



Center for Response to Intervention in Early Childhood (CRTIEC):
*A Consortium of the University of Kansas, The Ohio State University,
University of Minnesota, and the Dynamic Measurement Group*

<http://www.crtiec.org>

Taking a Snapshot of Early Childhood Response to Intervention (RTI) Across the USA

Maura Linas, Judith J. Carta & Charles R. Greenwood

Introduction

The RTI approach in elementary schools nationally is increasing common (Berkeley, Bender, Peaster, & Saunders, 2009). They reported that 15 states have adopted an RTI model with 9 implementing on large and 6 on small scales. Twenty-two states are in development phases.

Less common however, is an RTI approach to early childhood education and early intervention. Yet interest is increasing in public Pre-K programs, Head Start, and early childhood special education. Knowledge regarding the status of RTI implementation in early childhood programs (e.g., Pre-K, Head Start, etc) is unknown. These pages report the first year findings of a national survey regarding states' interest in and implementation of preschool RTI.

The purpose of this annual investigation is to add to this knowledge by examining the reported implementation status of RTI in Early Childhood across US states and territories.

Research Questions

1. What is the extent that the RTI approach is being implemented nationally?
2. What specific early childhood settings are seeing RTI implementation?
3. Which specific components of RTI are being implemented?
4. What curricula and learning outcomes are being emphasized?
5. Do states have RTI models ready to share with others?
6. What are the challenges implementing RTI in early childhood setting as reported by early childhood professionals?

Methods

Sample

The population of knowledgeable state early childhood special education leaders including IDEA-Part B [619] directors and state PreK directors were surveyed to generalize findings to the USA. A listing of these leaders in each state and territory and their contact information was obtained from the NECTAC website (online at <http://www.nectac.org/contact/619coord.asp>). In all 57 responded.

Measurement and Procedures

An 8-item survey was developed based on a brief review of the literature and discussions among colleagues to determine relevant questions. The first item was a multiple choice question where the choices were ordered ranging from *No Implementation* to *Full Implementation* in my state. The last survey question contained 9 statements reflecting challenges to RTI implementation. Each was evaluated on a 4-level Likert scale ranging from *Little/No Challenge* to *Significant Challenge*. Separating these two extremes were *Some Challenge* and *Moderate Challenge* values.

If a respondent indicated that No RTI activities were going on in the state, the respondent was directed to the last question regarding challenges, skipping the intervening items because these details tapped only aspects of implementation when reported happening in the state. A driving concept behind the survey was collection of information that might inform research, practice, and policy; by determining aspects of need that research and development could be profitably focused. The survey was developed and delivered to respondents using the Survey Monkey website (online at www.surveymonkey.com) and related tools. After developing, revising, and testing the survey, respondents were sent an introductory email explaining the purpose and value of this inquiry, as well as the human subjects protection procedures used to maintain confidentiality of the information.

The actual survey was accessed by respondents through a link in the email that delivered the survey form ready for completing. Following this first email, 3 subsequent email reminders were sent to those not responding at approximately 2 week intervals. In all, data was received representing 44 entities (40 states and Washington, DC, 3 territories [i.e., Guam, Federated States of Micronesia, Republic of Palau], and other entities, i.e., the Bureau of Indian Affairs). Of these 44, 11 received input from both the state 619 coordinator and Pre-K leader. A MS-EXCEL dataset containing the set respondents records including written comments was downloaded from the website and analyzed using basic descriptive statistics and graphical displays.

Results

See online at http://www2.ku.edu/~crtiec/cgi-bin/RTI_Initiatives/RTI_Map.php

Discussion

The purpose of this investigation was to assess the implementation status of RTI in Early Childhood nationally. Results indicated that states are beginning to have discussions about RTI and are introducing RTI concepts in professional development. Programs most likely to be implementing RTI are early childhood special education and state-funded pre-k programs targeting language/early literacy and social/behavioral outcomes. The greatest challenges reported were untrained staff, limited resources, lack of knowledge, and lack of Tier 2 and 3 interventions. Most states report implementing evidence-based Tier 1. The vast majority of states report not yet having RTI models that can be shared with others. Clearly, early childhood RTI

nationally is of interest but only just beginning to be considered.

Reference

- Berkeley, S., Bender, W. N., Peaster, L. G., & Saunders, L. (2009). Implementation of response to intervention: A snapshot of progress. *Journal of Learning Disabilities, 42*(1), 85-95.
- Linan, M., Carta, J. J., & Greenwood, C. R. (2009, June). [Taking a snapshot of Early Childhood Response to Intervention \(RTI\) across the USA](#). Poster presented at the IES Research Conference, Washington, DC