Reading and Response to Intervention (RtI): Putting it All Together

A supplement to
"Response to Intervention (RtI) – A Parent's Guide"
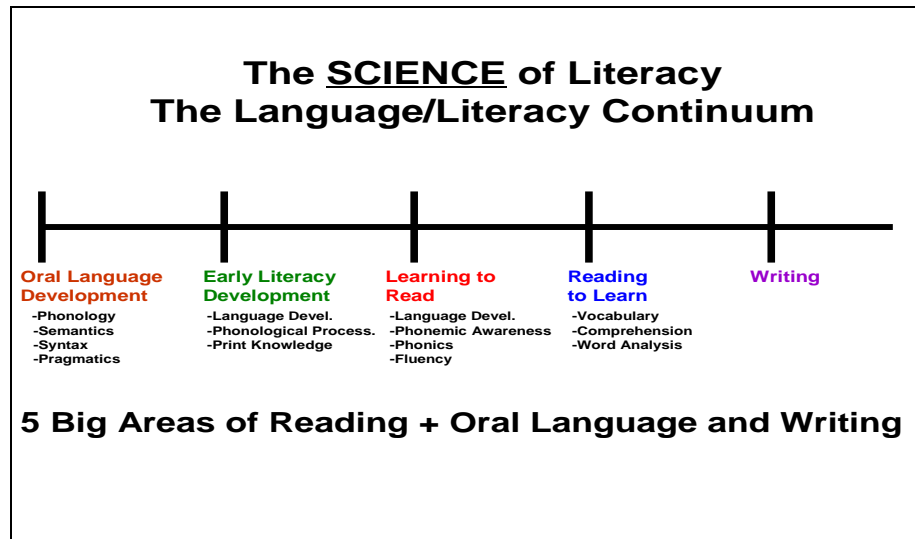
Developed by
Illinois ASPIRE

Updated May 2011

What is Reading?

Reading is part of a language/literacy continuum. Reading is oral language in print form. The following graphic describes reading, its component parts, and how reading should be taught.

The SCIENCE of Literacy
The Language/Literacy Continuum

Oral Language Development	Early Literacy Development	Learning to Read	Reading to Learn	Writing
-Phonology	-Language Devel.	-Language Devel.	-Vocabulary	
-Semantics	-Phonological Process.	-Phonemic Awareness	-Comprehension	
-Syntax	-Print Knowledge	-Phonics	-Word Analysis	
-Pragmatics		-Fluency		

5 Big Areas of Reading + Oral Language and Writing

What is Oral Language Development and how is it related to reading?

The first step to becoming a proficient reader is to have good oral language. When babies hear oral language, they can begin imitating and repeating what they hear. Singing, labeling objects, and reciting and reading simple nursery rhymes are good ways to help children develop oral language.

What is Early Literacy Development and how is it related to reading?

When children are toddlers, talking and reading simple books to them is the best way to help them develop early reading/literacy skills. Books that have "sound play" in them are excellent because they use rhyme and patterns to make reading fun (e.g., Dr. Seuss).

Through listening, children learn that our language is made up of individual sounds that fit together into words. A list of books that develop "sound play" is available at the following link: http://www.illinoisaspire.org/north/documents.php?folder_id=304.

Most children's oral language and early literacy skills develop naturally if they are surrounded by much talking and conversation as babies and toddlers and they are read to routinely. Developing these important oral language and early literacy skills allow children to become proficient readers.

What are Learning to Read skills?

Unlike oral language and early literacy skills that typically develop naturally, most children learning to read must be given **explicit, systematic instruction** in the essential areas of reading. The five essential areas of reading and their definitions are:

Phonemic Awareness – understanding that words are made of individual sounds called phonemes (e.g., "cat" has three separate sounds: 'c' 'a' 't').

Phonics - understanding that letters have sounds that "unlock" what the words say. Phonics is the key to knowing sound-letter relationships, or "cracking the code." When a child sees an unfamiliar word, if he or she knows the sounds that letters make, he or she can begin to sound out the word.

Fluency - being able to read the words effortlessly and automatically. When this is accomplished, students can Read to Learn and begin to develop wider vocabularies through reading, thus developing strong reading comprehension skills.

Vocabulary - understanding the meaning of words. Initially, this critical skill is developed through oral language (talking) and being read to routinely. Once students are proficient readers, they will read, and their vocabularies further develop through reading.

Comprehension - the complex cognitive process involving the intentional interaction between the reader and the text to extract meaning. This is

the end result! All of the skills discussed above need to be developed and taught in explicit, systematic ways to maximize a child's comprehension of reading material.

Learning to Read skills emphasize explicit, systematic instruction in the first three of the five essential areas of reading: Phonemic Awareness, Phonics, and Fluency. While learning to read, all children should also be developing vocabulary and comprehension skills through oral language activities. At this point in their literacy development (Kindergarten, 1st and 2nd grades), emphasis should not be on Reading Comprehension activities, but on developing the skills along the language/literacy continuum to learn to read.

What is meant by explicit and systematic?

Explicit - I Do, We Do, You Do: Direct teacher instruction involves teachers modeling skills, students practicing with guided support from teachers, and students doing skills independently. Skills are not left for students to "figure out" implicitly!

Systematic - a logical order/sequence of instruction, with skills building upon one another. A good systematic program should include a lot of cumulative review and guided practice of previous skills.

How does Writing fit into the Language/Literacy continuum?

In early grades, good writing instruction reinforces the skills for Learning to Read. Once students are in the Reading to Learn phase, good writing instruction continues to teach mechanics while emphasizing organization of thoughts.

What are Reading to Learn skills?

Once children are proficient, fluent readers, emphasis should shift to reading comprehension strategies, such as what to do Before reading, During reading, and After reading. Vocabulary development through reading should be emphasized in the later grades (e.g., beyond 2nd grade). Advanced word analysis skills/phonics should also be routinely woven into instruction.

What role does Response to Intervention (RtI) play in helping all students acquire all of these skills?

RtI involves the use of a multi-tiered approach to instruction, intervention, and assessment. This multi-tiered approach has proven to be an effective way for schools to develop and implement a system for providing effective, research-based instruction and intervention to all students. Illinois' RtI model utilizes three tiers, and each tier is discussed below in the context of reading instruction.

Tier 1 reading instruction is what all students receive daily. It is generally expected that at least 80% of students should be at benchmark with strong instruction using a research-based curriculum. It is recommended that schools utilize curricula that weave together all of the essential components of reading in explicit, systematic ways and that provide cumulative review with guided practice opportunities. Examples of powerful research-based curricula include those published by Harcourt, Scott Foresman, Houghton Mifflin/McGraw-Hill, and SRA. (Note: Mention of these curricula is for example purposes only and should not be construed as an endorsement. Each school district must review various curricula products and make its own determination about the appropriateness of the product.)

Parent Question: Ask your school what curricula they are using to teach reading. For example, a guided reading/leveled book approach may work well for proficient readers but may not be explicit or systematic enough for struggling readers (those below a grade level benchmark) who need to acquire the sound-symbol system or other essential foundational reading skills.

Tier 2 instruction gives MORE to those students who need additional help. "More" could mean more Time given to instruction, a smaller Group, or a stronger Focus on what skill(s) along the language/literacy continuum need strengthening. If students are given more time and are instructed in a smaller group, this alone may help **as long as** the focus is directly on the skill(s) needed and instruction is explicit and systematic. Some Tier 1/core programs include Tier 2 and Tier 3 instruction and intervention supports for students who need more. This is ideal. At

other times, schools may use supplemental, specific research-based interventions to strengthen needed skills.

Parent Question: Ask your school what system is in place for those students needing MORE. Students should receive this support immediately. Screening and benchmarking systems identify these students. It is recommended that progress be monitored two times per month to make sure the extra support is working. Graphs of progress should be provided to parents on an on-going basis.

Tier 3 instruction involves those students needing the MOST support. Using the most powerful, research-based instruction and intervention at this tier is essential. Examples of powerful, effective reading programs include Language!, Reading Mastery, Horizons, and Corrective Reading. (Note: Mention of these programs is for example purposes only and should not be construed as an endorsement. Each school district must review various programs and make its own determination about the appropriateness of the program.) More Time, smaller Groups, and more Focus on the skills along the language/literacy continuum are critical so that students receiving Tier 3 interventions can catch up to typical grade level peers.

Parent Question: Ask your school what system is in place for those students needing the MOST. Students should receive this support immediately. Screening and benchmarking systems identify these students, some of whom may already be receiving special education services. Progress should be monitored weekly and graphs of progress should be provided to parents on an on-going basis.

At the middle and high school levels, these same principles apply. At these secondary levels, parents should ask the school what systems are in place for students who need Tier 2 and Tier 3 interventions. These supports should be provided immediately to students who are still acquiring basic reading skills. Also, parents should ask schools what system is in place at Tier 1 for helping students access the content information across each subject area.

English Language Learners: Children who are learning English as a second language are commonly referred to as English Language Learners (ELL). ELL students may acquire English reading skills in a different manner or at a different rate of improvement than children who are native speakers of English. Their acquisition of English will also be influenced by the type of instructional program offered at the school they attend (e.g., English as a Second Language (ESL), transitional bilingual, dual language) and the amount of prior learning in the native language. School teams should consider these differences in the acquisition of reading skills when making decisions about an ELL student's response to core instruction and/or intervention.

Another important factor to consider is the unique linguistic characteristics of the language in which literacy instruction is delivered. Instructional programs or interventions that have been scientifically validated for use with native English speakers learning to read in English may not be suitable in translated form for instruction in a language other than English.

Parent Question: Ask the school what scientific evidence or local data they rely on to be certain that the English or native language instructional program or intervention being used with ELL students is effective for that specific group of students. Parents should also ask if the instructional program being used for literacy instruction in the native language is a translation or if it is a program or intervention developed and scientifically validated in the language of instruction.

Supporting resources: A list of books that can help children develop phonemic awareness and phonics skills and a document that outlines important distinctions among and examples of interventions, accommodations, and modifications are available at the following link: http://www.illinoisaspire.org/north/documents.php?folder_id=304. Other useful websites that are specific to RtI and reading include the following:

- RtI Action Network: http://www.rtinetwork.org/
- National Center on Response to Intervention: http://www.rti4success.org/
- National Research Center on Learning Disabilities: http://www.nrcld.org

- National Center on Student Progress Monitoring:
  http://www.studentprogress.org
- Florida Center for Reading Research:
  http://www.fcrr.org/forParents.htm
- Reading Rockets:
  http://www.readingrockets.com/guides/readingrockets#parent
- U.S. Department of Education:
  http://www.ed.gov/parents/academic/help/ reader/index.html
- Compact for Reading and School-Home links:
  http://www.ed.gov/pubs/ CompactforReading/index.html
- International Reading Association:
  http://www.reading.org/InformationFor/Parents.aspx

For more detailed information on RtI, please refer to "Response to Intervention (RtI) – A Parent's Guide" and "Parents' Frequently Asked Questions on RtI." These documents are available under "Parent Resources" on the Illinois ASPIRE website at the following link: http://www.illinoisaspire.org/welcome/parent_resources.php.

References

Cardenas-Hagan, E. (n.d.) *English Language Learners: From Prevention to Intervention.* Presented at Plain Talk about Reading conference/Center for Development and Learning. Retrieved March 30, 2009, from http://www.cdl.org

Hart Paulson, L. (n.d.) *123s of ABCs: Early Literacy Leading to Early Reading.* Presented at Plain Talk about Reading conference/Center for Development and Learning. Retrieved March 30, 2009, from http://www.cdl.org

Honig, B., Diamond, L., Gutlohn, L. *Teaching Reading Sourcebook.* California: Arena Press; CORE (Consortium on Reading Excellence).

Lyon, R.G. (1999*). The Science of Learning to Read and the Art of Teaching*. Presented February 20, at the Schwab Foundation for Learning

Moats, L C. (2000). *Speech to Print: Language Essentials for Teachers.* Baltimore, MD: Paul H. Brookes.

Moats, L.C. (2007). *Whole Language High Jinx: How to Tell When Scientifically Based Reading Instruction Isn't.* Washington, DC: Thomas B. Fordham Institute. Retrieved July 10, 2009, from http://www.edexcellence.net/detail/news.cfm?news_id=367

Moats, L.C. (2000). *Whole Language Lives On: The Illusion of Balance in Reading Instruction.* Washington, DC: Thomas B. Fordham Institute.

National Institute of Child Health and Human Development. (2000). *Report of the National Reading Panel. Teaching children to read: An evidence-based assessment of the scientific research literature on reading and its implications for reading instruction* (NIH Publication No. 00-4769). Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office. Retrieved July 10, 2009, from http://www.nationalreadingpanel.org/Publications/summary.htm.

National Literacy Panel on Language-Minority Children and Youth. (2006). *Executive Summary: Developing Literacy in Second-Language Learners: Report of the National Literacy Panel on Language-Minority Children and Youth*. Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Publishers.

Rayner, K., Foorman, B., Perfetti, C., et al.. (2007). How Should Reading Be Taught. *Scientific American, 85-91*.

Shaywitz, S. E. (2003). *Overcoming Dyslexia: A new and complete science-based program for reading problems at any level*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf.