



What Every Parent Needs to Know about the Support Team Process

What is Support Team?

The purpose of the Support Team (S-Team) is two-fold: (1) to improve the delivery of instructional services within the general education setting to students experiencing difficulties of an academic, social or behavioral nature in school, and (2) to serve as a resource for teachers in the delivery of these services. The Support Team is a regular education process to identify, plan and monitor alternative instructional strategies for students in need of assistance.

Who May Request Assistance from the Support Team?

Parents, teachers or other school personnel may all seek assistance from the S-Team. Any unresolved issue that impedes learning may merit a request to the S-team, and this request may come from a variety of sources. However, the decision to apply the S-Team process is made by the team after careful consideration of the student's needs.

How Do I Know if a Student Needs This Support?

If a student is exhibiting academic and/or behavioral difficulties that are not helped by your efforts, you may wish to consider the S-Team problem-solving process.

What are the Steps in the Support Team Process?

1. **Referral** – Parents, teachers, diagnosticians, and building administrators may refer a student who is having difficulty achieving success within the academic setting. The referral includes the gathering of information, identification of specific needs and clarifying the issue(s) of concern.
2. **Assessment and Collection/Evaluation of Data** - The team must meet to discuss and analyze the information available in order to determine if an intervention plan is appropriate.
3. **Develop Intervention Plan** - The team brainstorms possible strategies and techniques, providing the referring teacher with research-based strategies directly related to the student's area of concern/need. Once the strategies are discussed and implementation of one (or more) is agreed upon, all those involved in the implementation process will develop a specific plan for what intervention /instructional strategy will be

implemented, who will be responsible for implementation, when the intervention will occur and for how long, and the progress monitoring tool to be used. A timeline for follow-up and evaluation of progress using the plan is established (typical follow-up is 4 weeks).

4. **Implementation of Intervention Plan** - Strategies are implemented and documented in the classroom on a daily basis and are progress monitored at least weekly for a minimum of 20 school days. It is vital intervention/instructional strategies are directly related to the student's identified area of need, and that the progress monitoring tool utilized is appropriate to measure growth in this area. Parents should be notified every 4 weeks of implementation, at a minimum, and documentation of the student's progress provided.

As interventions move along the continuum in search of problem resolution, the process grows in intensity, duration and frequency of interventions, along with an increased emphasis on monitoring student progress.

Although all at-risk students should have appropriate intervention and instructional strategies in place, it is not necessary for all referrals to document 20 days prior to initiating a referral for a comprehensive evaluation. In cases where obvious

severe disabilities and/or crisis are noted, the Support Team may determine an immediate referral is necessary and will collect the data concurrently with the evaluation process. The bypassing of implementing alternative strategies prior to referral for an evaluation should be clearly documented and occur only when delay of referral would be detrimental to the student.

5. **Evaluation of Progress, Follow-Up and Support** - New information/data from the intervention period is reviewed and implementation strategies are monitored for fidelity. At this point, the Support Team should decide on a plan of action:
- a. Develop new interventions and continue monitoring progress; Continue referral
 - b. Continue current interventions, if successful, and monitor progress; Potentially close out the referral
 - c. Make a referral for comprehensive evaluation (SPED)

6. **Continuous Monitoring** - The Support Team continues to monitor student progress at the times specified in the Intervention Plan.

Are Parents Involved in This Process?

Absolutely! The parent is notified when the student is referred to S-Team and is asked to provide valuable information that may be used in determining strategies or interventions.

Does the Support Team Process Delay Possible Evaluation?

The RTI/Support Team process takes longer than a traditional 1-step comprehensive evaluation. However, at the time of referral, students are receiving services designed to remediate their learning problems. The hope is that the prevention built into RTI will reduce the identification of false positives (i.e., students incorrectly identified as having a disability because they have not received strong instruction) and help many students get on a trajectory toward successful academic outcomes. Also, RTI facilitates prevention and identification early in the primary grades (in contrast to the traditional IQ-achievement discrepancy, which often requires years of schooling before a sizeable discrepancy can accrue).

Do All Support Team Referrals End in an Evaluation?

No. Some students monitored by the S-Team are referred for further testing when a disability is suspected, but the majority of students are never referred because they are getting the support they

need through the traditional intervention process.

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