

Gifted Students, Gifted Services, and Response to Intervention (RtI)

What is RtI?	How Can RtI Include Gifted Students?
Response to Intervention (or Instruction) is usually a school-wide model	By holding the model accountable for the full range of students, the model includes appropriate educational experiences for gifted learners as well as for those students who may struggle in some way. Use a talent development vs. a deficit approach.
Method for identifying and serving students with additional academic and social-emotional needs	RtI can be a method for early recognition of strengths and needs. "Additional academic and social-emotional needs" includes both interventions and alternate experiences, extensions, or acceleration. This includes meeting the needs of students who are gifted and those who are twice exceptional (e.g., are both gifted and have a disability such as SLD, ASD, ADHD).
Based on the premise that all students have access to a high quality core of instruction	High quality, grade-level core curriculum is inadequate for gifted learners. However, it is possible to supplement or replace the core with suitable acceleration, depth, and complexity in Tiers I, II, and III.
Includes universal screening and assessments	Assessments include those for achievement and ability. Assessments have adequate ceilings for the gifted and allow for demonstration of above-grade level performance.
Requires some students to have additional time and attention	Gifted students can have additional time with teachers with expertise in differentiation for gifted learners.
Includes progress monitoring and standard protocols for students who need additional supports and/or services	Progress monitoring is used to document mastery and need for compacted or replacement curriculum. Progress monitoring and interventions are used as a part of a decision making process for further services and for documenting student growth and performance.
Includes a team approach to problem solving that involves parents	A team approach is helpful for gifted students with diverse needs including underachievers with advanced potential, those who need additional acceleration or enrichment, or those needing counseling services.
Involves a tiered system of supports based on level of need	Gifted students differ in their strengths and in their need for intensity of services. Twice-exceptional students need services for both disability and high ability.

The Possibilities

- **RtI can supplement but not replace a systematic program of services for students with high abilities.**
- When all students are assessed, include provisions for assessing strengths as well as deficits.
- An RtI structure permits flexibility between tiers of supports so that individual needs for additional challenge may be addressed.
- In teacher training for RtI, characteristics of all learners, including those who are gifted, can be incorporated.
- Through RtI, teachers address the needs of gifted students including those who also have learning disabilities.

CAUTION: RtI Systems are Rarely Implemented Effectively for Gifted Learners

- When any system is said to include identification and services for *all* children, some interpret that to mean that training, identification, and services specific to the needs of gifted students are no longer needed. This is not true. Teachers who have gifted students in their classrooms need professional development in gifted education.
- Schoolwide frameworks incorporating differentiation and enrichment work best when they are supplemented with acceleration, planned articulation, affective supports, and expanded learning opportunities based on students' strengths.
- National research has shown 84% of classroom activities are *not* differentiated for gifted students in heterogeneous classrooms (<http://www.gifted.uconn.edu/nrcgt/westarc1.html>).