

FLOWCHART GUIDE TO BEHAVIOR IMPEDING LEARNING IN RTI ENVIRONMENTS

Diana Browning Wright

Behavioral Rtl has long been a dream of consultants working with students with challenging behaviors. It is rapidly being implemented in school districts across the country. But what if the student already has an IEP for a disability? Special education law applies, but so does behavioral Rtl for all students. To fully understand the following flowchart, the reader will need to become familiar with the central principles of behavioral Rtl which include universal screening, fidelity of treatment at all Tiers, and making decisions based on student progress monitoring data. Once familiar with the processes of behavioral Rtl, the next step is understanding the content of interventions and selecting them for implementation at each of the three Tiers. To the extent practicable we are mandated to select evidence based interventions to distribute across the tiers. See: *RTI and Behavior: A Guide to Integrating Behavioral and Academic Supports* by Sprague, Cook, Browning Wright & Sadler, 2008 to develop a thorough understanding of this process.

The flowchart (see below) illustrates how federal IDEA law for students with IEPs intersects with behavioral Rtl.

Under “consideration of special factors” requirements, the IEP team must consider whether the student has behaviors that are impeding learning of the student or the student’s peers. If the team’s answer is yes, the behavior *is* impeding learning, then the IEP team is required to address that with strategies, including positive behavioral interventions, strategies and supports. These must be specified in the IEP document. By carefully following the flowchart sequences, the reader will see how this legal requirement intersects with behavioral Rtl that many districts are now beginning to implement.

YES: It is impeding learning of student or peers.

In an Rtl environment, when the student is exhibiting behavior impeding learning, the Rtl team will look at the quality of Tier I to determine if improvements need to be made. Rtl teaming is about all classes in the school, not just general education classroom. However, the IEP team must now simultaneously specify positive supports due to the YES determination of behavior impeding learning the team concluded. This can be either the addition of Tier 2 supports, if none have been tried yet, or the improvement of fidelity in Tier 2 if it is already being implemented with the student.

If Tier 2 positive supports are not effective, the IEP team may develop a behavior intervention plan based on the function of the behavior. This is a Tier 3 intervention. If that is ineffective, the team will maximize interventions that are available at Tier 3 including an improved behavior plan, or possibly the related service of Cognitive Behavioral Therapy, family services or wraparound mental health.

MAYBE: It is impeding learning of student or peers.

In an Rtl environment, if the IEP team is not sure the problem behavior has risen to the level of “behavior impeding learning” the IEP team will consider next steps. Minimally, the IEP team will specify goals in the IEP and progress monitor to be sure the behavior does not rise to the “impedes learning” level. The Rtl team will examine Tier 1 environment for areas in need of improvement if the student is non responsive to Tier 1 indicated in the universal screening. If the Rtl team believes Tier 2 is now required because progress monitoring data indicates that need, those Tier 2 interventions will be applied.

NO: It is NOT impeding learning of student or peers.

In this scenario, the IEP team has determined that the student has problem behaviors, but they are not interfering with learning. In this case, the IEP team will want to examine the Tier I environment to determine if changes there would eliminate the problem behaviors. Perhaps the instructional strategies, curriculum and student characteristics are not in alignment, and the student requires some changes to be behaviorally and academically successful. If, however, the Tier 1 classroom environment does not need adjustment, then the student is now nonresponsive to Tier 1 and Tier 2 default behavior interventions should be implemented.

Throughout this process, the supports are increased, decreased, and maintained depending on the student’s progress monitoring data. This data is collected not only by the IEP team process, but in an Rtl environment, using Rtl logic, it will also be collected through the Rtl process used for all students in all classrooms.

Behavioral Rtl for Students with IEPs

