

Summary from National Expert Meeting

June 2, 2010 | Washington, DC

Background

On June 2, 2010 the Steering Committee convened a day-long meeting of 12 national experts to identify the key issues on RTI in early childhood. The experts represented diverse content expertise in areas such as early childhood program quality, curricula and instruction in academic learning and social-emotional development, assessment, culturally and linguistically diverse learners, and tiered models of instruction and intervention in pre-k and the early elementary grades.

Name	Affiliation
Sue Bredekamp	Consultant
Judith J. Carta	University of Kansas
Marijata Daniel-Echols	High Scope Educational Research Foundation
Douglas H. Clements	University at Buffalo
David K. Dickinson	Vanderbilt University
Linda M. Espinosa	University of Missouri, Columbia (ret.)
Mary Louise Hemmeter	Vanderbilt University
Gail Joseph	University of Washington
Scott McConnell	University of Minnesota
Rollanda O'Connor	University of California, Riverside
Ellen Peisner-Feinberg	UNC-CH
Carolyn Webster-Stratton	University of Washington

Themes that Emerged from the Discussion

The discussion was documented and later summarized around the following key themes that emerged:

- **There was general consensus among the national experts on the need for guidance on RTI in early childhood.** Participants acknowledged that current provisions within the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) address the use of RTI for school-age students, but that there are no policies or federal legislation that address the use of RTI for younger children prior to kindergarten. Participants also noted that interest in RTI in the early childhood field has grown, with some programs beginning to implement this approach with pre-k children in the absence of policies and guidelines to support these practices.
- **National experts agreed on the need for a definition of RTI in early childhood that identifies key features of this approach.** RTI was viewed as a broad framework that could be used to support integrated development across all domains of learning, including language and literacy, mathematics,

and social-emotional development. Participants mentioned several defining features of RTI that will require further explanation, specifically, assessment linked to tiered instruction and interventions, and systemic supports. Participants observed that recommendations about assessment within RTI (e.g., universal screening and progress monitoring) should build on guidance already available regarding sound assessment practices in early childhood in general. With respect to tiered instruction and interventions, participants discussed the importance of articulating the use of evidence-based curriculum and intentional teaching as a foundation of RTI in early childhood and framing tiers as a way of organizing instruction and behavioral supports according to level of intensity. Systemic supports such as professional development, collaborative relationships, and professional qualifications and competencies were widely viewed as necessary for implementing RTI effectively in early childhood programs and settings.

- **National experts agreed on the need to provide guidance on how RTI should be implemented in early childhood programs and contexts.** Participants noted the need for further guidance in several areas related to implementation: the process of implementing RTI across various tiers, the use of specific assessment tools and curricular resources, the roles of specialists and general early educators, the involvement of families, and the need for adaptations for dual language learners (DLLs).