

# An Overview of the Model

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## Response to Intervention: Behavior

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by Florida Positive Behavior Support/RtI for Behavior Project

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## RtI: Behavior

### 1. What is Response to Intervention for Behavior?

Response to intervention (RtI) focuses on “the practice of providing high-quality instruction and interventions that are matched to student needs, monitoring progress frequently to make decisions about changes in instruction or goals, and applying student response data to important educational decisions.” (NASDSE, 2007).

RtI for Behavior should involve Positive Behavior Support (PBS) that aims to prevent inappropriate behavior through teaching and reinforcing appropriate behaviors (OSEP Technical Assistance Center on Positive Behavioral Interventions & Supports, 2007). RtI for Behavior should offer a **range of interventions that are systematically applied to students based on their demonstrated level of need**, and addresses the role of the environment as it applies to the development and improvement of behavior problems.

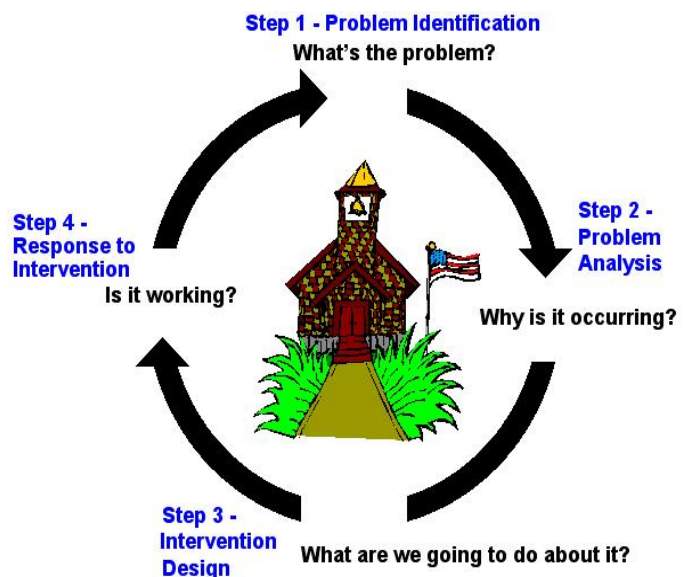
### 2. What are the core principles of RtI for Behavior?

The core principles of Response to Intervention for Behavior include:

1. Continual application of a **structured problem-solving process**;
2. Reliance on an **integrated data system** that is used to inform problem-solving and decision making;
3. Utilization of a **multi-tiered model** of support delivery that enables the efficient use of school resources;
4. Applying **evidence-based interventions** that match the student’s level of need, and that rely on prevention, teaching, and reinforcement-based strategies;
5. Monitoring the **progress** of students; and
6. Measuring the **fidelity** of applied interventions.

### 3. What is a problem solving process?

The four-step, problem-solving model of RtI for Behavior looks very simple. First, problem behaviors of all students, groups of students or individual students must be identified. Next, it is critical to understand why those behavior problems are occurring. Based on an understanding of why the behavior is occurring, school personnel and teams can develop effective and efficient interventions to address the problem behavior and then progress monitor whether students are responding to the interventions.



#### 4. Why is it so important to focus on teaching positive social behaviors?

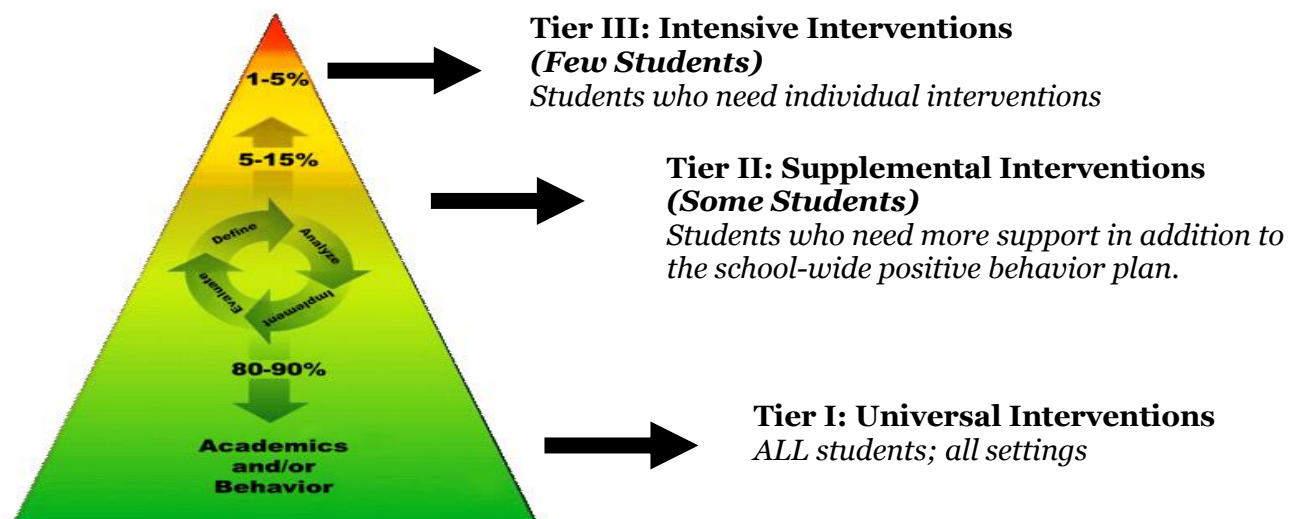
In the past, school-wide discipline has focused mainly on reacting to specific student misbehavior by implementing punishment-based strategies including reprimands, loss of privileges, office referrals, suspensions, and expulsions. Research has shown that the implementation of punishment, especially when it is used inconsistently and in the absence of other positive strategies, is ineffective. Introducing, modeling, and reinforcing positive social behavior is an important part of a student's educational experience. Teaching behavioral expectations and rewarding students for following the expectations is a more positive approach than waiting for misbehavior to occur before responding.

#### 5. Why is an integrated data system so necessary for problem-solving?

The success of the RtI for Behavior process is dependent on a number of critical features. First, the problem-solving approach requires the use of accurate data for decision-making at each level and step of the process. This means that schools have to have ways of collecting, maintaining, and accessing their data that are easy to use, relevant, and accessible to decision makers, and easily summarized in a way that is understandable to teachers and parents. The types of data collected will differ according to the focus of the problem-solving process. For example, problem solving at the entire school level requires the analysis of summary data that is based on the behaviors of the entire student body; while problem solving for an individual student requires the analysis of specific patterns of behavior for that student. Understanding which kinds of data to collect requires a deeper understanding of each level or tier of support.

#### 6. What does this multi-tiered support system look like?

A three-tiered model for instruction and intervention expresses the concept that behavioral supports are provided at a **universal level** that is intended to effectively address the needs of all students in a school. This is sometimes referred to as Tier 1. However, not all students will respond to the same strategies. As a result, at Tier 2 some students with identified needs would receive **supplemental or targeted instruction** and intervention. Finally, at Tier 3, a few students with the most severe needs receive **intensive and individualized** behavioral support. This three-level support system allows educators to identify the needs of all students, match the level of support to the severity of the behavior problems and then assess the students' response to intervention.



## **7. What is Tier 1 Response to Intervention for Behavior?**

The goal of RtI Behavior at the Tier 1 level is the prevention of problem behavior and promotion of positive behavior by establishing processes that should facilitate success for ~80% of the student body. An effective Tier 1 system should reduce the number of students who need more expensive and time consuming resources at Tiers 2 and 3. So, if more than 80% of students respond to Tier 1 supports, the school has maximized their resources and is able to meet the needs of more students more effectively.

## **8. What are school-wide behavioral supports?**

A major advance in school-wide discipline is the emphasis on school-wide systems of support that include proactive strategies for defining, teaching, and supporting appropriate student behaviors to create positive school environments. Some parents and educators believe that all students come to school knowing appropriate rules of conduct, and those who do not follow the rules should simply be punished. However, research and experience has taught us that systematically teaching behavioral expectations and rewarding students for following them is a much more positive approach than waiting for misbehavior to occur before responding.

Instead of using a patchwork of individual behavioral management plans, a continuum of positive behavior support for all students within a school is implemented in areas including the classroom and non-classroom settings (such as hallways, restrooms, etc.). By teaching and encouraging positive student behavior, we reduce the “white noise” of common but constant student disruption that distracts us from focusing intervention expertise on the more serious problems mentioned above. In summary, the purpose of a school-wide behavior plan is to establish a climate in which appropriate behavior is the norm.

## **9. What are the components of a comprehensive Tier 1: Universal system of discipline or positive behavioral interventions and supports?**

All effective school-wide systems have seven major components in common a) an agreed upon and common approach to discipline, b) a positive statement of purpose, c) a small number of positively stated expectations for all students and staff, d) procedures for teaching these expectations to students, e) a continuum of procedures for encouraging displays and maintenance of these expectations, f) a continuum of procedures for discouraging displays of rule-violating behavior, and g) procedures for monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of the discipline system on a regular and frequent basis.

## **10. What are Tier 2 Supplemental Supports?**

Tier 2 Supplemental Supports are designed to provide additional or targeted interventions to support students who have access to Tier 1 Universal Supports and are not responding positively to them. Supplemental Supports are more intensive since a smaller number of students within the middle part of the triangle are at risk for engaging in more serious problem behavior and need more support. Common Supplemental Support practices involve small groups of students or simple individualized intervention strategies. Supplemental Support is designed for use in schools where there are more students needing behavior support than can be supported via intensive and individual Tier 3 support, and for students who are at risk of chronic problem behavior, but for whom high intensity interventions are not essential. Supplemental Support often involves targeted group interventions with a few students or larger groups (30 students or more) participating. Supplemental Supports are an important part of the continuum of behavior support needed in schools, and there is a

growing literature documenting that targeted interventions can be implemented by typical school personnel, with positive effects on up to 67% of referred students. Supplemental interventions also are recommended as an approach for identifying students in need of more intensive, individualized interventions. Specific Supplemental Supports include practices such as “social skills club,” “check-in/check-out” and the Behavior Education Plan.

### **11. How many students may need Tier 2 Supplemental Supports?**

Approximately 15-20% of your student body may need Tier 2 supports. This percentage is not absolute; schools with strong Tier 1 supports will have a reduced need for Tier 2 supports.

### **12. What differentiates Tier 2: Supplemental Supports from other systems of positive behavior support?**

The main difference between supplemental and other levels of positive behavior support is the focus on supporting students at risk for more serious problem behavior. Supplemental Intervention addresses the needs of students who require more support than is available for all students (i.e., Universal Support) and less support than is available for individual students who need flexible, focused, personalized interventions (Tier 3: Intensive Support). This means that Supplemental Intervention allows teams to select features of the process (e.g., types of programs or interventions, data collection tools used, information gathered, and degree of monitoring) to provide more focused behavior support to students with behavior needs that do not require intensive, individualized plans

### **13. What are the key features of Tier 2: Supplemental Supports?**

Tier 2: Supplemental Supports are implemented through a flexible, but systematic, process. Key features of Supplemental Support interventions include:

1. Continuous availability;
2. Rapid access (within 72 hr);
3. Very low effort by teachers;
4. Consistent with school-wide expectations;
5. Implemented by all staff/faculty in a school;
6. Flexible intervention based on assessment;
7. Match between the function of the problem behavior and the intervention;
8. Adequate resources for implementation;
9. Student chooses to participate; and
10. Continuous monitoring of student behavior for decision-making.

### **14. What is Tier 3: Intensive/Individual Supports?**

Tier 3: Intensive/Individual Supports were originally designed to focus on the needs of individuals who exhibited patterns of severe or extreme problem behavior. Research has demonstrated the effectiveness of positive behavior supports in addressing the challenges of behaviors that are dangerous, highly disruptive, and/or impede learning and result in social or educational exclusion. Tier 3: Intensive/Individual Support is most effective when there are positive universal and supplemental systems in place. In addition, the design and implementation of individualized supports are best executed when they are conducted in a comprehensive and collaborative manner. The process should include the individual with behavioral challenges and people who know him/her best all working together as a behavioral support team. Support should be tailored to a student's specific needs and circumstances. It should involve a comprehensive approach to understanding and

intervening with the behavior, and should use multi-element interventions. The goal of Tier 3: Intensive/Individual Support is to diminish problem behavior and, also, to increase the student's adaptive skills and opportunities for an enhanced quality of life. Tier 3 should also meet the behavioral needs of students with the most intense and/or persistent problems in the most effective and efficient manner and in the least restrictive setting possible.

### **15. What are the critical components of Tier 3: Intensive/Individual Supports?**

Tier 3: Intensive/Individual Supports involve a process of functional behavioral assessment (FBA) that investigates why a behavior is occurring in more detail and development of a positive behavior implementation plan (PBIP) that includes more intensive research-based interventions, closer and more detailed progress monitoring, and more staff time and resources dedicated to problem solving for individual students. The PBIP should be comprised of individualized, assessment-based intervention strategies, including a wide range of options such as: (1) guidance or instruction for the student to use new skills as a replacement for problem behaviors, (2) some rearrangement of the antecedent environment so that problems can be prevented and desirable behaviors can be encouraged, and (3) procedures for monitoring, evaluating, and reassessing of the plan as necessary. In some cases, the plan may also include emergency procedures to ensure safety and rapid de-escalation of severe episodes (this is required when the target behavior is dangerous to the student or others), or major ecological changes, such as changes in school placements, in cases where more substantive environmental changes are needed. However, this action should occur only after Tier 3 interventions have been attempted and have been proven ineffective.

Tier 3 supports can be provided at different levels of intensity, depending on the student's level of need. Initially, the student's behavioral team should gather specific information for a detailed FBA. Then, students with less intensive or frequent behavior problems may benefit from a PBIP that describes simple individualized interventions and progress monitoring procedures. Students with more intense behavior problems, or a continued poor response to previous Tier 3 interventions, may be supported through a more comprehensive process that includes the development of a more targeted and comprehensive PBIP. Finally, a very small number of students with the most severe needs may require what is called wraparound services, which continues to utilize the same FBA and PBIP components, but include processes for identifying and coordinating family and community services.

### **16. What differentiates Tier 3: Intensive/Individual Supports from other systems of positive behavior support?**

The main differences between Tier 3: Intensive/Individual Supports and other levels of positive behavior support are the focus and intensity of the interventions. The defining features of Tier 3: Intensive/Individual Supports (i.e., identification of goals, data collection and analysis, summary statements, multi-element plans, and a monitoring system) address the needs of individual children in a more comprehensive manner. Tier 3: Intensive/Individual Supports allow teams to vary features of the process (e.g., data collection tools used, breadth of information gathered, specificity and number of hypotheses generated, extent of the behavioral support plan, and degree of monitoring) to provide the most individualized behavior support possible.