Response to Intervention (RtI) is an educational technique, supported by the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA 2004), that seeks to improve the quality of general instruction that all children receive. The main function of RtI is to catch a struggling student early and intervene with tailored instruction that supports the child’s weaknesses, in order to avoid the need to refer the child for special education services. RtI is a tiered process, offering different levels of scaffolding and instruction depending on the child’s individualized needs. There are no specific guidelines on who qualifies for this type of education support, or for how long or how frequently the services are offered.

Many schools believe that the RtI process must be in place for a pre-determined amount of time before a child can be referred for any additional special education services; however some individuals believe that this prolongs the qualification process and delays appropriate services for those who have significant learning disabilities. In more recent years there have been laws put in place to ensure that utilizing the RtI process will not delay or deny special education evaluation. Additionally, there are laws ensuring that an RtI will never replace any part of a comprehensive qualification evaluation.