#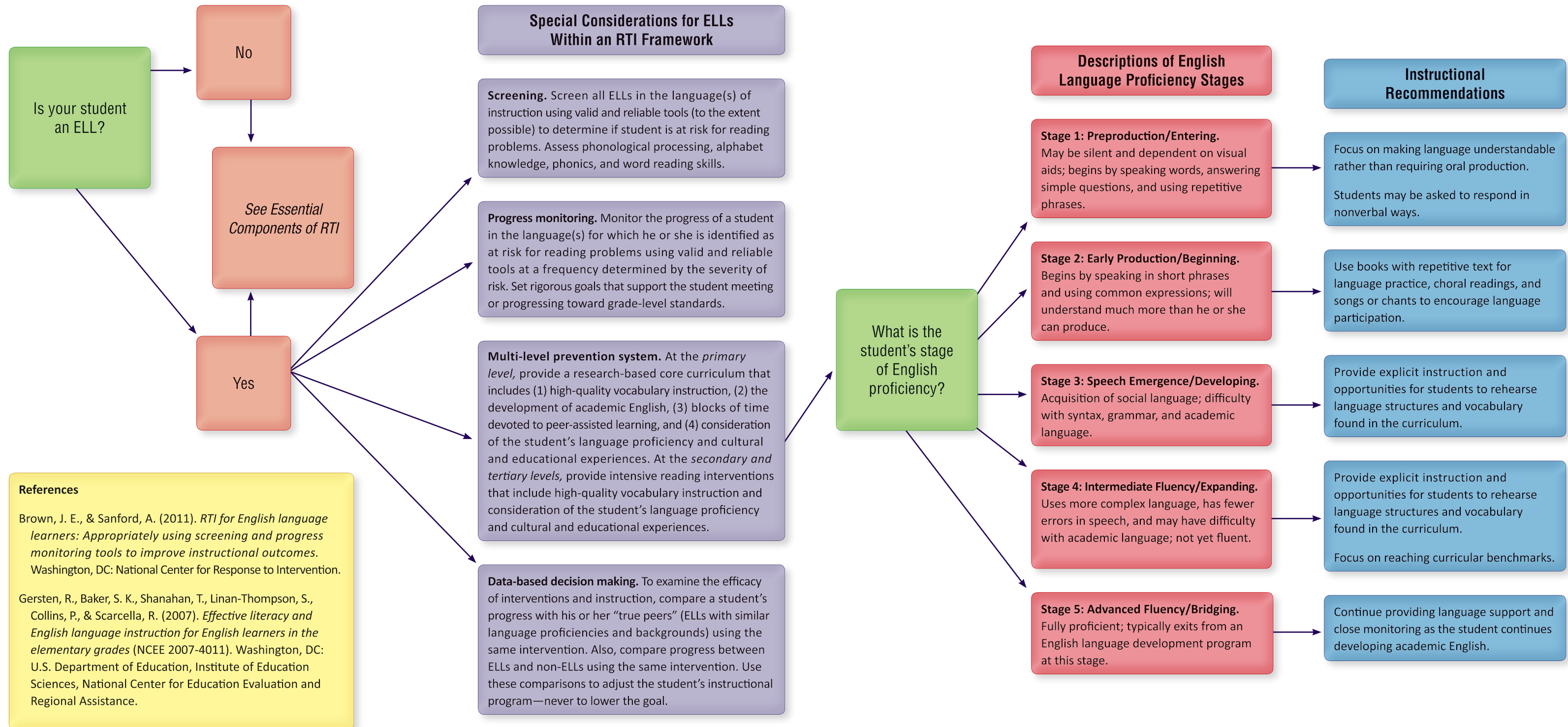 Literacy and English Language Instruction for English Language Learners (ELLs) Within a Response to Intervention (RTI) Framework

Is your student an ELL?

No → *See Essential Components of RTI*

Yes →

Special Considerations for ELLs Within an RTI Framework

Screening. Screen all ELLs in the language(s) of instruction using valid and reliable tools (to the extent possible) to determine if student is at risk for reading problems. Assess phonological processing, alphabet knowledge, phonics, and word reading skills.

Progress monitoring. Monitor the progress of a student in the language(s) for which he or she is identified as at risk for reading problems using valid and reliable tools at a frequency determined by the severity of risk. Set rigorous goals that support the student meeting or progressing toward grade-level standards.

Multi-level prevention system. At the *primary level,* provide a research-based core curriculum that includes (1) high-quality vocabulary instruction, (2) the development of academic English, (3) blocks of time devoted to peer-assisted learning, and (4) consideration of the student's language proficiency and cultural and educational experiences. At the *secondary and tertiary levels,* provide intensive reading interventions that include high-quality vocabulary instruction and consideration of the student's language proficiency and cultural and educational experiences.

Data-based decision making. To examine the efficacy of interventions and instruction, compare a student's progress with his or her "true peers" (ELLs with similar language proficiencies and backgrounds) using the same intervention. Also, compare progress between ELLs and non-ELLs using the same intervention. Use these comparisons to adjust the student's instructional program—never to lower the goal.

What is the student's stage of English proficiency?

Descriptions of English Language Proficiency Stages

Stage 1: Preproduction/Entering. May be silent and dependent on visual aids; begins by speaking words, answering simple questions, and using repetitive phrases.

Stage 2: Early Production/Beginning. Begins by speaking in short phrases and using common expressions; will understand much more than he or she can produce.

Stage 3: Speech Emergence/Developing. Acquisition of social language; difficulty with syntax, grammar, and academic language.

Stage 4: Intermediate Fluency/Expanding. Uses more complex language, has fewer errors in speech, and may have difficulty with academic language; not yet fluent.

Stage 5: Advanced Fluency/Bridging. Fully proficient; typically exits from an English language development program at this stage.

Instructional Recommendations

Focus on making language understandable rather than requiring oral production.

Students may be asked to respond in nonverbal ways.

Use books with repetitive text for language practice, choral readings, and songs or chants to encourage language participation.

Provide explicit instruction and opportunities for students to rehearse language structures and vocabulary found in the curriculum.

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Focus on reaching curricular benchmarks.

Continue providing language support and close monitoring as the student continues developing academic English.

References

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About the National Center on Response to Intervention

Through funding from the U.S. Department of Education's Office of Special Education Programs, the American Institutes for Research and researchers from Vanderbilt University and the University of Kansas have established the National Center on Response to Intervention. The Center provides technical assistance to states and districts and builds the capacity of states to assist districts in implementing proven response to intervention frameworks.

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