

Response to Intervention

Dear L&M,

I am totally frustrated with my child's school. I know he has a learning disability, but they keep telling me he doesn't qualify. He is not on grade level and is beginning to hate school. He is in second grade and knows he is different from the other kids. Please help!!

Many parents share your concern! First, you need to contact your child's school and schedule a meeting to review all testing/assessments conducted on your child. At this time, share your concerns/goals for the school year with the teacher, administrator, and any other specialists you have invited to the meeting. As a team, develop a plan of action with a time-line to accomplish 2-3 goals for your child. The time-line should be no longer than 6-8 weeks, with assessments pre-determined to evaluate if sufficient growth has occurred. At the second meeting, decide if pullout services from the classroom are necessary and determine another schedule for amount of services received, assessments to be conducted and a date to review if sufficient growth has occurred. At the third meeting, carefully review all data and decide if your child displays growth in the areas of academic concern. If not, discuss the need for special educational services for your child and how it will impact his/her regular educational services.

As the parent, you must advocate for your child's rights and services in the public school system. Many schools are overwhelmed with the expense of special services and hiring staff to properly service all students Individual Educational Plans. In response to the number of children being identified with 'special learning styles', a new approach to receiving special educational services is being implemented in most schools across CT. The Response to Intervention is a three-tier process that stresses the need for highly qualified teaching in the classroom and strong collaboration between classroom teachers and specialists. The first tier represents the classroom teacher instructing all students with the anthology. The second tier represents the classroom teacher and specialists (reading, math, speech, special educational teachers, psychologists) all working together in the classroom to meet the needs of students with differentiated material, without the child leaving the classroom. The third tier represents one-to-one support outside the classroom with differentiated material, in addition to tier one and two support. A student is placed in different tiers after being identified through scientific research-based assessments that sufficient academic growth is not occurring. The assessments occur every 6-8 weeks, as well as collaboration of school staff members to review benchmarks and classroom observations. If a child is not mastering his/her grade level curriculum, the child is automatically eligible for special educational services. The reauthorization of IDEA 2004 (Individuals with Disability Education Act) eliminates the use of the discrepancy formula to allow children to receive special education services. The discrepancy formula, which measures the difference between a child's I.Q. and achievement is viewed by many as culturally bias, inaccurate and identifying students too late. Under IDEA 2004, Response to Intervention acts as a qualification for children to receive special education services- after tier one, two and three have failed. A response to intervention that allows the child to receive services as early as kindergarten, as opposed to waiting until Grade Three... that's leaving no child behind!!!!