

# Resources for Addressing Barriers in Meeting Required Proficiency in Math

*This list will be updated as the National Center learns of innovative solutions.*

## Issue: Ability to Pass Basic Math Placement Exam and Remedial Math Classes

Across the country, community colleges and some universities require incoming students to take and pass a basic [math placement exam](#). Typically, the exams assess the student's level of proficiency and those results dictate the level of math they are eligible to take, including the remedial classes they may need before taking their required college math course. Nationally, passing these placement tests and any necessary remedial classes have become a major issue in student success, [leading to drop-outs and/or very slow progression](#). The average age of the T.E.A.C.H. recipient is 36. They have been out of school for a number of years and have forgotten many of the math skills they learned in high school because teaching in early childhood education often does not require them to use math in their daily work. If they do not do well on these exams, remedial classes are often required before students can take their early childhood courses.

## Promising Practices

1. Delay general education studies until further in college career. According to [Elisha Hicks](#) at Edison Community College in Ohio, general education courses often tend to be the most difficult for students to pass, so she encourages waiting to take these courses until later in their college career. Waiting would prevent students from dropping out earlier, losing confidence due to failing courses and having to retake courses (i.e., waste time and money). T.E.A.C.H. counselors often advise T.E.A.C.H. scholarship recipients to take a few early childhood courses first, if possible, to build their confidence as beginning college students.
2. Offer a co-req model where students take remedial courses simultaneously with college-level courses. [Co-requisite courses](#) are taken alongside college-level courses instead of the traditional model that requires students below college readiness to take one or more remedial courses as a pre-requisite before enrolling in college-level courses. [Data reports](#) show that [co-requisite models raise the percentage of students that complete college courses compared to traditional remediation models, and they are also more cost effective](#). Community colleges such as Ivy Tech in Indiana and Pikes Peak in Colorado have begun implementing them.
3. Offer innovative approaches to increase student success. The [RISE model](#) (Reinforced Instruction for Student Excellence), which the NC Community College System is implementing currently, places students in college level courses with or without co-requisite courses, or into remedial courses based on their high school GPA (or test scores if GPA is unavailable or if they haven't completed high school within the past 10 years). Students with a GPA of 2.8 or higher are not required to do any remedial or co-requisite classes. Students with a GPA between 2.2 and 2.799 are required to enroll in a college course AND a mandatory co-requisite course. Students with below a 2.2 GPA are required to take one semester of a traditional remedial education course. Click [here](#) for an overview of RISE.
4. Some states are encouraging students to enroll in free, online math preparation courses that help students pass required math tests and/or courses. Some Florida colleges are using [Modern States](#) while some Iowa colleges utilize [Kahn Academy](#).

If you know of any promising strategies to address this barrier and would like to share, please contact  
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