



# Response to Intervention in Grade One

Reading Recovery®

## SUMMARY REPORT



### About this report

*This document demonstrates Reading Recovery's close fit with **eight crucial features of RTI**, adapted from frameworks provided by the National Research Center on Learning Disabilities and the International Reading Association's Commission on RTI.*

*Administrators from 18 school districts across the nation were interviewed to learn more about how they are using Reading Recovery as part of their RTI plans. A list of the districts and a link to more-detailed online information is on the back page of this report.*



## What is response to intervention?

Response to intervention (RTI) is an educational approach to instruction, assessment, and intervention designed to provide effective, data-based interventions for struggling students. Although RTI was conceived as a means of early identification and determination of special education eligibility, it is increasingly becoming an overall approach to school improvement through general education.

### Possible benefits to an RTI approach

- Fewer inappropriate referrals to special education
- Earlier intervention with students at risk of literacy failure
- Reduced inappropriate identification or overidentification of children from minority groups in special education
- Greater ongoing collaboration between general and special education

<sup>1</sup> All references to Reading Recovery also apply to Descubriendo la Lectura for children whose primary language of instruction is Spanish.

### Reading Recovery<sup>1</sup> and RTI

Although RTI involves multiple interventions for various needs across grade levels, one literacy intervention has compelling evidence for meeting the intent of the legislation for first graders. With more than 25 years of implementation in the United States and high research ratings from the U.S. Department of Education's What Works Clearinghouse, Reading Recovery is a proven intervention used by thousands of elementary schools.

Approximately 75% of children with complete Reading Recovery interventions meet grade-level standards and continue to learn in classrooms without supplemental support. Those who make progress but do not reach grade-level expectations are evaluated to determine the type of future support that will be needed.

The goal of Reading Recovery is to dramatically reduce the number of first-grade students who have extreme difficulty learning to read and write, and to reduce the cost of these learners to education systems. Administrators who have successfully embedded Reading Recovery into their comprehensive literacy plans call it an ideal fit within an RTI framework. They know that Reading Recovery's two positive outcomes match the intent of RTI legislation:

1. Identify students whose academic achievement may need further monitoring.
2. Provide effective interventions for those who need them.

### Administrators agree...

- RTI requires a problem-solving protocol rather than a standard protocol for planning and implementing interventions.
- Successful plans are built carefully over time, starting with what is already done well and making decisions about what is still needed to meet the needs of all children.
- High priority is given to local decisions about core classroom instruction, with an emphasis on high-quality, differentiated teaching rather than scripted, canned programs.
- When selecting and using assessment tools for screening and progress monitoring, the quality of assessment information should not be sacrificed for efficiency of the procedure.
- Because interventions should be based on research and successful outcomes, Reading Recovery is a cornerstone of the RTI plan for first graders, providing an exemplar for screening, responsive teaching, progress monitoring, professional development, collaboration, and fidelity of the intervention.
- Reading Recovery needs to be an early intervention, not delayed because of inflexible tier approaches.
- Reading Recovery professionals play a significant role in RTI planning, implementing, and assessing response to intervention.





Reading Recovery educators collaborate with other teachers to promote literacy and develop support for all children.

A Reading Recovery teacher leader in Rio Rancho, New Mexico leads a running record professional development session with classroom teachers.

RTI must be part of a comprehensive, systemic approach to literacy assessment and instruction.

Response to intervention (RTI) is not a new concept in literacy education.

Administrators in Reading Recovery schools and systems echo the words of Marie Clay, developer of Reading Recovery, who called for education systems to solve two problems:

1. How to deliver good first instruction in literacy
2. What kind of supplementary opportunity to provide for children who are low achieving in the classroom's good instructional program (Clay, 1996)

In addition to the priorities given to classroom literacy approaches, administrators recognize the need for *early* intervention for children having difficulty with literacy learning. As a key element of a comprehensive literacy plan, Reading Recovery is an effective research-based intervention and an exemplary professional development model. Highly qualified Reading Recovery teachers

- provide a successful early intervention,
- document response to intervention, and
- work collaboratively with other teachers to develop comprehensive support for children.

Regardless of the 'tiered' or 'layered' frameworks used by schools or districts, Reading Recovery must be available as soon as possible for first graders with the greatest difficulties.



A two-part screening process helps identify the lowest literacy achievers and select children for Reading Recovery lessons.

A Reading Recovery teacher in Iowa's River Valley School District reviews screening results as she plans a lesson.

An RTI approach calls for school staff to determine which students need further monitoring or instruction.

Reading Recovery provides universal literacy screening for first graders. In Reading Recovery, screening is a two-part process. First, classroom teachers rank all students according to their current literacy competencies. Then, the lowest literacy achievers are tested using *An Observation Survey of Early Literacy Achievement* (Clay, 2002, 2006) comprised of six authentic, valid, and reliable literacy tasks. Children with the lowest screening scores are selected for the Reading Recovery intervention. The Observation Survey also informs initial teaching decisions by providing information about each child's current literacy behaviors.

RTI calls for research-based interventions with documented effectiveness.

The What Works Clearinghouse (WWC) reports that Reading Recovery has the strongest research base of any early reading intervention reviewed by the WWC (2008). Numerous experimental studies and national Reading Recovery data collected on every child validate the effectiveness of the

intervention. Evaluation studies report positive outcomes for English language learners as well as minority and low-income students. Follow-up studies support the long-term effectiveness of Reading Recovery.

*See references for WWC intervention report.*

**Teacher expertise is central to instructional improvement, particularly for children having difficulty with literacy learning.**

Administrators in Reading Recovery implementations recognize the importance of expertise for all teachers, but particularly for those working with struggling beginning readers and writers. They place emphasis on a skillful teacher who can focus on the needs of a particular child rather than yielding to the simplicity of scripted programs. Reading Recovery provides an exemplar for professional development, with year-long initial training and ongoing professional development

sessions. Reading Recovery teachers and leaders use their expertise in their other roles and in school and district literacy initiatives. Some university training centers are working with Reading Recovery teacher training sites to offer professional development to intervention specialists, special education teachers, and classroom teachers. As with Reading Recovery, this professional development focuses on lessons designed for individual children.



**Reading Recovery's problem-solving approach to teaching produces compelling student outcomes.**

At Denison Elementary School in Iowa, Reading Recovery students receive intensive one-to-one instruction that insures responsive and differentiated teaching.

**An RTI approach calls for responsive and differentiated teaching to meet the needs of each student.**

Reading Recovery's "one-on-one tutoring by qualified tutors for at-risk readers" meets the U.S. Department of Education's gold standard of research to determine what works. Contingent, responsive teaching requires the teacher to make decisions based on each child's immediate context and knowledge (McEneaney, Lose, & Schwartz, 2006). Compelling student outcomes in English and in Spanish, across racial/ethnic and socioeconomic groups, and for English language learners validate the effectiveness of responsive and differentiated teaching in Reading Recovery.

Administrators in Reading Recovery schools look for interventions to help individual children build strategies that will transfer to independent learning in the classroom, rather than relying on packaged programs. They know that Reading Recovery's problem-solving approach — building on a child's strengths and guided by ongoing observation data — meets this goal.



**RTI fidelity measures should ensure that an intervention is implemented as intended.**

Administrators want to know that an intervention is consistently administered as intended. Reading Recovery ensures fidelity of implementation, through

- a published set of Standards and Guidelines,
- an annual registry that verifies compliance with standards,
- intensive year-long training and ongoing professional development for all Reading Recovery professionals,
- annual evaluation of outcomes for every child by the International Data Evaluation Center, and
- analysis of outcome and process data by university trainers.



**Reading Recovery has a built-in, comprehensive system for monitoring the progress of each child.**

Descubriendo la Lectura teachers at Fort Bend ISD in Texas monitor student progress using daily and weekly records of children's text reading, writing, vocabulary, word and letter work.

**Ongoing progress monitoring is built into an RTI plan.**

In addition to continuous monitoring of students' classroom progress, each child's progress during interventions must be monitored in order to make necessary modifications. Administrators face challenges when making decisions about ways to monitor progress during interventions. But Reading Recovery has a built-in comprehensive system for monitoring the progress of each child including daily and weekly records of change over time in text reading, writing, vocabulary, word and letter work. Reading Recovery teachers maintain regular communication with classroom teachers about each child's progress and serve on school literacy teams. Reading Recovery teacher leaders provide support for problem solving about a child making slow progress and check records for each child periodically. The Observation Survey is used on entry and exit to monitor the response to the intervention.



Reading Recovery schools strive to achieve the notion that every student belongs to everyone.

A Reading Recovery teacher at Union Elementary in North Carolina observes her student in a small-group classroom setting.

## An RTI approach requires close collaboration among stakeholders.

A core feature of an RTI approach is collaboration across general education, special education, and compensatory education. Strong administrative support is needed at the district and school level to ensure a coordinated RTI plan. Reading Recovery schools strive to achieve the notion that “every student belongs to everyone,” encouraging district and campus decision-making teams to build collaborative goals and action plans. RTI teams should include members with literacy expertise; Reading Recovery professionals are valuable members of these teams.

Reading Recovery has an established system of collaboration to meet the needs of children:

- Ongoing and often informal conversations with classroom teachers about individual children
- Team meetings (for progress monitoring, problem solving, and decision making)
- Reading Recovery teachers observing children in classroom settings
- Classroom teachers observing Reading Recovery lessons
- Sharing valuable diagnostic teaching records for Reading Recovery children who are ultimately referred for special education assessment

### References

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A summary report of interviews  
with 20 district and school  
administrators and how  
Reading Recovery fits within  
their RTI frameworks.

## Response to Intervention in Grade One Reading Recovery®

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## Early Literacy Intervention: Expanding Expertise and Impact a Reading Recovery initiative in partnership with the USDE

# SUMMARY REPORT

### About this initiative

*Early Literacy Intervention: Expanding Expertise and Impact is a Reading Recovery initiative in partnership with the U.S. Department of Education. The goal of the initiative is to focus on developing highly effective teachers and resources for schools for improving the reading and writing abilities of students.*

### Questions?

Email [info@readingrecovery.org](mailto:info@readingrecovery.org)

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### Districts and schools in this study

Anderson County Schools—Clinton, Tennessee  
Crystal Lake School District 47—Crystal Lake, Illinois  
Denison Community Schools—Denison, Iowa  
Fort Bend Independent School District—Sugar Land, Texas  
Guthrie Center Community Schools—Guthrie Center, Iowa  
Harlem School District 122—Machesney Park, Illinois  
Humble Independent School District—Humble, Texas  
Irving Elementary School—Sioux City, Iowa  
Ozark Public Schools—Ozark, Missouri  
Pekin Public Schools—Pekin, Illinois  
Rio Rancho Public Schools—Rio Rancho, New Mexico  
River Valley School District—Washta, Iowa  
Salli Cone Elementary School—Conway, Arkansas  
Shawano School District—Shawano, Wisconsin  
Spokane Public Schools—Spokane, Washington  
St. Charles Parish Schools—Luling, Louisiana  
Union Elementary School—Monroe, North Carolina  
Washington School for Comprehensive Literacy—Sheboygan, Wisconsin

**Full report of interview findings, school profiles, contact information, and other free professional development resources available online at <http://fdf.readingrecovery.org>**