



RESPONSE TO INTERVENTION

Applications to *Storylands—Adventures in Reading*

Storylands—Adventures in Reading is a supplemental resource for emergent through early-fluent readers. The program includes stories that are fun and engaging with memorable characters and eye-catching illustrations.

Lessons and activities in the *Storylands* program reinforce basic reading skills, including phonemic awareness, phonics, vocabulary and word study, meaning and comprehension, and fluency.

The *Storylands* program provides books for readers at different levels, so students can read books at their own level that feature the same characters and themes.

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What is Response to Intervention?

Response to Intervention (RTI) is a model that involves early intervention for the purpose of providing supports and services for students in order to keep them on a path to academic success. This model can be successfully used with Pre-K and school-aged children. RTI identifies a three-tiered framework of supports and services for children.

Tier 1 involves high-quality curriculum that is comprehensive and evidence-based. This tier also involves a system of progress monitoring that is used in order to gather baseline information. Once this information is gathered, decisions can be made about a child's need for academic support.

Tier 2 addresses the needs of children who have been identified as needing additional support. This support is offered in the form of large- or small-group instruction that is intensive and focuses on children's specific learning needs. A child's progress is continually and frequently monitored at this stage. Family members are brought in as part of a team for collaboration and problem solving.

Tier 3 involves additional support for those children who need more support above and beyond Tier 2. Intensive intervention now becomes individualized. Monitoring of the child's progress persists and problem-solving efforts continue with a team that makes decisions about the child's plan of action.

While the majority of entities utilizing RTI do so with school-aged children, many have shifted their focus to early childhood. Using RTI with young children is believed to circumvent problems with language and literacy development (Coleman, Roth, & West, 2009).

There is a difference, however, between the RTI model used for older children and the model used in early childhood. Approaches must be adapted to meet the developmental needs of children in the early years.

According to Coleman, Roth, & West (2009, p. 9), RTI models for young children should include:

- the use of tiered service delivery models;
- learning standards that guide instruction;
- the use of intentional teaching methods that include embedded and explicit instruction; and
- the emerging use of progress monitoring measures and data driven decision-making models.

Evidence-Based Practices

Response to Intervention calls for the use of high-quality instructional methods that meet the developmental needs of children. *Storylands—Adventures in Reading* includes key components necessary for building literacy skills as identified by the National Reading Panel (National Institute of Child Health and Human Development, 2000). Instruction focused on phonemic awareness and phonics provides children with knowledge of the sounds of spoken language and how these sounds connect to our written system of communication.

Experience with vocabulary and word study encourages children to encounter new words, which are repeated throughout the *Storylands* series.

Another necessary component of early literacy instruction involves fluency, which addresses reading with accuracy, appropriate rate, and expression. Development of fluency leads to greater comprehension.

Finally, *Storylands—Adventures in Reading* focuses on meaning and comprehension, which ultimately, is the purpose for reading.

Screening and Assessment for Monitoring Progress

One of the major components of RTI involves monitoring the strengths and needs of children as they learn. *Storylands—Adventures in Reading* meets the needs of children who read on a variety of levels. Similarly themed books are written for emergent, early, and early-fluent readers, so children of all ability levels can participate in literacy experiences together.

In particular, Response to Intervention advocates for authentic assessments that require teachers to monitor progress through everyday learning experiences, such as “observation, work samples,

and curriculum probes” (Coleman, Roth, & West, 2009, p. 9).

Storylands—Adventures in Reading is perfectly matched to authentic assessment, as each lesson includes activities that lend themselves to this form of monitoring. Each lesson includes prompts and questions a teacher can ask before, during, and after reading. Key concepts from the stories are addressed in fun, game-like formats that allow a teacher to observe children’s participation and assess understanding.

Throughout the *Storylands—Adventures in Reading* Teacher’s Guide, reading record sheets are provided for the purpose of monitoring comprehension and reading behaviors related to specific stories in the series.

Family Involvement

Response to Intervention includes a family engagement component that is particularly crucial as part of a program for young children. As families possess knowledge of their children’s strengths and needs, it is imperative to involve them in the decision-making process and planning for supports and services their children require.

The literature on parent involvement in education strongly emphasizes the immediate and long-term academic benefits to children. This is especially the case with children in their early years of school as they adapt to the new environment and begin to form who they are as learners. “It is a well-established fact that home-school collaboration benefits all children” (Raffaele, 1999). For this reason, *Storylands—Adventures in Reading* provides a Web site that includes all of the fiction titles in a read-aloud format, which can be accessed by children and their families. Involving families in the process of reading is a perfect way to provide families with a peek into their children’s literacy development.

Applying the Three-Tiered Model

► Tier 1

Determine approximate reading levels of children (emergent, early, early-fluent), and provide each child with a corresponding book. (*Storylands* books revolve around similar themes with common characters across the reading levels, so all children can have shared experiences with the theme, regardless of the reading level.)

— The teacher **uses authentic assessment** strategies to monitor student progress.

— The teacher **observes** as children interact with the stories and participate in discussions of the storylines.

— The teacher periodically **assesses** children using the provided Reading Record Sheets in order to gain insights about student progress and make recommendations for additional supports needed.

— The teacher **implements** the Literacy Centers to provide more focused practice with a variety of literacy skills.

► Tier 2

If questions arise about a particular child's progress, the teacher adjusts instruction to provide more intense learning opportunities that address specific needs. The teacher may find it necessary to adjust the reading level of the book a child reads or focus on the instruction of targeted literacy skills in small-group settings.

The Literacy Centers provided in *Storylands—Adventures in Reading* allow the teacher to engage children in activities that focus on identified problem areas, such as sight words, letters and sounds, blends and digraphs, word families, sequencing, rhyming words, vowel sounds, story comprehension, and more.

Families are encouraged to participate in the literacy development process at home, using the provided online books and accompanying games and activities.

► Tier 3

For a child who continues not to make adequate progress, the teacher implements elements of Tier 3. The teacher works one-on-one with the child to teach and prompt as the child interacts with stories in the series. If the teacher notices that the child continues to struggle, he or she might recommend a more formal evaluation of the child's learning needs.

Differentiated Learning

Storylands: Adventures in Reading lends itself to differentiated instruction, which makes it perfect for use in Tiers 2 and 3 of RTI.

The stories are organized around themes. Within each theme there are 20 reading levels that begin with the emergent level and increase in difficulty through early fluent and fluent.

Children, whose reading levels vary, will have shared experiences with similar story themes and characters, but they can focus on stories that meet their developmental reading needs. As children progress in their reading abilities, they can proceed through stories written at higher levels of difficulty.

A more specific opportunity for providing differentiated instruction is built into the lessons themselves. After the story, lesson, and follow-up activities are completed, the teacher can evaluate the child's progress using the Reading Record Sheet. If the final analysis indicates satisfactory progress, the child moves to the next level(s). If not, the child is re-evaluated, and he or she may continue at the same level, or work with books and activities at a less difficult reading level, depending on the teacher's recommendations.

Conclusion

Response to Intervention is an approach that emphasizes the holistic development of children, combined with authentic assessment, early intervention, collaborative decision-making, and family involvement (Coleman, Roth, & West, 2009). *Storylands—Adventures in Reading* weaves together these components in the context of engaging stories with delightful characters, while offering children enjoyable experiences with skills that contribute to reading success.

References

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Dr. Jennifer Prior

This paper was researched and written by Dr. Jennifer Prior. Dr. Prior is Associate Professor of Early Childhood and Literacy at Northern Arizona University. Her scholarly interests include using environmental print as an instructional literacy tool, family involvement in education, and effective literacy practices. She has coauthored *Environmental Print in the Classroom: Meaningful Connections for Learning to Read* (International Reading Association) and *Family Involvement in Early Childhood Education: Research into Practice* (Thomson Cengage Learning). She has presented her literacy research and classroom applications at numerous conventions for the International Reading Association as well as for the National Reading Conference, the National Association for the Education of Young Children, and the Association for Childhood Education International.