

# The Fiddler

Florida Diagnostic and Learning Resources System  
North East Florida Educational Consortium

Serving: Baker, Bradford, Flagler, Putnam, St. Johns, and Union Counties, and FSDB

**Spring 2008**



## FDLRS Survey: We're listening to Y-O-U!

Just as the Spring-time sun and rain bring life to the earth, our stakeholders infuse energy into to our FDLRS services by providing input related to their needs each school year. You can help!



Please take a moment to assist us as we gather information to improve our services. Simply click on the link below and follow the easy instructions for completing our survey. We greatly appreciate your support and will incorporate this data into our planning. (You may need to right-click on the link, and then click on "Open Hyperlink".) If you are reading a hard-copy of our newsletter, you can go to our website to take the survey posted there: [www.nefec.org/fdlrs](http://www.nefec.org/fdlrs). Thanks in advance for your support!

Click here: [FDLRS/NEFEC 2008 Needs Assessment](http://www.nefec.org/fdlrs)

## Response to Intervention (RtI) Implementation

By now, everyone in the field of education has heard about and/or experienced the buzz about RtI. Even local newspapers report on the reaction to RtI by families of students who are impacted by this paradigm shift in assisting students who need specific intervention (Florida Times-Union article 4/22/08: *Schools try to head off special education classes*).

Dr. George Batsche, Project Co-Director of the Problem Solving and Response to Intervention Project, reports that RtI has received considerable attention since its inclusion as one criterion for eligibility for SLD in the statute and regulations for IDEIA 2004. RtI is part of the eligibility process for the new Emotional and/or Behavior Disorders (EBD) category that replaces the EH/SED category in Florida. However, the application of RtI is much broader than its use in SLD or EBD identification. In fact, the basic components of RtI are included in broad-based general education reform initiatives such as the Continuous Improvement Model (CIM). The successful implementation of RtI principles encompasses general education initiatives first and special education application second. Response to Intervention, in many ways, is simply another term for "data-based decision making" applied to education.

At our FDLRS office, we receive many questions about RtI as districts continue to work through the process of implementation. Excitement is in the air as general and special education practitioners come together on this initiative. For more information, check out the resources listed on the next page of this newsletter.

# Response to Intervention Resources

## **Florida's Problem Solving and Response to Intervention Project**

<http://floridarti.usf.edu/>

Information about the project, PowerPoint presentations, newsletters, online resources, tools, FAQs and more

## **IDEA Partnership Project - Together on RtI: A Collection of Free Resources Selected by National Organizations for their Members:**

<http://www.ideapartnership.org/page.cfm?pageid=28>

Tools and training materials for immediate use as well as links to websites that will continually produce high quality information

## **The National Research Center on Learning Disabilities (NRCLD)**

<http://www.nrclld.org>

NRCLD Learning Disabilities Resource Kit: Specific Learning Disabilities Determination Procedures and Responsiveness to Intervention: [http://www.nrclld.org/resource\\_kit](http://www.nrclld.org/resource_kit)  
Download the complete Learning Disabilities Resource Kit at  
[http://www.nrclld.org/resource\\_kit/LD\\_Reource\\_Kit.zip](http://www.nrclld.org/resource_kit/LD_Reource_Kit.zip)

## **National Center on Student Progress Monitoring**

<http://www.studentprogress.org>

Downloadable articles, PowerPoint presentations, FAQs, and additional resources about screening, student progress monitoring, Curriculum-Based Measurement, applying decision making to IEPs and other researched based topics. Review the tools at <http://www.studentprogress.org/chart/chart.asp>

## **The National High School Center: <http://www.betterhighschools.org/>**

Central source of information and expertise on high school improvement for the Regional Comprehensive Centers (RCC) provides an in-depth look at the implementation and structural issues, as well as the needed support required to successfully institute Response to Intervention (RtI) at the secondary school level.  
[http://www.betterhighschools.org/docs/NHSC\\_RTIBrief\\_08-02-07.pdf](http://www.betterhighschools.org/docs/NHSC_RTIBrief_08-02-07.pdf)

## **Center on Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports**

<http://www.pbis.org>

Capacity-building information and technical assistance for schools in identifying, adapting, and sustaining effective school-wide disciplinary practices, includes a newsletter article on the relationship between PBIS and RtI:  
<http://www.pbis.org/news/New/Newsletters/Newsletter4-2.aspx>

## **Center for Early Literacy Learning (CELL)**

<http://www.earlyliteracylearning.org/>

Provides tiered model of intervention approach as part of their conceptual framework in identifying evidence-based practices that promote literacy and language development in young children (0-5)

## **Center for Evidence-Based Practices to Improve Social Emotional Development of Young Children: <http://www.challengingbehavior.org>**

Funded by the [U.S. Department of Education](#), [Office of Special Education Programs](#) to raise the awareness and implementation of positive, evidence-based practices and to build an enhanced and more accessible database to support those practices

# SIM: Not Just Another Acronym!



You've been to workshops that teach strategies to help your struggling students benefit from your instruction. You use graphic organizers and other meta-cognitive devices on a regular basis. So what makes SIM so special?

Developed by the University of Kansas Center for Research on Learning over 20 years ago and supported by Just Read, Florida!, the Strategic Instruction Model (SIM) helps teachers make decisions on what is most important to teach and empowers students in learning and retaining information. The two components of SIM, *Learning Strategies* and *Content Enhancement*, have been rigorously field tested and validated by teachers all over the country.

*Content Enhancement Routines* are used by teachers to help students organize, understand and remember critical information. These routines are divided into two types; planning and teaching. Both rely on powerful teaching devices to organize and present curriculum content in an understandable and easy-to-learn manner that actively engages students with the content.

## **Planning Routines**

Planning routines help teachers think about and organize content, then present it in a way that allows students to see the organization. The focus is on helping teachers plan for diverse groups of students through a process of reflection and action for the purpose of creating and implementing powerful lessons, units and courses.

## **Teaching Routines**

Teaching routines focus on helping a teacher inform, guide, and involve students in ways that will promote content learning through the use of powerful teaching devices. Some teaching routines are for exploring text, topics and details. Others help teach complex concepts so students gain a deep understanding and develop a shared vocabulary for talking about important information.

All of the routines promote direct, explicit instruction. This type of instruction helps students who are struggling, but it also facilitates problem-solving and critical thinking skills for students who are doing well in class.

**If you would like information on attending a *Content Enhancement* professional development opportunity, contact Renee Steinmetz at [steinmetzr@nefec.org](mailto:steinmetzr@nefec.org) or 386-329-3811.**

**Additional information on SIM can be obtained by going to the Center for Research on Learning, University of Kansas website: <http://www.ku-crl.org/sim> .**

## BEESS Announces the Florida Assistive Technology Assessment Competencies and Resources Web Site

The Bureau of Exceptional Education and Student Services (BEESS) recently announced the availability of the *Florida Assistive Technology Assessment Competencies and Resources* website. This resource was developed through the efforts of FDLRS ATEN staff members in collaboration with the Florida Center for Interactive Media. We encourage you to visit the web site to view competencies and resources. "*Competencies At-A-Glance*" is a printable feature that can be used by directors and administrators for a quick view of the Assistive Technology Assessment Competencies. Please extend this website resource to all assistive technology providers in your districts and to any other personnel who may be involved in providing assistive technology assessment and services for students with disabilities.

If you have any questions or would like further information, contact Frank Crosby, our FDLRS Region 2 ATEN Lab Manager at 386-329-3811.

To review these Competencies and Resources, go to:

<http://www.florida-ese.org/atcomp>



To learn more about FDLRS ATEN services, visit our website at:

[www.nefec.org/fdlrs](http://www.nefec.org/fdlrs). Click on ATEN on the right side of the web page.

If you would like a tour of the FDLRS Region 2 ATEN lab in Palatka or any of the satellite labs located in Columbia, Levy, or Nassau Counties, contact Frank Crosby at the number above.



### **All About You!**

Personnel Development Partnership  
(PDP)

#### **Is your goal professional certification?**

Check out the UNF Educator Preparation Institute (EPI). Contact [kkrudwig@unf.edu](mailto:kkrudwig@unf.edu) for an EPI informational packet, time schedule for Cohort 2 (2008-2009), cost information, and application.

#### **Do you need tuition support?**

- o Available for ESE teachers admitted to the EPI
- o Available for ESE teachers needing to complete an endorsement in areas of autism, pre-k handicapped, severe and profound disabilities, and/or reading.

#### **Do you want easy access to lots of professional development resources and scholarships?**

Check out PDP's website: <http://www.florida-ese.org/personneldevelopment/>

#### **Do you have questions?**

Contact Dr. Kathryn Krudwig, 904-620-1616

[kkrudwig@unf.edu](mailto:kkrudwig@unf.edu)

Contact Dee Crawford, 904-620-1880

[dcrawfor@unf.edu](mailto:dcrawfor@unf.edu)

### **Volunteer Opportunity**

The Family Network on Disabilities of Florida, Inc. (FND) is seeking volunteers throughout the state of Florida. Volunteers may be asked to participate in service and fund-raising projects. Individuals and groups are encouraged to get involved. Volunteering on behalf of FND will fulfill service requirements for students, professionals, and corporate service missions. Professionals with specific specialties may be eligible for in-kind donation tax deductions. Everyone has something to contribute, and all contributions are valued. Contribute the gift of your time today! Interested parties may contact Sarah Lopez, Director of Development, Family Network on Disabilities of Florida, Inc. Visit the website at <http://www.fndfl.org> or contact Sarah Lopez at [sarahlopez@fndfl.org](mailto:sarahlopez@fndfl.org) or (727) 523-1130 x105 or Toll Free in Florida at (800) 825-5736.

## Region 2 Digital Library Spend Time Learning or Just Having Fun!

Have you visited the FDLRS Region 2 Digital Library website? If not, you can expect a different kind of library. You won't find dusty books or old magazines there. The digital lending library has been designed by Elisa Wern, Assistive Technology Specialist with Alachua County Public Schools, for LATS (Local Assistive Technology Specialists) in the state of Florida to help them serve the students in their school districts. Feel free to browse, borrow, and hopefully return to share what you have found and created since the library will continue to grow if there are both borrowers and lenders.



You'll find resources for literacy, math and science, resources for and reviews of software products, activities for PowerPoint, Boardmaker, Classroom Suite and much, much more! What do switches and the Etch-a-Sketch that we all know and love from our childhood have in common? Find out the answer by visiting this website for a wealth of information and resources. Go to: <http://www.region2library.org/>.

Elisa adds her own personal comments to make your tour of this unique digital library feel as though you are in the room with the librarian. Jump to a bounty of other online libraries for use in the classroom or simply to share with your child or grandchild in those quiet story-time moments at home together.

One of the websites featured in the FDLRS Region 2 Digital Library is from Priory Woods, an all age community special school situated in east Middlesbrough that provides a quality, inclusive education for pupils with severe learning difficulties and those with profound and multiple needs. Go to: <http://www.priorywoods.middlesbrough.sch.uk/>. Download a drag and drop resource on the *Old Lady Who Swallowed a Fly* for interactive whiteboards / plasma screens and many other switch/touch-screen videos. This one is fun even for typically developing preschoolers!

Switch videos are animations or slideshows set to music, which can be controlled by a range of common assistive access devices. They are designed to help children understand and generalize cause and effect, one of the foundation stones for early learning. All videos on the Priory Woods website can be played online or downloaded for use on a PC or Mac computer.

Things are changing. There are now more technology tools than ever to help increase student performance both in the school setting as well as in the peer/social setting. How do school systems struggling with funding, often using outdated technology and weary of new technology stay current, excited and understand the possibility of the future of learning...the future that is here today? As a resource to help answer this question and others, a *Performance Technology Toolkit* was developed during March 2008 through an online discussion on the [www.fctd.info](http://www.fctd.info) website, sponsored by the Family Center on Technology and Disability with David Davis, Coordinator of the Florida Instructional Technology Resource Unit (FDLRS Tech), as moderator. Check out this toolkit by clicking the *New and Exciting* tab on the website. You'll be glad you did!

## Thank You...Child Find Services



### *(Letter from a Parent of a Student Needing Child Find Support/Services)*

*My story begins when my second son was approximately 2½ years old. He was becoming frustrated at not being able to tell me things that he needed. Instead, he would point toward an object and make a static-like sound in order to communicate. This became increasingly irritating to him. He started becoming even more agitated at not being able to express himself verbally as his older brother would talk non-stop.*

*I shared my concern about my son with other educators and most of them thought I was just overreacting. As part of being a special educator, I had been trained that if a child does not acquire language skills by the time he/she is three years old, then there would be a heightened possibility that a learning delay may occur or even learning problems may develop. Thus, the time clock was ticking and my concerns were growing stronger.*

*I remembered a "Child Find" magnet that was attached to my classroom refrigerator. My husband and I talked and I made the call to FDLRS Child Find. Immediately appointments were scheduled for testing and at the same time, a change with his pediatrician was made. Between the information that Child Find provided and the new pediatrician, it was discovered that my son needed tubes due to ongoing ear infections that had caused damage resulting in hearing and speech/language delays.*

*The specialist relayed that the static sound my son made was probably the sound he actually heard all the time. This broke my heart. It was also discovered that he needed occupational therapy to strengthen his fine motor development.*

*Our son was enrolled into our county's Pre-K program at age three and I remembered telling his teacher, Mrs. Wheeler (who we also owe much gratitude and honor), "Do the best you can to teach him, but if he doesn't make much progress I won't hold it against you." I was very serious because he had so many gaps in his learning background.*

*After the first year of services, he had acquired some skills but still struggled. After the second year, an amazing difference was noticed. He made huge advancements and was extremely proud of his accomplishments. Today, he is like a totally different child. He had to overcome so much, and it is with much thankfulness towards Child Find and his Pre-K teacher that my family and I are so grateful for their expertise and persistency in helping families like mine.*

*As of this past January he was staffed totally out of the Developmentally Delayed program in our county. Early intervention does work! Thanks again to FDLRS Child Find, and the wonderful teachers who support our students.*



**If you have concerns about your child's development or questions about referral services, contact one of our Child Find Specialists for a free developmental screening at 1-800-227-6036. All information provided is confidential.**

# Autism in the News

## **Autism Awareness Day**

Autism Awareness Day at the Capitol in Tallahassee was held April 1st. For news and information about this event and other autism-related resources, go to <http://www.autismfl.com/>.



## **District Parent Events Spotlight ASD Presenter**



Three districts in our FDLRS service area celebrated Parent events this year with information provided on a large variety of topics. Each event had one presenter in common. Dr. Brian Abrams, a Podiatrist in Flagler County, energetically presented a wealth of information about autism from a personal point of view.

Dr. Abrams and his wife, Julie, have a five-year old son diagnosed with ASD, who is receiving services through the Flagler County ESE program. Dr. Abrams becomes animated as he shares his story about receiving the diagnosis for his son and pauses as he passionately delivers the punch line that he himself was also diagnosed with autism at the same time as his son.

As they say, the rest is history! Dr. Abrams loves to report that he “made Amazon.com rich” buying every book written about autism, and he describes how he came to be a physician because of his need to be autonomous, something he found out after working in engineering with the U.S. Department of Defense designing night vision and electro-optic equipment. Dr. Abrams is quick to announce that he wasn’t a high-functioning Asperger’s child and that he didn’t talk until he was six. Most touching is his story about the impact of a teacher who recognized his potential and inspired him to achieve.

In early 2006, Dr. Abrams founded the Florida Autism Coalition for Education and Services (FACES), a multi-faceted organization which, among other things, provides parent support groups and provides autism education and support to anyone either directly OR indirectly affected by autism. For more information about FACES, contact Dr. Abrams at [brijul1@juno.com](mailto:brijul1@juno.com).

### **Autism Safety Tool Kit**

Are you prepared for an autism emergency? The National Autism Association has posted a tool kit for parents to help keep their children safe. Visit their website at <http://www.nationalautismassociation.org/safetytoolkit.php> to download information.

## **Vacations for Families of Children with Autism**

According to the authors of the website AllEars.Net, a trip to Disney World can be a positive, rewarding experience for children with autism and similar special needs. And while any vacation requires a certain amount of planning, a little extra effort to accommodate your special child will pay large dividends when you get to the parks. While their information is specific to WDW, these tips may be helpful to families on any vacation trip. The site contains comments and additional tips from families who have visited theme parks. Check out the information at on their website: [http://www.allearsnet.com/pl/dis\\_aut2.htm](http://www.allearsnet.com/pl/dis_aut2.htm).



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**North East Florida Educational Consortium**  
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**TO:**

**FDLRS/NEFEC is pleased to present:**

**Summer B.I.T.S.**

*(Behavioral, Instructional, & Technology Strategies)*

**Summer Sessions for  
Professional Development**

*Relax, Rejuvenate, Renew and  
Reinforce Your Skills*

Check out the calendar inside this newsletter or  
go to [www.nefec.org/fdlrs](http://www.nefec.org/fdlrs)  
and click on "HRD Workshop Flyers"  
on the right side of the web page  
for more detailed workshop information.

**Register for all sessions at**  
**[www.nefec.org/calendar](http://www.nefec.org/calendar).**

*(No stipends will be offered for these sessions)*

The Florida Diagnostic and Learning Resources System is funded by the State of Florida, Department of Education, Division of Public Schools and Community Education, Bureau of Exceptional Education and Support Services, through federal assistance under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), Part B; IDEA Part B, Preschool; and state General Revenue funds to provide support services for Florida's Exceptional Student Education programs. An Equal Opportunity Employer, FDLRS is an integral part of the North East Florida Educational Consortium, located in Palatka. NEFEC is dedicated to helping member districts cooperatively meet their educational goals and objectives by providing programs and services that individual districts would not be able to provide as effectively or as economically acting alone.