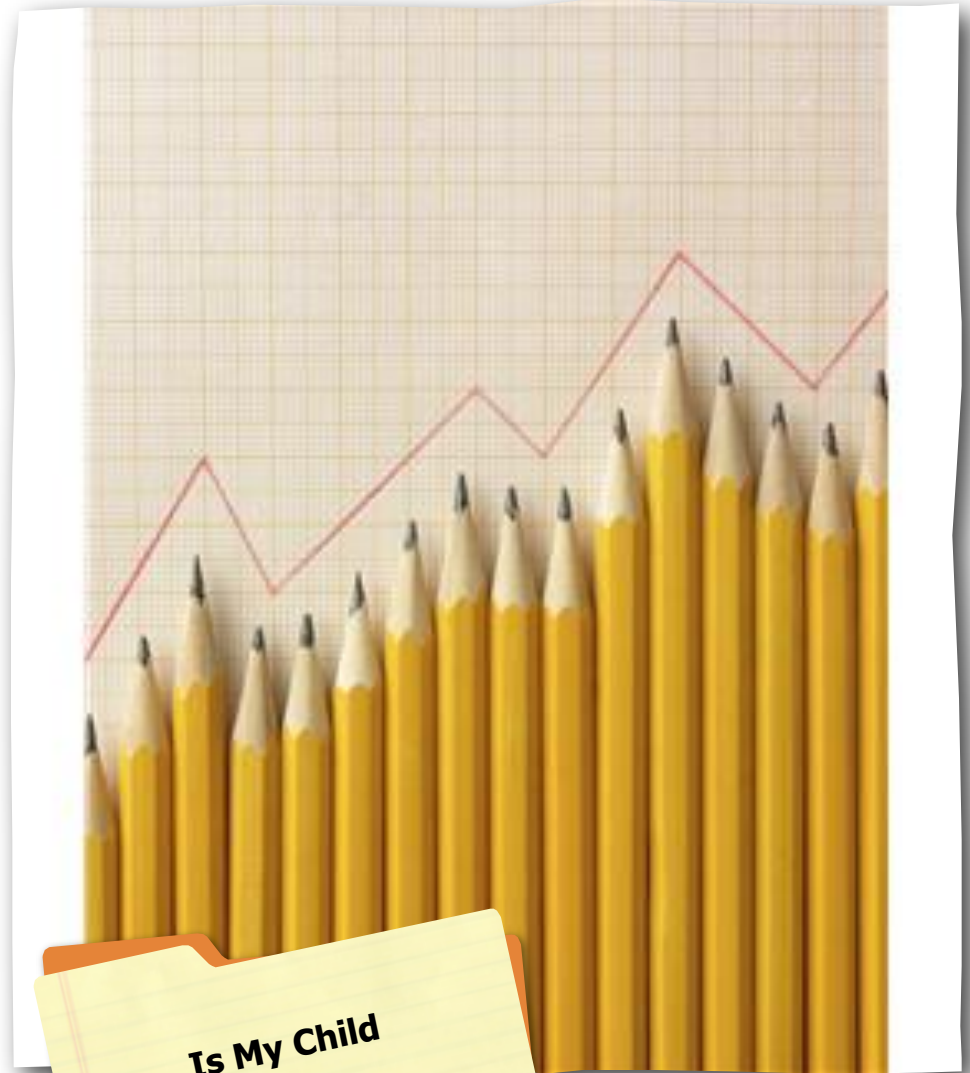# Decision-Making & Problem-Solving

Problem Identification - Many people may see the same problem differently. A collaboratively generated data-based problem definition can help parents, teachers, and related service providers all see the problem the same way. Using input from all of these individuals, a team prepares a data-based description of the students current performance. For example: Mike, a second grade student reads grade-level material at 25 words correct per minute (wcpm). Next, they compare this performance to expectations based on research or peer norms. Mike should be reading 44 wcpm based on research. Therefore they can confirm that there is a problem.

Problem Analysis - Answering the parents' next question, "Why is my child not reading well?" is the goal of problem analysis. There are 5 common reasons for problems: (a) the student does not want to do it, (b) they need more practice, (c) they need more help, (d) they have not done it this way before, and (e) it is too hard. The team can test each of these hypotheses and identify appropriate intervention strategies (Daly, Witt, Martens, & Dool, 1997).

Intervention - When data from multiple sources are used to validate a problem and identify likely solutions, intervention selection is not haphazard. Teachers and parents can know they are using resources wisely in resolving the problem. Rigorous application of instructional design and frequent progress monitoring measures allow teachers to show parents progress or explain adjustments.

Evaluation - Charting and evaluating the outcomes of intervention provides teachers and parents evidence that their decisions were sound, or provides input for further problem-solving actions.

Daly, E. J., III, Witt, J. C., Martens, B. K., & Dool, E. J. (1997). A model for conducting a functional analysis of academic performance problems. School Psychology Review, 26(4), 554-574.

Is My Child Learning?

Decision-Making & Problem-Solving

Is My Child Learning?

Every parent wants to know the answer to this question, and it is only right that they should. Parents need to know that schools are preparing their children for the future. Recent legislation, Louisiana ACT 54, reflects this need and creates an accountability system to meet the publics' expectations. While all accountability is good, useful instructional decisions demand data that is collected more frequently than once a year. LEAP 21 outcomes do not tell us if a student is learning, they tell us if the student did learn. This retrospective approach to assessment robs teachers of the opportunity to improve instruction and student outcomes during the school year.

Credible answers to this parent's question require early and frequent measures of student performance data. Schools are training their faculties in data collection, interpretation, and utilization using a model called Response to Intervention (RTI). Including parents in this training could improve shared goal setting and build partnerships.

The Response to Intervention (RTI) model uses data to monitor all students' progress and to select, implement, and monitor more intense instructional strategies for students who are at-risk.

At Tier 1, screening data is collected for all students allowing school-based teams, including parents, to see the general academic health of the school and to identify students at-risk in core curriculum areas. When expectations are not met, teachers and parents can apply a Problem Solving Model to guide intervention selection and implementation of Tier 2 or 3 services.

Selected students, those not meeting research-based or local norms for performance during screening, are provided with Tier 2 services. These services are selected using a problem-solving process to more exactly match instruction to a student's specific needs and to provide more intense intervention and monitoring. The decision to provide services and the design, implementation, and monitoring of these services are all activities that should include the student's parents.

Students who do not respond as expected to Tier 2 intervention are afforded even more intense and individualized instruction with Tier 3 interventions.

The Problem Solving Model

The problem solving model is a four stage process through which teachers, parents, and others with knowledge of a child scientifically evaluate observed performance problems and identify solutions with high probabilities of resolving the problems.