



**W·A·Y PROGRAM™**  
Widening Advancements for Youth

## **SPECIAL EDUCATION PRE-REFERRAL PROCESS**

The pre-referral process was developed to ensure researchers are provided reasonable accommodations and modifications before they are referred for special education assessment. The pre-referral process allows experts to use strategies that draw on the researcher's strengths and meet their educational needs.

### **RESEARCHER INTERVENTION TEAM**

In the pre-referral process each cohort acts as the child's Researcher Intervention Team (RIT). The purpose of the RIT is to:

- work together to identify the researcher's learning strengths and needs
- put strategies into action, and
- evaluate their impact so the researcher can succeed in the general education setting

If the interventions being implemented are specifically to rule out a disability, the parent and researcher should be notified of the suspicion and intent of the team. The parent and researcher should be invited to participate in the pre-referral discussions.

### **PROCESS**

The team selects a researcher suspected of having a disability for the pre-referral process. The referral could be based on a concern about their academic performance or behavior. Any staff that participates in the

researchers academic process may recommend a researcher for the pre-referral process. The team should consider specific areas of concern, such as not completing projects, earning poor grades, not paying attention, having trouble understanding projects in Hero.

The RIT follows these steps:

- Review the researcher's strengths, interests, and talents.
- Discuss reasons for referral, overall performance level, and behavior in the lab.
- List interventions previously tried and their rate of success. (School interventions may include accommodations, modifications, and behavior plans. Home interventions may include follow up with health concerns, behavior plans, and help with using Hero independently.)
- Brainstorm interventions that address concerns.
- Select interventions to try.
- Develop a plan for carrying them out.
- Agree on a time to meet again to discuss progress.
- Put the intervention into action and evaluate it over time.
- \*\*Interventions should be implemented, tracked and documented over a 8 week period.
- The team meets weekly to discuss the success, or lack thereof, of the intervention. The RIT will evaluate whether as a result of the intervention, the researcher's performance improves, remains the same, or regresses?

If the interventions are effective and the researcher seems to be back on track, the team should continue with the plan and hold future meetings as needed. This suggests the researcher doesn't need a special education evaluation at this time. Most likely, they will benefit from instruction in the general education setting with continuing interventions.

If the interventions don't bring about desired change, the team may decide to:

- try another round of interventions or alter the current ones, starting the process again or

- refer the researcher for a special education evaluation to find out if he's eligible for special education services as a student with a disability. Proper documentation of the the 8 weeks of intervention and outcome tracking must be provided upon referral to the special education staff.

## THINGS TO CONSIDER

- Attendance
- Participation in in-lab projects
- Progress in Hero independently
- Behavior
- Expert classroom management practices
- Previously implemented interventions