



**Parent and  
Family Guide**  
TO UNDERSTANDING  
**Response to  
Intervention**



**MISSISSIPPI  
DEPARTMENT OF  
EDUCATION**

Ensuring a bright *future* for every child

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## **MISSISSIPPI DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION**

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## Schools are responsible for helping all children succeed.

There are many ways to help children who are struggling to learn and need additional support. The Mississippi Department of Education Response to Intervention is one form of support that school districts in Mississippi are required to implement.

### WHAT IS RESPONSE TO INTERVENTION?

Response to Intervention (RtI) is a multi-step process that is put in place to support the academic and behavioral needs of ALL students as early as possible to ensure success. The goal of RtI is to prevent failure and make all students successful learners. RtI might also be referred to as Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS). RtI contains the following essential components:

- Universal Screener in math, reading, and other content areas to help schools identify students who may need more support or other types of instruction;
- Research-based interventions, teaching strategies, or other methods that have been proven to be effective in addressing a student's academic or behavioral problems that will help children learn;
- Progress monitoring a student's progress in the general curriculum to see how well the student is doing on a specific skill;
- Following recommended state guidelines for making decisions about which students are making progress or responding to intervention.

The RtI process provides different levels of support depending upon the needs of the child. At the core of RtI is high quality classroom instruction that is aligned to the Mississippi College and Career Readiness Standards.

### PARENTS MAKE A DIFFERENCE

#### What can I do as a parent?

If your child is struggling in school, it is important that you:

- Ensure your child attends school daily.
- Communicate with your child's teacher(s).
- Request help from the teacher early.
- Encourage your child to do well in school.
- Understand the assessments (tests) that your child takes.
- Monitor your child's progress in school and at home with homework.
- Ask how you can help your child at home.
- Focus on what your child can do and build on that foundation.
- Collaborate with your child's school.

#### How can I tell if my child is struggling?

Your child may be having difficulties in school if he or she shows any of the following:

- Lack of motivation, interest, or attention;
- Homework frustrations;
- Behavior problems;
- Slipping grades;
- Low self-esteem.

RtI can be used at any grade level and provides teachers and schools a process for looking at student performance. By using data and progress monitoring, teachers and parents can understand how the student is doing compared to grade-level expectations. Keeping a student at or near grade level, from the first days of pre-school to the final days of high school, is essential to a student's self-esteem and long-term success.

RtI is intended to improve the early identification and support of students with learning and behavior needs, including the need for special education.

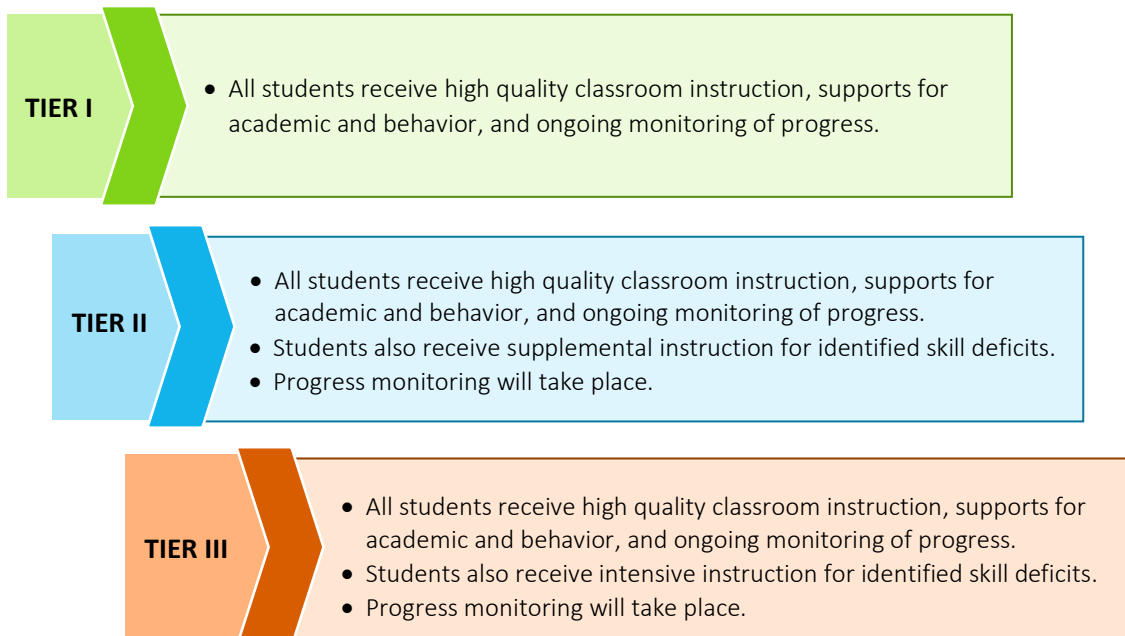
RtI provides an opportunity to identify students in need of additional classroom supports or special education services. Information and data gathered by an RTI process can lead to earlier identification of students who have true disabilities and are in need of special education services.

For students receiving special education services, RTI can help determine whether students are benefitting from those services.

## RESPONSE TO INTERVENTION ACTION: A THREE-TIER MODEL

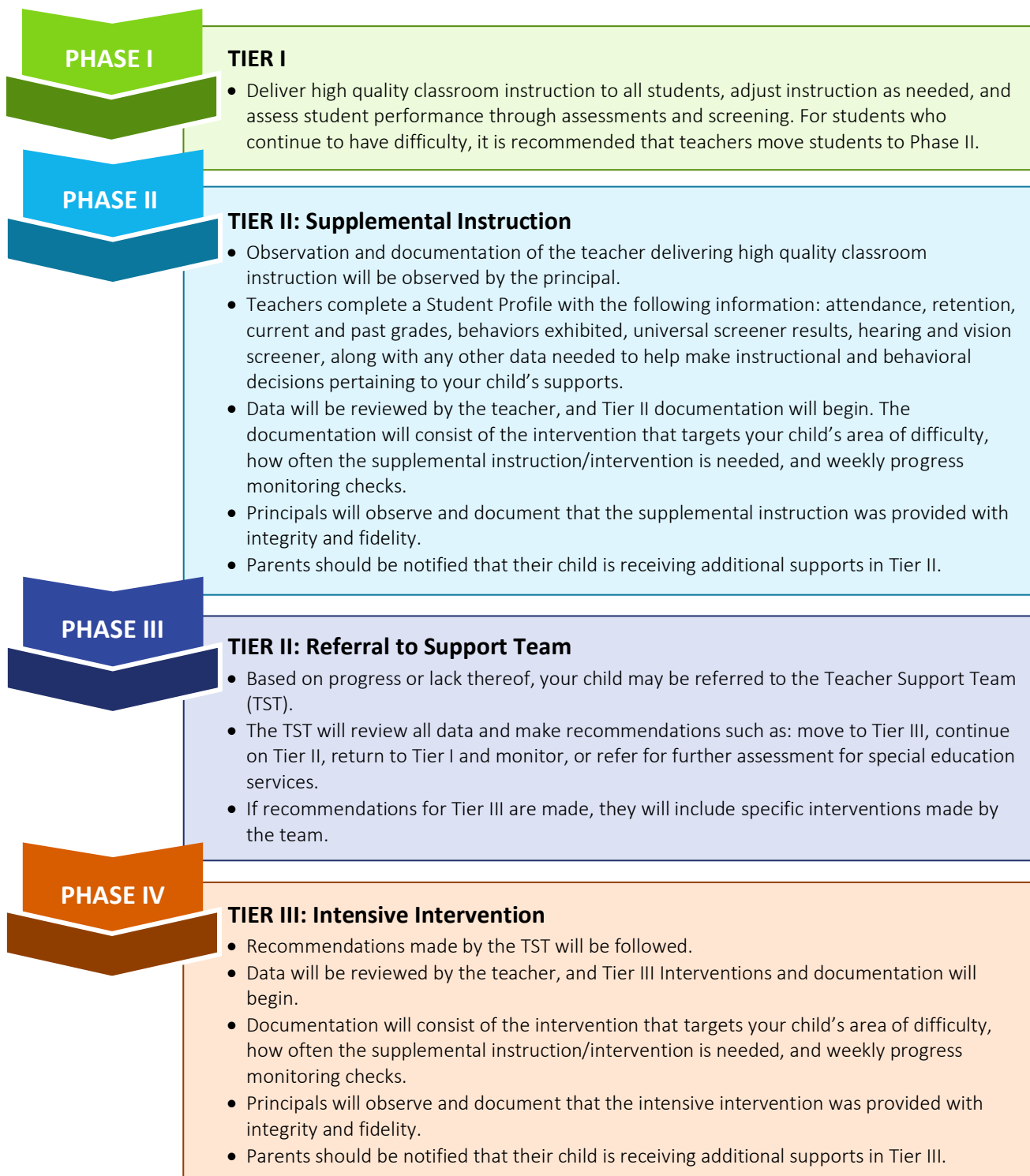
The Mississippi Department of Education requires all school districts to follow a model which consists of three (3) tiers of instruction.

At all stages of the process, teachers and school leaders use RtI to make the student more successful by following the student's progress in academic and behavioral target areas.



## WHAT DOES THE RtI PROCESS LOOK LIKE AT THE SCHOOL LEVEL?

As part of the Response to Intervention Process or MTSS, teachers have recommended documentation to collect to ensure appropriate interventions and supports are provided to your child. Outlined below is the process that the Mississippi Department of Education recommends districts follow.



## WHAT RtI IS AND WHAT IT IS NOT

### RtI is...

- × Screening to monitor student performance in general curriculum.
- × Scientifically proven interventions.
- × Closely-monitored student progress.
- × Decision-making based on student data.
- × Accuracy and consistency (fidelity).
- × Clear communication with parents.

### RtI is not...

- × General classroom instruction or assignments (more of the same).
- × Classroom observations.
- × Special or reassigned classroom seating.
- × Shortened assignments.
- × Suspension.
- × Retention.

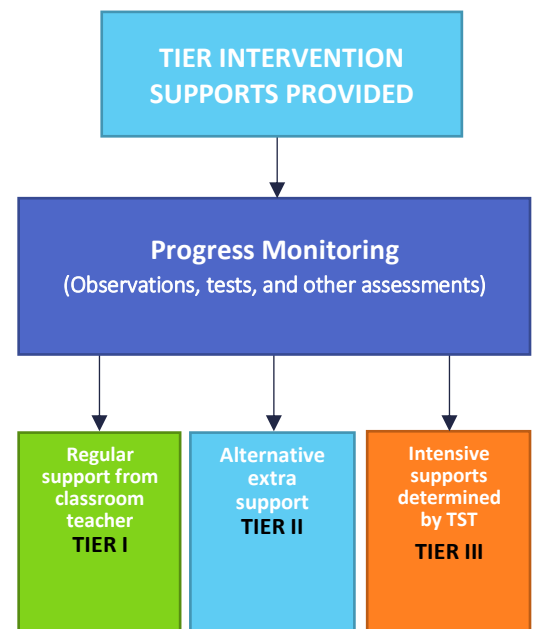
## HOW WILL I KNOW IF RtI IS HELPING MY CHILD SUCCEED?

Another important part of RtI is progress monitoring.

Progress monitoring is a way for teachers to take a snapshot of how children are doing on a specific skill. It shows how well the extra support is working or if it needs to be changed. It includes observations, tests, and other assessments.

The guidelines for progress monitoring at your child's school should state how long a child will receive specific support and how they will determine whether the support is helping your child. When a student meets the goals developed by the school, the extra support is no longer needed and the child continues to receive regular support from his or her classroom teacher.

When progress monitoring shows that a student is not responding to the extra support, another strategy may be tried. However, if the Teacher Support Team (TST) determines a higher level of support is needed, a student may receive individual instruction that further focuses on supporting the skills the student needs to be a successful learner (Tier III).



## WHAT IF I THINK MY CHILD NEEDS SPECIAL EDUCATION SERVICES?

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RtI does not replace the special education process. If at any time you believe your child needs special education services, you have the right to ask for an evaluation. RtI cannot be used to delay or deny that evaluation. If a student is not making progress in the RtI process at Tier III, a comprehensive evaluation for special education services may be recommended by the Teacher Support Team (TST).

**Ask for a formal evaluation for special education if you suspect your child has a disability.**

## WHAT QUESTIONS SHOULD I ASK MY CHILD'S SCHOOL?

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- Is the curriculum (core classroom instruction) meeting the needs of my child?
- Is my child currently in the tier process? If so, at which level?
- What are the extra support strategies that my child's school is using if he/she is struggling in the classroom?
- What have you identified as the area that my child is struggling in or needs additional support?
- What are you currently providing to meet those areas of deficiencies?
- How are you progress monitoring their growth?
- Is my child making progress?
- How will I be informed of the progress my child is making?
- If my child is not making progress, what are you going to do differently?
- What can I do at home to support my child in this process?

**Parents play an important role in the success of their student at school. Research shows that the more parents are involved in student learning, the higher the student's success.**

## GLOSSARY OF TERMS

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**Curriculum:** the focus of a course of study; includes the goals and expectations for teaching and learning in a subject

**Fidelity:** the accuracy and consistency of an intervention compared to how it was intended to be delivered

**Intervention:** an additional support and opportunity for students to master the goals of the course or grade level; often involves short-term support in a small group or one-on-one setting

**Progress Monitoring:** the use of student results and data to determine if an intervention is successful; involves regular checks on the extra support provided and is used by schools to determine if a student needs more or less support

**Response to Intervention:** the practice of using data and research-based strategies to meet the needs of all learners; can be used to provide early, effective support in both academic and behavioral areas

**Screening:** a short assessment or procedure used to identify a particular set of knowledge, skills, or ability gaps in students

**Teacher Support Team (TST):** a problem-solving group of teachers and school leaders responsible for interventions at Tier III; is a requirement for each school to have a TST

## NEED MORE INFORMATION?

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**National Research Center on Learning Disabilities**  
[www.nrclld.org](http://www.nrclld.org)

**National Association of State Directors of Special Education**  
[www.nasdse.org](http://www.nasdse.org)

Adapted from: “A Parent’s Guide to Response to Intervention” by National Center for Learning Disabilities; “A Family Guide to Response to Intervention (RtI)” by Parent Information Center of NH; and State Board Policy Part 3, Chapter 41: Interventions (previously State Board Policy 4300), Mississippi Department of Education