

## **RtI in Early Childhood**

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## **Presentation Outline**

- General early childhood practices and RtI
- Nebraska initiatives and practices and RtI
- Application of play assessment and intervention
- Pilot study overview

## **Key EC Principles**

- Prevention
- Natural environment (LRE)

## **Key RtI Components**

- Multi-level system
- Data-based decision-making
  - Regular data collection
  - Use of data to assign children to tiers
  - More intense interventions need more frequent and direct assessment
- Scientific research-based instruction and interventions
  - Based on data
    - Research
    - Progress monitoring data

## **Integrating EC and RTI**

- Prevention is critical to RtI
- Natural environment can be supported through tiered system
- Frequent data collection
- Standards for EC programs relate to research-based instruction

## The good news....

- Many RtI components are already in place
- The system is good for ALL children
  - Head Start
  - Center based
  - Child care programs
  - Preschools

## Quality Indicators of RtI

- Organizational Capacity
  - Program-wide buy-in and implementation plan
  - Team Leadership
  - Integration of Services
  - Implementation Infrastructure

## Program-wide buy-in and implementation plan

- May be easier in EC settings
- Regular training occurs already
- Can include RtI components in any program's plan

## Team leadership

- A variety of people can take leadership roles
- Administrators, teachers, staff, parents generally are highly invested

## Integration of Services

- A great deal of collaboration already exists across disciplines.
- Kristy will discuss this more

## Implementation Infrastructure

- Training is highly valued
- Support and resources can be made available
- EC personnel are often very creative at activating new resources

## Quality Indicators of RtI

- Quality Process
  - Parent involvement
  - Universal screening and assessment
  - Individual progress monitoring
  - Planned service delivery decision rules
  - Scientifically supported instruction
  - Intervention delivery
  - Verification issues

## Parent involvement

- Informing parents about RtI may be easier
- Parent components are already in place
- Will need to document efforts to inform and involve parents in RtI

## Universal screening and assessment

- All assessments meet state standards
- Data-based and psychometrically sound
- Link to classroom performance
- Assist with finding students who need more

## Individual progress monitoring

- Procedures must be objective, reliable, valid and sensitive
- Use of problem-solving process
  - Define behavior
  - Develop and implement appropriate monitoring system
  - Develop and implement appropriate interventions
  - Change plan when needed

## Planned service delivery decision rules

- Use of universal screening and progress monitoring data
- Need to develop norms to be able to have appropriate decision-making rules for children's services

## Scientifically supported instruction

- Applies to core instruction as well as more individualize interventions
- Training needed in how to evaluate programs
- Training needed in how to evaluate research

## Intervention delivery

- Training needed in intervention selection
- Resources are critical here
- Training needed in how to evaluate intervention effectiveness
- Training needed in how to evaluate research

## Verification issues

- May not be as much of an issue in EC compared to School Aged
- DD verification may be more utilized
  - Fits well with RtI

## Current Trends in Early Childhood

Why the timing is right for RtI...

- Accountability for early childhood programming
- Natural Environment/LRE
- Service Delivery
- Best Practices regarding Assessment

## Accountability

- IDEA 2004—Led to required “State Performance Plan” or SPP specifically related to early childhood
  - SPP is to have specific preschool outcomes
  - progress made toward those outcomes is reported annually to OSEP (Office for Special Education Programs)

- The Early Childhood Outcomes Center (ECO)
  - Funded in 2003
  - Addresses measurement issues related to meeting federal mandates around child and family outcomes
- ECO/OSEP generated the following outcomes:

- Positive social-emotional skills
  - including social relationships
- Acquisition and use of knowledge and skills
  - including early language/communication and early literacy
- Use of appropriate behaviors to meet their needs

- In Nebraska, this process has been termed "Results Matter"
  - "Results Matter" is a child and family outcomes system designed to improve programs and support for all children ages 0-5 served by school districts, the Early Development Network and their partners

## What does Results Matter have to do with RtI?

- Individual Progress Monitoring
  - Early childhood service providers are becoming more skilled
- Data Based Decision Making
  - Service providers are using data for program evaluation and to measure overall student progress

## Natural Environment/LRE

- IDEA 2004
  - Part C (ages 0-3) "Natural Environment" means settings that are natural or normal for the child's same age peers who have no disabilities
  - Part B (ages 3-5) "Least Restrictive Environment" means services are, to the maximum extent appropriate, provided in natural environments including the home and community settings in which children without disabilities participate

- RtI tiered system is directly aligned with supporting children in their natural and least restrictive environments
- Evidence-Based/Developmentally appropriate practices
  - direct benefit to "targeted" students
  - indirect benefit to all children in LRE and natural environments

## Service Delivery

- NDE has put extensive time and effort into research and training for more effective team functioning and service delivery
- Current initiative in place that directly supports integration of services

## Primary Service Provider

- One team member becomes the Primary Service Provider or PSP
- PSP develops a relationship with the child's primary caregivers
- Early childhood team engages in joint planning—PSP integrates this information during visits with the family
- Integration of Services (Quality indicator of RtI)

## Coaching

- Nebraska has been refining a “Primary Service Provider as Coach” model for several years (PDFI)
- Coaching: “an interactive process of observation, reflection, and action in which a coach promotes, directly and/or indirectly, a learner’s ability to support a child’s participation in family and community contexts”
  - Strongly supported by research on adult learning

## Best Practices regarding Assessment

- Division for Early Childhood (DEC) of the Council for Exceptional Children and the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC)
  - Overwhelming research to support assessment approaches that are developmentally appropriate in terms of their purpose, content and method

## Authentic Assessment

- Recommended practices emphasize authentic assessment approach
  - Ecological reference or occurring in familiar environment
  - Involvement of child’s family/caregivers
  - Use of a variety of methods for collecting information

## Play Assessment and Intervention

- Natural environment
- Parent friendly
- Staff friendly

## Play Assessment and Intervention

- Tier one
  - Observation of play
  - Screen for children’s needs
- Tier two
  - Small group interventions
  - Regular progress monitoring
- Tier three
  - More intense interventions and progress monitoring

## Pilot Study

- Four EC classrooms
- Play assessment/intervention training
- Data collection – universal screening
- Small group interventions
  - Monitor progress

## Long-term Goals

- Longitudinal data on play assessment and intervention
- Expand to behavioral concerns
- Investigate predictive validity of play
  - Later pre-academic and academic skills

## Questions/Discussion

## Contact us for more information

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