

How do educators assess student literacy?

Throughout the school year, your child's teacher uses several types of assessments to deepen their understanding of students' strengths and areas for growth. Gathering data through assessments allows educators to identify students at risk for literacy difficulties and adjust their instruction to best fit the needs of each student in their classroom. This flowchart provides caregivers an overview of the different types of assessments that educators use. For more information on assessments, see our blog post "[Reading Assessments and Their Purposes](#)" by Emily Ball and Leah Zimmermann.

References

Fuchs, L. S., & Fuchs, D. (1996). Combining performance assessment and curriculum-based measurement to strengthen instructional planning. *Learning Disabilities Research & Practice*, 11, 183–192.

Klingbeil, D. A., McComas, J. J., Burns, M. K., & Helman, L. (2015). Comparison of predictive validity and diagnostic accuracy of screening measures of reading skills. *Psychology in the Schools*, 52(5), 500-514. <https://doi.org/10.1002/pits.21839>

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UNIVERSAL SCREENER

WHAT: A brief assessment to identify students who may need additional support.

WHO: All students

WHEN: Students take the screener one to three times per year.

WHY: Screeners offer insights into the needs of individual students and into class-wide trends. Educators analyze student scores to determine whether their current core instruction is effective.

Is a student's score below the screener's benchmark score?

NO

YES

PROGRESS MONITORING

WHAT: Progress monitoring assessments track student growth over time.

WHO: All students

WHEN: Throughout the year; however, students with reading difficulties/disabilities are progress monitored more frequently (e.g., weekly or biweekly)

WHY: Progress monitoring measures the effectiveness of core instruction and intervention and helps educators determine whether instructional changes are necessary.

DIAGNOSTIC ASSESSMENT

WHAT: Diagnostic assessments identify the specific literacy skills with which a student needs additional support.

WHO: Students showing signs of difficulty

WHEN: Before or during an instructional period

WHY: Identifying specific skills with which a student has difficulty allows educators to design and implement targeted instruction.

SUMMATIVE ASSESSMENT

WHAT: Summative assessments gauge the extent of students' learning and mastery of skills.

WHO: All students

WHEN: At the end of an instructional period (often the end of the school year)

WHY: Summative assessments allow educators to understand which skills students mastered and whether changes are necessary for future instructional periods.