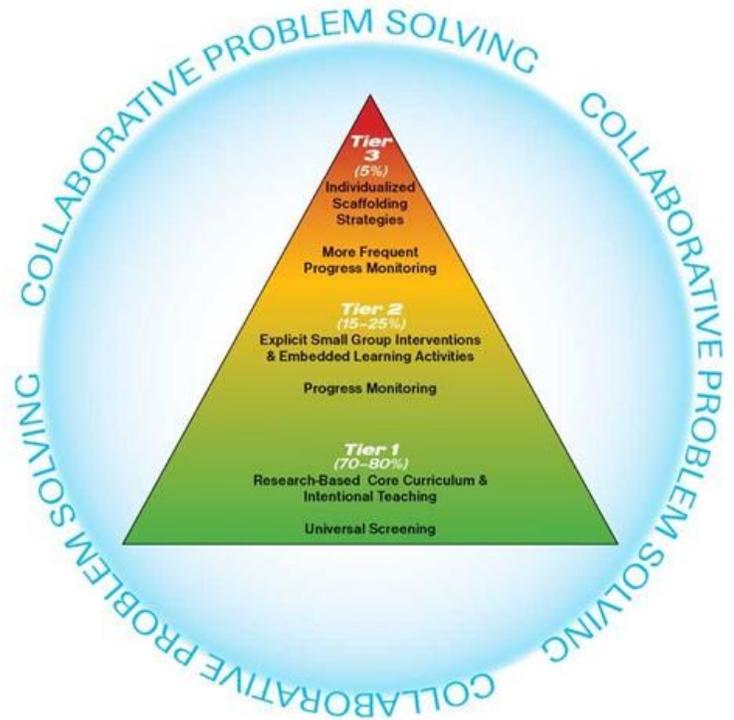
What is Tier 2: Some Students (at-risk), High Efficiency, Rapid Response

- Explicit small group interventions—structured, teacher-directed, content-specific interventions (Developmentally Appropriate Practice, DAP)
- Embedded learning opportunities—occur within daily activities, build on children’s strengths and interests, compliment explicit interventions
- Progress Monitoring—used to assess student progress or performance in the areas in which they were identified by universal screening as being at risk for learning difficulties

What is Tier 3: Individual Students, Assessment-Based, Intense, Durable Procedures

- Additional instructional supports are added based on the results from progress monitoring and universal screening
- Add individualized scaffolding strategies into small group intervention lessons
- Monitor student progress more frequently and re-adjust plan for scaffolding strategies.

SOURCE: National Center for Learning Disabilities, 2008



SOURCE: Buysse and Peisner-Feinberg, 2009



The Process of Problem-Solving

Encompassing these three tiers is the process of problem-solving. Teachers, parents, and specialists can work together collaboratively to plan various levels of instructional supports and also assess how well children respond to those supports. The problem solving teams are established to make decisions on the basis of the tiered framework. We must first define the problem by reviewing the assessment information on the children. Next, the team works together to analyze the assessment results to make decisions about needed adjustments in instruction. These will be data-based decisions. These decisions will then help to develop and implement a plan for modifying instruction for some children according to the tiered model. Then, the team will evaluate these modifications, which will include a plan for monitoring progress and making continued instructional adjustments based on the data. The team will also determine the times and specific ways for documenting as well as sharing the information with other members.

SOURCE: Young Exceptional Children, 2010

Applying the Principles of R & R In the Classroom

There are several decisions that need to be made in order to implement this practice in our Pre-k classrooms. Decisions regarding selecting universal screening and progress monitoring tools as well as identifying standardized tiered interventions will need to be made. Also, teachers will need the full support of the administrators, specialists, and families as they are all a part of the collaborative team. To begin applying the principles of R&R in the classroom a collaborative decision must be made as to how to incorporate universal screening and progress monitoring into your existing assessment plan.

STEP 1: Look at the assessment information that is already being gathered and determine which of those measures are linked to curriculum and early learning standards.

STEP 2: Organize instructional strategies into three tiers from least to most intensive. Identify which of those strategies are linked to the core curriculum.

STEP 3: Develop opportunities for collaborative problem solving to support instructional decision making.

Incorporating these steps can be the foundation for the effective use of Recognition and Response in Pre-K classrooms. Therefore, R&R in preschool, at its most basic level, should be used to address challenging behavior of children as well as promote social-emotional competency early on. This will in turn provide the necessary developmental support for these young children and also increase the likelihood for them to be academically successful as they enter Kindergarten and higher grades. Recognition and Response should be a natural part of the daily curriculum.

R & R and Challenging Behaviors

Applying this approach to preschool children with challenging behaviors involves forming and maintaining various relationships. Establishing and maintaining positive relationships with children in the classroom is an important step for the prevention and intervention of behavior problems. Also, the building of positive relationships with families of young children is a crucial step in promoting social-emotional competence.

Tier 1

- Incorporating positive behavior strategies, teaching methods that promote self-regulation and problem-solving and functional communication in those children with language delays.
- Screening for social-emotional/regulation problems.

Tier 2

- Targeted social skills instruction would be provided for a small group of children who are at risk for behavior problems but do not need individual behavior plans.

Tier 3

- Intensive and individualized behavior intervention plan is implemented.
- Ongoing functional behavior assessment/analysis, data collection and progress monitoring.

SOURCE: Barnett et al. 2006, Fox and Hemmeter 2009



SOURCES

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Frameworks for Response to Intervention in Early Childhood: Description and Implications. DEC, NAEYC, and NHSA, 2013.

What Does RTI Look Like in Preschool? By Mojdeh Bayat, Gayle Mindes, and Sheryl Covitt, 2010.

Response to Intervention & the Pyramid Model. Infants and Young Children. Fox et al, 2010.

Response to intervention for young children with extremely challenging behaviors: What it might look like. School Psychology Review, Barnett, et. al, 2008

<http://www.rtinetwork.org>

Fundamentals of Recognition and Response

When thinking about Response and Recognition in early childhood, there are some very important things to remember.

- ⇒ This is an emerging practice based on the principles of RTI but adapted for younger children in various programs.
- ⇒ This model does not require that the child go through the multi-tiered system before being referred to special education.
- ⇒ This model does not restrict the referral or evaluation process and is not solely focused on academics.
- ⇒ R&R embodies the characteristics of intentional teaching and developmentally appropriate practice.
- ⇒ At the higher tiers, targeted teaching and caregiving practices might be implemented in small groups but that does not mean that children are separated or isolated from their peers for all teaching.
- ⇒ The top tier of this model is not defined as special education.
- ⇒ The goal of the framework is to support teaching and caregiving rather than identification of a delay or disability.
- ⇒ The data collected can be used as an aid and can support teams in making special-education determination eligibility.

Early education is already behind the idea of prevention and finding children who need additional support as early as possible. The practices recommended within R & R are consistent with the current emphasis in early childhood on high-quality curriculum and teaching, the importance of intervening early using research-based approaches, the need to connect teaching and learning processes with positive outcomes for children and families, and the implementation of high-quality inclusion. Response to Intervention, or in this case Recognition and Response in early childhood, provides a critical opportunity for the field to improve the outcomes for all young children by addressing the needs of each child in a developmentally appropriate way.

According to Mary Ruth Coleman, Ph.D., FPG senior scientist and project co-director, there are two key principles behind Recognition and Response. "It is never appropriate to deny a special education label when we have evidence that one is needed. And it is never appropriate to deny classroom support that we know would be beneficial because the label is not attached."

SOURCE: Carta & Buysse, 2008; Buysse, Peisner-Feinber, 2010

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THEY TEACH US.**



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Caring for All Children

Workshops of Interest

The ECDC can provide information and workshops on a variety of topics tailored to the interests and needs of parents and early childhood professionals. Resources are available on such topics as general child development, developmental issues for children with special needs, coping strategies, and specific disabilities.

Workshops include:

- Including All Kids
- Developmentally Appropriate Practices
- Early Childhood Development: The Meaning of Red Flags
- Supporting Social Emotional Development
- Positive Guidance and Behavior Strategies
- Moving On: Transitioning Families (EI-CPSE) & (CPSE-CSE)
- What Are Early Intervention and Preschool Special Education?
- What is an Individualized Education Program (IEP)?
- Writing IEP Goals
- Getting Ready for Kindergarten
- Challenging Behavior Series

Who We Are

The Early Childhood Direction Center (ECDC) is a regional technical assistance center for the State Education Department providing information, referral and support to families, professionals, and community agencies concerned with young children birth to five. We are located at Syracuse University's Center on Human Policy.

**ECDC services to families are
free and confidential.**

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