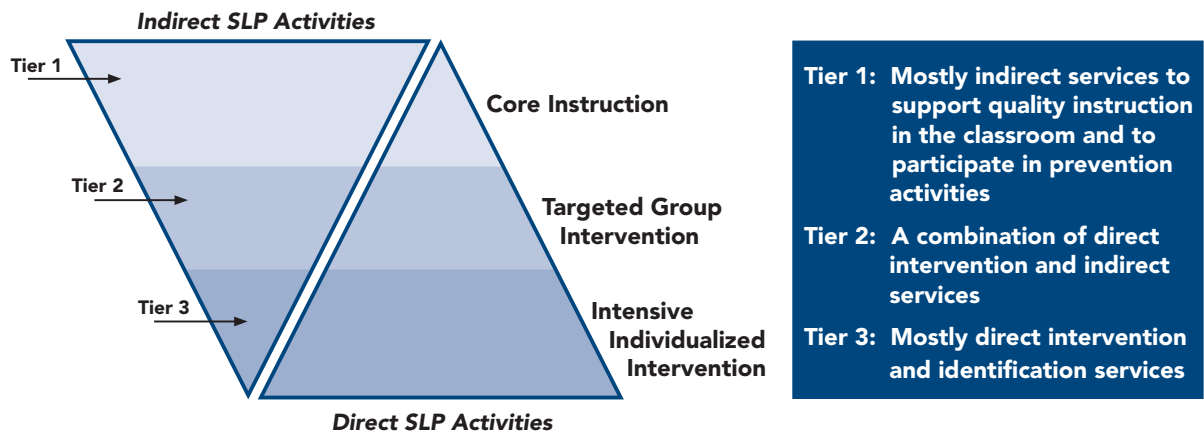




# RTI: Match Speech and Language Activities to Student Needs

Speech-language pathologists are well-equipped to affect and increase student achievement within the multi-tiered systems of Response to Intervention (RTI). This article will tell you how you can help prevent student failure with timely interventions for struggling learners.

RTI models have two or more tiers of increasingly intense intervention. Intensity increases from tier to tier through changes in duration, frequency, and time interventions; group size; and instructor skill level to meet the needs of all students. Speech and language services can be categorized within the RTI framework as direct and indirect services.



## SLP Activities at Tier 1 (Core Instruction)

Activities in Tier 1 seek to identify struggling learners and provide instruction to match their learning needs. The SLP may provide some direct services in the classroom, participate in prevention activities, and indirectly support classroom instruction.

### Examples of Direct Services

- Conduct expanded speech and language screening using one of the following:
  - Teacher report with SLP observation
  - District-developed screening test
  - Published speech and language screening test
- Provide preventative support and/or support for struggling students through a variety of classroom activities, such as:
  - Encourage oral-language development in kindergarten and first grade in socio-dramatic play centers, listening centers, and “Good Speech” centers.
  - Organize small, flexible groups with multiple opportunities for interaction.
  - Schedule classroom time during small group instruction to work with students who are at-risk for difficulty in speech or language development.
  - Provide classroom lessons that promote effective communication behavior and connections between oral and written language.
  - Co-teach expressive language skills in the classroom. For example, the teacher may provide explicit teaching about writing stories, while the SLP focuses on oral-language skills.



### **Examples of Indirect Services**

- Observe performance in the classroom. Analyze language demands of the curriculum and the effects of those demands on the students. Observe individual students to identify where a breakdown in learning occurs.
- Become involved in the RTI problem-solving team.
- Provide parents with information and activities to help support their child's speech and language development.
- Provide homework programs.
- Provide information to teachers about the language demands in the state performance standards and the curriculum, and how to use language to meet students at their level.
- Assist the classroom teacher in modification of the presentation of information to match student learning needs.

### **SLP Activities at Tier 2 (Targeted Group Intervention)**

Tier 2 interventions continue the support provided in Tier 1 in a more structured format with increased frequency or provide focused intervention to remediate deficits contributing to the student's struggle with grade-level curriculum. Students generally work in groups or rotate through learning stations.

### **Examples of Direct Services**

- Provide articulation or language-specific intervention programs to prevent more serious problems later on or to remediate problems when students seem highly stimulable and ready for change.
- Identify, use, and disseminate evidence-based practices for speech and language skills and communication behaviors related to Tier 2 intervention.
- Conduct frequent progress monitoring of target skill(s) for students in Tier 2 speech or language intervention (at least every two to three weeks).

### **Examples of Indirect Services**

- Assist in determining when students need Tier 2 intervention or when referral to special education for speech and language disorders is warranted.
- Observe Tier 2 students in the classroom to identify when struggles may be linked to speaking, listening, reading, or writing skills.
- Communicate progress in Tier 2 articulation or language intervention to the students' parents and teacher.
- Participate on the RTI problem-solving team to make decisions about when the students enter and exit Tier 2 intervention.

### **SLP Activities at Tier 3 (Intensive, Individualized Intervention)**

Students who continue to struggle without measurable progress after Tier 1 and Tier 2 intervention are provided individualized instruction. A referral to special education may or may not be indicated.

### **Examples of Direct Services**

- Provide intensive, individualized, focused intervention.
- Monitor progress frequently.

### **Examples of Indirect Services**

- Participate on the RTI problem-solving team to make decisions about student's referral to special education.

Timely interventions are fundamental to prevention of academic failure. RTI compels us to intervene early and appropriately to give children every opportunity to succeed in life.