

Introduction

The Louisiana Department of Education (LDOE) recognizes that reading is the most important academic skill and the foundation for all academic learning. The K-3 Literacy Screeners must be administered to all students, regardless of abilities.

K-3 Literacy Screeners identify which students may be at risk for experiencing reading difficulties so that teachers can provide timely and effective support.

Alternative literacy screener guidance for the following types of diverse learners are listed below:

- English Learners
- Fluency Based Speech Disorders (e.g.; stuttering, oral apraxia)
- Hearing Impairment
- Visual Impairment
- Significant Cognitive Disabilities

English Learners

To assess a student's early literacy skills in English, directions for the task should be provided in the student's native language (to the extent possible) and stimulus items presented in English. It is imperative that the students understand the directions of the task, and it is clear if they are being evaluated on phonological processing and not comprehension.

A score on a screening measure indicating that an English learner may be at risk for reading difficulties does not mean the child has a reading disability. Being at risk means that the English learner needs extra instructional support to learn to read. This support might simply entail additional time on English letter names and letter sounds. In other cases additional support might entail intensive instruction in phonological awareness or reading fluency.

The evaluator should be aware of possible cross-linguistic transfers that the student may make when they are negotiating two or more languages and should be considered when scoring and interpreting screening results.

Fluency Based Speech Disorders

Oral reading fluency is typically measured by timed assessments, which may be invalid for students who stutter or have oral motor speech disabilities, such as apraxia of speech. Given that the nature of such disabilities is slow and/or dysfluent speech, the use of fluency-based measures for these students would not be appropriate.

Teachers should work closely with the speech-language pathologist (SLP) in the school to make assessment accommodations.

Hearing Impairment

If the hearing loss is mild or moderate, administer the approved K-3 literacy assessment using standard procedures and follow the typical assessment schedule and documentation procedures. Appropriate accommodations that are described in both the literacy assessment administration manual and included on the child's IEP may be used.

If the student is NOT able to respond in a meaningful or timely way on the literacy assessment, an approved alternate literacy assessment tool (e.g., Curriculum Based Measures) may be administered. This decision should be documented on the IEP.

Visual Impairment

Students with visual impairments should be screened with the appropriate modifications, adaptations, and accommodations that are documented on the student's IEP. Assistive technology, large print, and Braille are common types of accommodations to support students with visual impairments.

If the IEP team has determined, based on current data, that the student will use braille as the primary learning medium, use an alternate literacy assessment tool (such as *Assessment of Braille Literacy Skills*) that provides the basis for designing instruction and monitoring progress.

Significant Cognitive Disabilities

Students at the Kindergarten Level

All kindergarten students with significant cognitive disabilities must be screened at the beginning of the year with an approved literacy assessment. Administer the literacy assessment using standard procedures. Accommodations as described in the administration manual for the literacy assessment may be used.

If the student is NOT able to respond in a meaningful or timely way on the literacy assessment, administer the literacy assessment using alternate procedures that are not listed in the administrative manual (e.g., extra time given to support use of word/symbol board or computer to present or respond to passages, use of eye gaze or head stick to make a selection).

Students at the 1st-3rd Grade Level

All students with significant cognitive disabilities in grades 1-3 must be screened at the beginning of the year with a literacy assessment.

If the student has never been assessed using an approved literacy assessment, the same procedures described for Kindergarten administration should be followed, including reporting.

If an approved literacy assessment was previously used with the student, and it was determined that alternate procedures or an alternate literacy assessment tool is needed, document this decision on the IEP in the General Student Information section.

Administration and Reporting

K-3 Literacy Screeners must be administered to all students within the **first 30 school days**. Submit results in EdLink 360 by the **October 31** snapshot date.

Starting 2022, literacy screener scores will be reported to the LDOE for all students regardless of ability. Scores of 0 should be reported only when students participate in the screening and earn a score of zero. The use of a zero for any other purpose will be flagged and districts will be notified.

Exception Codes:

01 = Not assessed due to extenuating medical reasons (documentation should be kept on file for potential audits)

05 = Documented significant disability with approved alternate assessment as indicated on a current IEP

Documentation for a medical excuse from screening must include a letter from the doctor that does not use the student's disability as the sole reason for not screening.

If exception code 05 is selected:

Submit Score for exception code="05" (3 digit entry) - ranging from 0 through 999

Submit code to identify the disability that is documented on 504/IEP/EL checklist:

01: English Learners

02: Fluency Based Speech Disorders

03: Hearing Impairment

04: Visual Impairment

05: Significant Cognitive Disabilities

Submit code to identify what the alternate assessment score is based on:

01: Alternative assessment

02: Alternate procedures of administration for standard K-3 literacy screener

If a student was enrolled in your school system during the first 30 operational days of school, was not tested, and does not fit any of the exception codes, do not submit any score for the student. Do not enter a score of 0 for these types of situations as the field should be left blank.

Virtual schools should schedule in-person appointments to administer the literacy screener, adhering to all health and safety guidelines. If a student requires an alternate testing location please email assessment@la.gov.

According to [ACT 438](#), within fifteen days of identifying that a student in kindergarten through third grade is below grade level, the school shall notify the student's parent or legal guardian in writing that the student has been identified as being below grade level, and shall provide the student's parent or legal guardian with the following:

- (a) Information regarding the importance of being able to read proficiently by the end of third grade.
- (b) Activities that may be used at home to improve literacy proficiency.
- (c) Information regarding the specific interventions and supports that the school will provide to improve the literacy proficiency of the student.

Each school shall provide mid-year and end-of-the-year updates to the parent or legal guardian of each student identified as having literacy skills below grade level detailing the student's progress in gaining foundational literacy skills and providing the parent with additional tools to use at home to improve the student's literacy proficiency.

For additional information and resources please contact Bridgette.Cupstid@la.gov.