



**Individualized Implementation  
- RTI/CEIS/MTSS guide**



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# RTI – A formidable mandate

The legal and ethical mandate to identify and provide early intervening services to students whose behavior puts them at risk of school failure is strong. The mandate to keep students with social-emotional disorders in the least restrictive environment, a regular classroom, is even stronger. To date, schools have been better at identifying students with risk for failure than they have been at providing each of those students with personalized, skill-building, matched to personal strengths and learning style preferences. There are good reasons for this gap. Hundreds of psycho-social and educational strategies for addressing skill and behavior deficits have been proven effective. All work with some students in some situations, some of the time. None work with all students, all of the time. The ever-expanding mound of knowledge about what works is comprised of several major domains of study, each of which is beyond the scope of most individuals to master in fewer than ten years (Gardner, 2006). Despite this complexity, in order to meet the mandates described above, each teacher is often expected to have fully mastered all of these domains, with little or no training, before the first day of school. S/he is expected to quickly extract the precise set of proven strategies that can most closely meet the needs of each diverse student, and the group of those students as a whole, and personalize and adapt those strategies as needed. The expectation is that the teacher will be able to do this in their first classroom and in every class thereafter. The challenge can be, and often is, overwhelming. It calls out for the application of technology to lighten teachers' burden and extend better services to students. Ripple Effects is a set of technology tools that expand educators' capacity to match the most relevant set of proven effective strategies to each student's - and teacher's need.

## **Which educators can use Ripple Effects for RTI/MTSS/CEIS and IEPs?**

Any teacher, group of teachers, team or staff member with an appropriate relevant concern about a student's behavior or motivation can use Ripple Effects for early intervening services for students who have been identified as having special needs, or are at risk of being so identified because of behavioral issues.

## **Which students can benefit from Ripple Effects for RTI/MTSS/CEIS?**

Any general or special education student who demonstrates a behavior or skill deficit that interferes with their academic progress, or other students' access to instruction and academic progress is a good candidate to use Ripple Effects programs.

# Start with social-emotional strengths and personal interests

To personalize an individual intervention plan for a student, begin by identifying one or more social-emotional strengths. Next, identify three or four key personal interests that can be a bridge to communication for you and a source of reinforcement for your student. Use your own observation, peers' responses, as well as data from the Screen for Strengths app. Use the list below as a starting, not ending, point.

Remember: any weakness may be the flip side of a potential strength, for instance, stubbornness is also an expression of perseverance.

## Strengths: Self-understanding

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Awareness of strengths and weaknesses | <input type="checkbox"/> Notices and names physical states        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Confident                             | <input type="checkbox"/> Notices mental/emotional signs of stress |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Goal directed                         | <input type="checkbox"/> Notices physical signs of stress         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Hardworking                           | <input type="checkbox"/> Positive outlook                         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Has growth mindset                    | <input type="checkbox"/> Values learning                          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Notices and names own feelings        | <input type="checkbox"/> Other:                                   |

## Strengths: Self-regulation

### Assertiveness:

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Is active, not passive            | <input type="checkbox"/> Uses voice to get and show respect |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Uses eyes to get and show respect | <input type="checkbox"/> Other:                             |

### Impulse control:

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Controls physical reactions         | <input type="checkbox"/> Uses breathing to calm self         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Controls verbal reactions           | <input type="checkbox"/> Uses physical activity to calm self |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Manages emotional reactions         | <input type="checkbox"/> Uses self-talk to calm self         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Predicts consequences before acting | <input type="checkbox"/> Other:                              |

## Strengths: Awareness of others

### Awareness of others:

- Avoids use of stereotypes
- Empathizes with people who have different experiences
- Enjoys other people's successes
- Notices when others are in distress
- Picks up on non-verbal clues from others
- Picks up on verbal clues from others
- Recognizes others' feelings
- Shows signs of distress at other people's pain
- Takes others perspective
- Other:

### Connection to community:

- Gets along with teachers
- Has good friends
- Participates in school activities
- Other:

### Communications skills:

- Actively listens to others
- Demonstrates care for others
- Expresses feelings in constructive way
- Shows respect to others
- Uses encouraging words
- Uses humor to bond
- Other:

### Group skills:

- Encourages others
- Joins groups easily
- Makes others feel welcome
- Participates in discussion
- Other:

**Pro-social values:**

- Courteous
- Fair
- Friendly
- Generous
- Helpful
- Honest
- Kind
- Loyal
- Promotes justice
- Reliable
- Responsible
- Trustworthy
- Other:

**Strengths: Decision-making**

- Comes up with creative options
- Names problems accurately
- Perseveres through difficulty/challenges
- Selects reasonable solutions to try
- Tests solutions
- Weighs alternatives carefully
- Other:

**Personal Interests**

- Academic subject
- Art
- Building things
- Cars
- Civil rights
- Media
- Music
- Personal relationships
- Sports
- Video games
- Other:

# Identify barriers to school success

Now specify your areas of concern for this student in terms of school outcomes, behavioral challenges and social-emotional skill deficits. If your school uses behavior screeners or observational methods to record student behaviors, you may want to use that information to help guide you in this section.

## School Outcomes

- Failing grades
- Fails to complete assignments
- Fails to complete homework
- Referrals for behavior problems
- Tardiness
- Truancy
- Other:

## Behavior challenges

- Aggressive towards peers
- Aggressive towards teacher
- Blames others for mistakes
- Blurts out
- Bullies others
- Cheats
- Declines to participate
- Defiant
- Disrespectful
- Disruptive in class
- Disruptive outside of the classroom
- Excludes others from group
- Fighting
- Gives unwanted touch
- Instigates aggressive behavior
- Interrupts
- Invades personal space
- Involved in bias activity
- Lies
- Reacts aggressively to teasing/bullying
- Refuses to comply
- Roughhouses
- Spreads gossip
- Steals
- Teases
- Tries to get out of work demands
- Tries to get unearned privileges
- Vandalizes
- Other:



## Social-Emotional Skill Deficits

### Affective:

- Appears isolated
- Emotionally needy
- Difficulty expressing feelings
- Difficulty labeling emotions
- Difficulty recognizing others' emotions
- Difficulty understanding own emotions
- Shy
- Other:

### Cognitive:

- Doesn't link cause and effect
- Forgets instructions
- Jumps to conclusions
- Not self-aware
- Shows poor judgment
- Uses negative self-talk
- Other:

### Behavioral:

- Attention seeking
- Disruptive
- Hyperactive
- Impulsive
- Inattentive
- Other:

### Relational:

- Cultural insensitivity
- Lacks assertiveness
- Poor communication skills
- Poor group skills
- Rejected by peers
- Other:



## Target Behavior 2

What? \_\_\_\_\_

Most likely when? \_\_\_\_\_

Least likely when? \_\_\_\_\_

*Intensity of behavior before intervention (mark along line)*

**Distracting**                      **Disruptive**                      **Destructive**

---

Date \_\_\_\_\_ Recorded by \_\_\_\_\_

*Intensity of behavior after intervention (mark along line)*

**Distracting**                      **Disruptive**                      **Destructive**

---

Date \_\_\_\_\_ Recorded by \_\_\_\_\_

---

## Target Behavior 3

What? \_\_\_\_\_

Most likely when? \_\_\_\_\_

Least likely when? \_\_\_\_\_

*Intensity of behavior before intervention (mark along line)*

**Distracting**                      **Disruptive**                      **Destructive**

---

Date \_\_\_\_\_ Recorded by \_\_\_\_\_

*Intensity of behavior after intervention (mark along line)*

**Distracting**                      **Disruptive**                      **Destructive**

---

Date \_\_\_\_\_ Recorded by \_\_\_\_\_

# Translate problem behavior into key objectives

Translate problematic behavior that you have identified to target into up to three skill-based, learning objectives. For instance, if the problem behavior is blurting out, the skill objective may be impulse control; if the problem is aggressive reactions to being gossiped about, assertiveness may be the skill-based learning objectives.

	<b>Targeted Behavior</b>	<b>Learning Objective</b>
<b>1.</b>		
<b>2.</b>		
<b>3.</b>		

# Identify key positive reinforcers

Identify one or more positive consequences that can support behavior aligned with key learning objectives. Look for ways to point out links between changed behavior and natural, positive consequences. Recognize that development of self-efficacy and solving a personal problem is its own reward not dependent on adult authority figures to be effective. Reinforcers may be internal to students, recognition from teacher or peers, or rewards and privileges.

## Internal to student

- Control
- Empowerment
- Personal achievement
- Personal time with teacher

## Recognition: teachers, peers

- Certificate of achievement
- Peer recognition
- Private adult recognition
- Public adult recognition

## Rewards or privileges

- Choices re studies
- Free time
- Sense of agency

# Be clear on options and constraints

First figure out your constraints, then build your individualized behavior treatment plan. Check the boxes that fit with the context, goals and constraints that impact this student.

## Technology access

- Chromebook
- Desktop
- Laptop
- Tablet

## Internet connectivity

- All of the time
- Some of the time
- No student access

## Adult facilitator

- Classroom teacher
- Counselor or psychologist
- Disciplinarian
- IEP team member
- Other:

## Student role

- Doing assigned lessons alone
- Exploring lesson with facilitator
- Privately exploring unassigned lessons
- Other:

## Where? (Physical location)

- Classroom
- Computer lab
- Counselor's office
- Detention room/ISS
- Library
- Nurse's station
- Resource room
- School office
- Other:

### **When? (Setting – time of day)**

- Academic period(s)
- Advisory period
- Free time
- Special Ed pull out
- Suspension period
- Other:

### **Frequency**

- One-time event
- Several times a week
- Several times up to 8 weeks
- More than 8 weeks
- PBIS
- Other:

### **Supplement to programming**

- Academic programming
- Character education
- Social emotional learning
- Substance abuse prevention
- Violence prevention
- Other:

# Choose an intervention approach

Based on the objectives and constraints you have identified, there are two ways to personalize the intervention:

## Student-Centered Approach

Using Ripple Effects' topic list, choose the initial two building blocks, then let student interest and Ripple Effects take it from there. For example:

1. Start with a strength related to the lesson objective. For a first-time user, assign the student "Learning Styles" or "Strengths." For a returning user, assign a "Keys" strength-building topic related to the lesson objective.
2. Next, assign the one topic that matches your behavioral concern.
3. Then invite students to PRIVATELY scroll through the topics to find what they think might be reasons behind their behavior, or to problem solve a personal challenge, or just to learn more about topics that interest them.
4. End with strength training in core social-emotional abilities. Let each student pick a skill they would like to develop from the "Keys" list.

## Teacher-directed Approach

Review sample intervention plans and the global list of Ripple Effects topics in one of the tiered Intervention Guides listed on the Resource page of this manual. Within your time constraints, from those resources create a list of topics that address the learning objectives you've set. If you are not using a preconfigured sample intervention plan, remember to look for links within tutorials for related topics. You can find them in:

1. The "How To" screens of each topic
2. The "Related Topics" list in the small text box within each tutorial screen

***Tips:** Depending on the student, it can take 10-20 minutes to complete a topic. Make sure to allow time for personal exploration in the program each session.*



# Create a “playlist” of personalized lessons

To find topics, open the intervention and scroll through the cell phone list. See complete topic lists and sample scope and sequence configurations in the Indicated Intervention manual at [www.rippleeffects.com](http://www.rippleeffects.com).

**Playlist for learning Objective 1:**

**Playlist for learning Objective 2:**

**Playlist for learning Objective 3:**

# Measuring success

Measure success by answering three questions:

## Did they do it?

The Scorecards in the student training programs (Ripple Effects for Kids and Ripple Effects for Teens) automatically document the student's completion of core components (the interactive parts) of each tutorial. This information is also visible in the Ripple Effects Data Manager.

## Did it work?

The proximal measures of program effectiveness are mastery of the skills, or attitudes that have been set as learning objectives. There are three important perspectives for measuring learner mastery: learner report, teacher observation and joint assessment.

1. **Learner report:** Under adult supervision, but without adult mediation of content, students can privately complete validated self-report screeners for pre- to post-, longitudinal assessment of core social emotional competencies. Use Screen for Strengths (left side menu) to document self-perception of key strengths.
2. **Teacher observation:** Adults can use behavioral observation tools to rate student behavior. The SWIS system within PBIS frameworks provides a great place to track behavioral issues. The Ripple Effects Pounce tool, focuses on helping educators notice and reinforce positive behavior.
3. **Adults and students** can jointly do an ongoing assessment of progress toward addressing target behaviors and meeting learning objectives, by periodically returning to the slider on pages 9 and 10 to mark intensity of target behaviors.

## Did it matter?

Using administrative data from your school, evaluate, for this student:

1. Did disciplinary infractions, office referrals, and suspensions of any kind go down?
2. Did engagement with school go up?
3. Did academic performance improve?
4. Were there fewer tardies or improved attendance?

# Help students take responsibility for their learning

The Ripple Effects' approach represents a decided shift in roles for many implementers. Adult implementers, whether teachers, psychologists, counselors, behavioral analysts, special education resource people, or disciplinarians, move from being the “sage on the stage,” to being the available, “guide on the side.” It is students who drive the program, explore reasons for their behavior and who are responsible for their learning outcomes. There are three key elements to empowering students to succeed:

## **1. Introduce the program then move to the background**

Make sure students know how to get around in the Ripple Effects program, then give them their assignment. Let them know it is a requirement, not an invitation, and leave them alone, with headphones to protect privacy. DON'T hover, over-direct, or tell them which buttons to click in which order. DO periodically ask to see their scorecard, or use Data Manager to check if students have completed the interactive parts (“Brain”, “Got It!”, and “Profiles”) of assigned topics.

## **2. Respect student privacy, maintain their trust**

Ripple Effects does NOT recommend seeking information about possible outside-of-school causes for problematic behavior. Our recommended policy is to NOT question students about possible underlying causes for negative behavior, but to direct them to privately explore what they think may be prompting problem behavior. For many students, school is the one place where they have an identity separate from the shortcomings of their family, or their personal history. Empower them to make needed connections between external pressures and school based behavior, but don't assert any right for you to do so. Almost all students who have minimal exposure to Ripple Effects take advantage of the opportunity to explore personal matters, especially trauma and family problems, when they can do so in private. Many subsequently disclose those problems to trusted adults, even if they have resisted doing so before.

## **3. Involve student's parent/guardians at every step.**

Ask a parent/guardian to help identify student strengths and behavioral concerns. Share observations of their child's positive behavior, and alert them to things their children are doing right. Find resources for connecting with families at Ripple Effects' teacher support site (<http://rippleeffects.com/teachers/>), including the Personal Trainer manual for parents to strengthen their skills in areas linked to school success for their children.

# That's the plan!

Congratulations on completing a personalized behavior plan! Insert student name and information from prior pages to complete a summary.

**Student name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ **'s key strengths are:**

\_\_\_\_\_ **'s personal interests are:**

\_\_\_\_\_ **'s key reinforcers are:**

\_\_\_\_\_ **'s progress on target behaviors are:**

**Personalized Ripple Effect's playlist for** \_\_\_\_\_:

## **Acknowledgements**

Response to Intervention (RTI) is a rapidly growing approach to addressing behavior problems before they prohibit school success. Much of what Ripple Effects has learned about what works for RTI and how we support Individual Education Plans (IEPs) has come from our clients. We are especially grateful to Nancy Franklin of Los Angeles Unified School District and Linda Bruene-Butler, Behavioral Research and Training Institute, University of Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey, University Behavioral Health, for their insights into how to integrate Ripple Effects as an effective, value-added component to behavioral intervention plans. We are grateful to Stephanie Pelcher, and the SBIT/STARS Program at Syracuse (NY) School District, for their generosity in sharing their program materials with us through the National Center for RTI, and to the National Center for its leadership in moving the field forward.







1601 Harbor Bay Parkway, Suite 105  
Alameda, CA 94502

Phone: 415-227-1669

Fax: 415-227-4998

[info@rippleeffects.com](mailto:info@rippleeffects.com)

[www.rippleeffects.com](http://www.rippleeffects.com)