

Best Practices for Literacy Screening: School and District Administrators

Beginning in the 2021-22 school year, each school district will screen students in Grades K-2 for weaknesses in literacy skill(s) development that may be associated with dyslexia.



WHAT IS AN ACADEMIC SCREENER?

Academic Screeners are brief, reliable, and valid assessments used to assist educators with identifying students who may be at risk for specific academic difficulties.

Academic Screening tools are:

- Quick and targeted assessments of discrete skills
- Standardized for administration and scoring
- Culturally and linguistically responsive for Washington Students
- An academic screener is NOT a tool to diagnose dyslexia



WHAT SKILLS SHOULD BE SCREENED?

Literacy screening tools should assess the following skills:

- Phonemic Awareness
- Phonological Awareness
- Letter Sound Knowledge
- Rapid Automatized Naming (RAN)

Please note that although RAN skills can improve, they cannot be pre-taught or remediated.



WHAT IS THE PROCESS?

To assist districts in understanding how the K-2 Literacy Screening fits in the overall assessment landscape, OSPI and Dyslexia Advisory Council has published a [Recommended Timeline](#) for the literacy skills in each grade from K-2. The specific process for each school district will vary based on the publisher's recommendations of the screening tools that the district chooses. OSPI and Dyslexia Advisory Council has created a crosswalk that can inform districts' choices. Phonological Awareness, Phonemic Awareness, and Letter Sound Knowledge should be administered each year to students in all three grade levels.

- Students who enroll mid-year should be screened with their peers at the next screening date.
- Students should complete the Rapid Automatic Naming assessment only once, at least four weeks after enrollment.
- If a student in K-2 demonstrates a deficit area on the initial screener, progress should be monitored (see MTSS Guidance).
- A team should analyze the reports and determine interventions via multi-tiered system of support (MTSS Guidance).
- Families should always be engaged in decision making and informed of student performance.
- If, after providing multi-tiered interventions, the student continues to have indications of dyslexia then the school district must recommend to the student's parents and family that the student be evaluated for dyslexia or a specific learning disability.





WHO IS BEING SCREENED?

Students in Grades K-2

Guidance for students who are English Language Learners: a screening tool should be a translated assessment (by the publisher) and be administered by a fluent speaker in the student's strongest language.



WHO SHOULD ADMINISTER THE LITERACY SCREENING TOOLS?

- In order to most effectively provide instruction and interventions, screening tools should be administered by the certificate classroom teacher of record.
- It is the Local Education Agency (LEA) building administrator's responsibility to ensure that all teachers in grades K-2 attend the district's selected screener's professional learning and are trained in administration of screening tools according to the recommendations of the publisher.
- The LEA along with building administrators should develop a professional learning and training schedule for the onboarding of new educators and staff.



WHY IS EARLY SCREENING ESSENTIAL?

Three important research findings support early screening for risk of dyslexia:

- Patterns of reading development are established early.
- Reading problems can be prevented and remediated through early identification and intervention.
- Without intense interventions, struggling readers do not eventually "catch up" and may be at risk for further academic failure.

See [Screening for Dyslexia](#) for information.

WHAT IS DYSLEXIA?



- An often-inherited neurological difference that impairs processing the phonological (sound) aspect of language, specifically the ability to perceive and manipulate the individual sounds in words, which can lead to problems with vocabulary development, reading comprehension, and written expression.
- Characterized by challenges with reading and spelling, particularly with the development of the connections between letters and sounds
- Not related to overall intelligence or sensory capabilities
- Not caused by lack of motivation, interest, or ineffective classroom instruction

Video: [What Is Dyslexia/Dyslexia Explained by Margie Gillis with Understood.org](#)



RESOURCES

- [OSPI Dyslexia Site and Resource Guide](#)
- [OSPI MTSS Page](#)
- [Frequently Asked Questions doc](#)
- [OSPI ELA Best Practices Menu](#)
- [NCIL Dyslexia Toolkit](#)
- [WA Branch of International Dyslexia Association](#)

