South River Preschool
Intervention and Referral Services (PIRS) Handbook

Supporting Early Learners Through Observation, Referral, and Intervention



Dr. Heather Lieberman, Principal
South River Early Learning Center & Preschool Programs

Purpose

This Preschool PIRS Handbook is designed to accompany a Preschool Flow Chart for Referral and Intervention Support (PIRS). This handbook helps preschool staff (teachers, aides, coordinators, etc.) understand the process of identifying, referring, and supporting children who may need additional developmental, behavioral, or academic support. In addition, the PIRS Handbook is designed to empower teachers and families to work together in supporting every child's success in preschool. Through early action, structured planning, and teamwork, we ensure no child slips through the cracks.

Table of Contents

1. Handbook Cover

1. Purpose

2. Table of Contents

3. Introducation of PIRS

4. Key Principles

5. Referral Chart

6. PIRS Process Breakdown

7-8. Step-by-Step Explanation

9. Examples of Criteria

10. Forms to Access for Process / Frequently Asked Questions

Introduction to PIRS

The Preschool Intervention and Referral Services (PIRS) process is a structured, team-based approach to identify and support young children (ages 3–5) who may benefit from additional help in the areas of:

- Communication
- Behavior
- Social-emotional development
- Motor skills
- Cognitive skills
- Sensory processing

**PIRS is not a special education placement. It is a general education initiative to ensure early support is provided before formal evaluation for special services.*

Team Roles & Responsibilities

Role	Responsibilities
● PIRS ● PIC ● Social Worker/CPIS	● PIRS- coordinate and facilitate PIRS process/meeting ● PIC- Instructional Coach to provide Curriculum support ● Social Worker/CPIS- Provide support in intervention development; CST representative
Teacher	Observe, implement strategies, document, communicate with family
Parent/Guardian	Share input, participate in meetings, support at home
Administrator	Support the process, coordinate meetings, review plans
Support Staff	Provide consultation and services (e.g., speech, OT, behavioral)

Key Principles

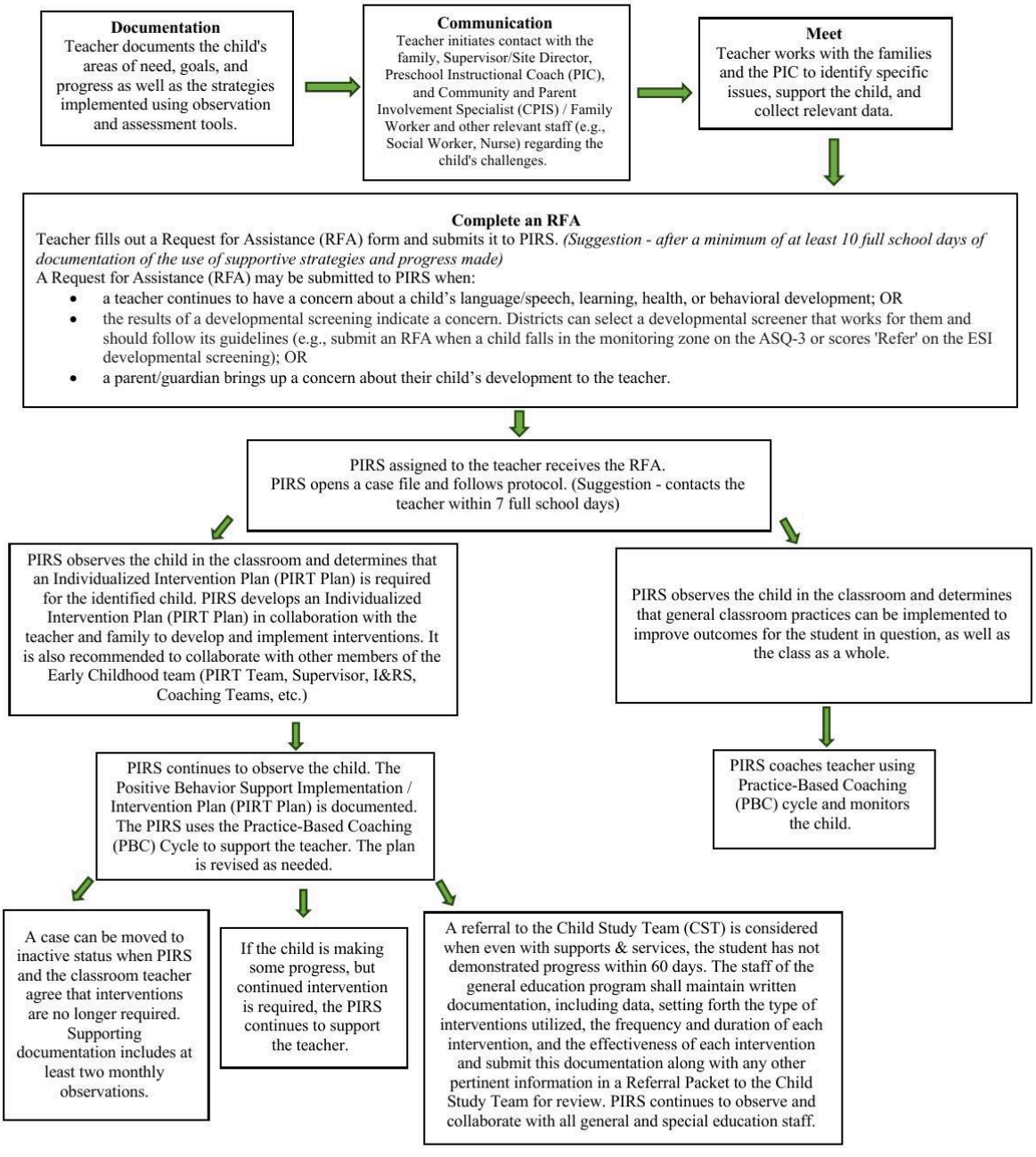
- Early Identification is critical.
- Collaboration between families, teachers, and specialists enhances outcomes.
- Documentation is essential for transparency and accountability.
- Intervention should be tailored, measurable, and time-bound.
- Data-informed decisions drive next steps.

Referral Chart

The Pyramid Model Partnership: The State Leadership Team of New Jersey

MONTCLAIR STATE UNIVERSITY
Center for Autism and Early Childhood Mental Health

Preschool Intervention & Referral Specialist
Request for Assistance (RFA) Suggested Process



Developed by the NJ Pyramid Model State Leadership Team with Guidance from NJDOE - Updated January 2025

PIRS Process Break Down

1. The teacher fills out the PIRS referral form (insert google form) and submits it to _____ (PIRS coordinator). _____will schedule a meeting with the teacher to screen concerns. Go over RFA.

2. If a referral is appropriate, the PIRS Coordinator will schedule a PIRS meeting day with allotted times to meet. This will be a document that has listed participants such as: PIRS team members, parents/guardians, teacher, related service providers, or any other relevant participants based on student needs

3. When the meeting documents are complete - the schedule and packet is then given/shared with the secretary,_____. The secretary will send a letter home notifying the parents of when the meeting will be. Along with the letter is a parent questionnaire that the parent will be returned to school. When the questionnaire is returned and the RSVP slip, they will be given to the secretary. The secretary will make sure everyone is invited to the meeting.

4. The secretary will let PIRS know when parent paperwork is provided.

5. PIRS team will have a pre-meeting in advance for planning (PIRS will have required documents complete)

6. At the meeting, during the first 15-20 minutes the team will discuss concerns and an Action plan will be put in place. The teacher will be provided with interventions and strategies to be used in the classroom.

7. The parent is then invited into the meeting for the final 20 minutes. The PIRS Coordinator and teachers will review the plan with the parents.

8. If the parent does not attend the meeting, the secretary will send home the Action Plan.

9. A follow-up meeting is scheduled before the end of the initial meeting. Make sure the secretary knows the date and time of the next meeting so the student can be put on the next scheduled PIRS date.

10. At the follow up meeting data, interventions and action plan will be updated and if successful the interventions will stay in place and the case can be concluded. Teachers are required to provide TSG observations, data tracking, and the individual child profiles. Needed for a meeting to take place.

11. If the interventions were found to be unsuccessful the Action Plan will be revisited and new interventions will be put in place.

Step-by-Step Explanation

Step 1: Observation & Concern

- The teacher notices a consistent concern (speech, behavior, motor, etc.)
- Collect anecdotal notes and work samples

Step 2: Family Communication

- Discuss concern with parent/caregiver
- Share strengths and concerns
- Provide reassurance and plan for support

Step 3: Tier 1/Classroom Strategies

- Implement strategies such as visual schedules, sensory breaks, language modeling, etc.
- Document frequency and child's response

Step 4: Review Data

- Review child's progress using logs, observations, and work samples
- Determine if further support is needed

Step 5: PIRS Team Meeting

- Include teacher, administrator, support staff, and family
- Review all data and concerns
- Decide on next steps

Step 6: Create Action Plan

- Develop specific, measurable goals
- Outline interventions and responsible staff
- Set timeline (usually 4–6 weeks)

Step 7: Monitor Progress

- Continue using strategies and collect progress data
- Regularly communicate with family

Step 8: Review & Determine Next Steps

- If goals met → monitor and support in class
- If no progress → refer to Child Study Team (CST)

Example of Referral Criteria

- Speech/Language: Not using words by age 2.5, unintelligible speech
- Behavior: Frequent tantrums, aggression, lack of impulse control, can't self regulate
- Motor: Difficulty holding crayon, walking with unsteady gait
- Social/Emotional: Lack of eye contact, difficulty engaging with peers
- Cognitive: Trouble following simple directions, limited play skills

Forms & Documentation

Each step should include proper documentation:

- PIRS Referral Form
- PIRS Action Plan Template
- PIRS Intervention Plan
- PIRS Process breakdown
- PIRS Process 25-26
- Referral Form (to CST) CST Referral Request; Request For Assistance

Frequently Asked Questions

Q: Is PIRS a special education process?
A: No, PIRS is a general education intervention process.

Q: What happens if a child shows no improvement?
A: The child may be referred to the CST or local Early Intervention for further evaluation.

Q: Can parents request PIRS?
A: Yes, parents can initiate a concern, and the team can begin the process.