

# Best Practices for Literacy Screening: Educators

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.



## 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 students strongest language.



## 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 discreet 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?

- *Phonemic Awareness:* the ability to hear, identify, delete and change the sounds of spoken words.
- *Phonological Awareness:* ability with recognizing broader speech sounds such as rhyme, alliteration, the number of words in a sentence, and the syllables within words. For more information on these skills, see Reading Rockets & National Center for Improving Literacy.
- *Letter Sound Knowledge:* knowledge of the sounds represented by the letters of the alphabet. (This also includes combinations of letters that represent speech sounds.) For more information on these skills, see Reading Rockets & National Center for Improving Literacy.
- Rapid Automatized Naming (RAN): the ability to quickly name aloud a series of familiar items. This includes letters, numbers, colors, and objects found in a classroom.

**Please note that although RAN skills can improve, they cannot be pre-taught or remediated. For more information on RAN, see [Understood.org](https://www.understood.org)**



## WHO SHOULD ADMINISTER THE LITERACY SCREENING TOOLS?

- In order to most effectively provide instruction and interventions, screening tools should be administered by the certificated 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.





## WHAT IS THE PROCESS?

Each school district's process will vary based on the recommendations of the publishers of the screening tools they choose. OSPI and the Dyslexia Advisory Council has published a Recommended Timeline for the literacy skills in each grade from K-2. These recommendations include:

- Phonological Awareness, Phonemic Awareness, and Letter Sound Knowledge should be assessed each year in all three grade levels.
- Students who enroll mid-year should be screened with their peers at the next screening date.
- The Rapid Automatic Naming should be administered only once, at least four weeks after enrollment.
- If a student in K-2 demonstrates a deficit area on the initial literacy screener, progress should be monitored.
- Following the screening and/or progress monitoring, a designated staff person should compile the data and distribute screening reports to the school's support team.
- The school's support team should analyze the reports to determine interventions via a multi-tiered system of support.
- Families should always be engaged in decision making and updated on student performance.
- If students continue to display weaknesses consistent with dyslexia after receiving tiered interventions, the school district must recommend an evaluation for the presence of a specific learning disability.



## CLASSROOM SUPPORTS:

### *Accommodations Create Access*

In addition to appropriate instruction, accommodations help children with dyslexia in the classroom and increase their independence. Some supports that students find helpful include:

- Extended time for reading and writing.
- Breaking up long assignments.
- Quiet place for studying and testing.
- Audio books (including for textbooks) or computer support for reading (i.e. Bookshare or Learning Ally).
- Computers with dictation software.
- Closed captions when watching videos to reinforce word knowledge. See ORBIDA for more 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 a 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](#)

