



RTW PROJECT UPDATE OCTOBER 2023

RTW is a federally funded research study that will provide autism evaluations to over 1,000 children enrolled in the Illinois Early Intervention (EI) program.

The problem: Long waitlists for autism evaluations for children enrolled in EI

Our goal: To find new and quicker ways to diagnose autism in young children. We want to make the autism diagnostic process efficient, accurate, and supportive for families of children enrolled in EI.

Our approach: Increase the number of people qualified to provide an autism diagnosis (for example, early intervention clinicians, like speech and developmental therapists).

This quarterly report provides an update on our progress.

Megan Y. Roberts

Megan Y. Roberts, PhD, CCC-SLP
Primary Investigator
The Reduce The Wait Project



Northwestern
University



early intervention
research group



To date, **36 Illinois speech-language pathologists and developmental therapists** have participated in the RTW Project.

86% DIAGNOSTIC AGREEMENT

Between EI providers (SLPs/DTs) with 20 hours of autism diagnostic training and RTW experts (clinical psychologist, SLP, DT) with a collective 10+ years of autism diagnostic experience.

RTW PROVIDERS

PROVIDER FEEDBACK

93%

Agree that the RTW approach is a good way to diagnose autism

93%

Agree that the RTW assessments are effective for diagnosing autism

87%

Agree that the use of these assessments is consistent with the Illinois EI mission

Providers to date were **97% Female**, **14% Black**, **3% Asian**, and **16% Latinx**.

67% of providers had **no previous experience with autism screening tools**.

AVERAGE YEARS
WORKING IN EI

14

AVERAGE EI
CASELOAD SIZE

16

RTW FAMILIES

CAREGIVER FEEDBACK

98% would recommend participating in RTW to a friend in need of similar help.

95% agree with the diagnosis that was given for their child.

79% would be willing to use telehealth to complete a diagnostic assessment even if in-person assessments were available, based on the RTW experience.

RTW ENROLLMENT BY CFC PERCENTAGE OF PARTICIPANTS

1	4%	16	1%
2	3%	17	1%
3	2%	18	2%
4	4%	19	0%
5	3%	20	1%
6	3%	21	2%
7	3%	22	2%
8	9%	23	0%
9	9%	24	0%
10	18%	25	1%
11	18%		
12	8%		
13	1%		
14	2%		
15	12%		

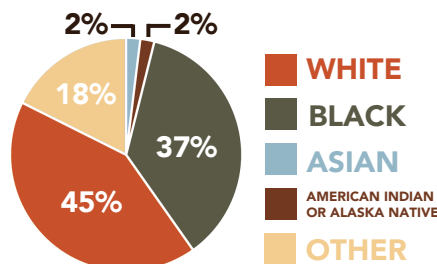
88%
OF CFCS
PARTICIPATING

200 TOTAL CHILDREN EVALUATED

FAMILIES AT A GLANCE

To date, RTW children are **68% Male**.
Ages range from **16 to 36 months old**.

47% of RTW families receive government assistance.



33%
HISPANIC

AVERAGE EVALUATION WAIT TIMES

NON-RTW
EVALUATIONS

15
MONTHS

FOR RTW
APPOINTMENTS

1.5
MONTHS

"The experience was great. I have gone through diagnostic testing before with my older children, and this was much better. We didn't have to go anywhere or put my child in an unfamiliar environment. The assessment was very thorough and the feedback session/report included lots of helpful information." — RTW Caregiver

PARTICIPATE IN RTW

RTW is actively recruiting providers and families! For more information:

Families: Text Enroll to 847-750-3440

Providers: Text Change to 847-750-3440

ei.northwestern.edu/rtw