RTI: A Primer for Parents
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RTI, or Response to Intervention, is a process where schools can provide interventions to students at risk for academic and/or behavioral problems. The RTI process was developed as a result of recent changes in federal and state laws that require schools to provide immediate and effective interventions to students who are struggling. These interventions need to be high quality, scientifically based, and matched to students’ needs. A benefit of the RTI mandate is that students no longer need to qualify for services before they can be provided. Now students can receive immediate help in the general education setting.

When educators discuss RTI, you may hear them refer to “tiers” of intervention. Tier 1 interventions include whole group or core instruction, and are likely to be effective for 80-90% of the student population in a given school. Tier 2 interventions are typically required for 5-10% of the student population: These are students for whom the Tier 1 intervention was not entirely successful. Tier 2 interventions include small group interventions like additional guided reading groups to work on reading comprehension skills or working with a math specialist on mathematics basic skills. Tier 3 interventions are intense, customized interventions designed for the 1-5% of the population for whom the Tier 1 and Tier 2 interventions were not sufficient.

Parents play an important role in the RTI process. Here are some ways to get involved:
- Provide your consent to the school for evaluations or the implementation of services.
- Attend the RTI team meetings for your child.
- Be aware of what interventions the school is implementing for your child and how progress is being monitored. If anything is unclear, ask for explanation.
- Praise your child or provide a reward when they meet their goals.
- Communicate suggestions to the RTI school staff as you know your child best and know what works well at home.

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