



# *i-Ready* Early Literacy and Dyslexia Risk Screener Technical Report

A Curriculum Associates Technical Report | March 2026

# Acknowledgments

The development of the *i-Ready* Early Literacy and Dyslexia Risk Screener Technical Report represents a significant cross-team effort within Curriculum Associates to advance the clarity, accuracy, and coherence of our screening assessment framework.

We acknowledge the many teams whose ongoing work underpins the development, refinement, and validation of the screener. The contributions of the Assessment Editorial, Psychometrics, Assessment Design, User Experience Research, Product, and Engineering teams have been essential in collecting evidence, analyzing task performance, conducting empirical studies, and ensuring the tasks remain instructionally relevant and technically sound. Their continued efforts to gather data and integrate classroom and field insights significantly strengthen the accuracy, rigor, and utility of the *i-Ready* Early Literacy and Dyslexia Risk Screener. Additionally, we acknowledge the advice and expertise provided by the Literacy Advisory Committee members, whose guidance helps Curriculum Associates improve the quality of the screener. We are grateful for the expertise and collaboration these teams bring to this important work.

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# Chapter 1. Introduction

## 1.1. Chapter Summary

This technical manual details the design, development, and psychometric properties of the Early Literacy and Dyslexia Risk Screener from *i-Ready*, a feature of *i-Ready Assessment*, for students in kindergarten through Grade 3. In educator-facing communications, this feature is presented as a single screener with two parts. For the purposes of this technical report, however, we discuss the Early Literacy Screener and Dyslexia Risk Screener as two distinct screeners because they are based on different psychometric models and have different sources of reliability and validity evidence. In addition, some screener-specific terms may differ from those used in educator-facing materials to align with technical and psychometric conventions.

Chapter 1 introduces the Early Literacy Screener and Dyslexia Risk Screener, describes their purposes and intended uses, and outlines the theoretical foundation that supports each screener. The chapter highlights the importance of early literacy skills for academic success, defines reading difficulties, disabilities, and dyslexia, and explains the role of universal screening in identifying students at risk in Grades K–3. It also summarizes the literacy skills recommended for inclusion in universal screeners and describes how the constructs measured by the Early Literacy Screener and Dyslexia Risk Screener align with these recommendations. The chapter concludes with the Theory of Action, which provides the foundation for the validity argument presented throughout the manual.

## 1.2. Literacy Advisory Committee

Our Literacy Advisory Committee (LAC) serves as a strategic partner in the design and development of the *i-Ready Literacy Task* suite—and especially the Early Literacy and Dyslexia Risk Screener by *i-Ready*. The committee provides guidance on key design decisions by reviewing task concepts, recommending refinements, and advising on the research agenda that shaped task selection for the screener. Members also help ensure alignment with current evidence on early literacy development and dyslexia risk, offering critical feedback that strengthened the validity argument, improved technical quality, and enhanced the instructional usefulness of the Literacy Tasks. Their collective expertise plays a central role in validating the assessment’s design and informing its ongoing evolution. The following members contributed to this work:

**Tony Albano, Ph.D.** is an Associate Professor in the School of Education at the University of California, Davis. He teaches courses in assessment, psychometrics, and data science. His research aims to improve the assessment process for students through more accurate scoring, modeling, and validation, with recent work focusing on computerized adaptive testing in the context of early education. Dr. Albano also consults on projects with the Department of Education and with testing and educational technology companies.

**Deborah K. Reed, Ph.D.** currently serves as the Director of the Tennessee Reading Research Center: A Reading 360 Initiative at the University of Tennessee, where she is a professor on faculty. Her research focuses on effective reading instruction strategies, interventions for reading difficulties, and improving literacy outcomes for struggling readers, including those in diverse and underserved populations. She has been

recognized for her contributions to education with numerous awards, including the Outstanding Researcher Award from the Council for Learning Disabilities. Prior to entering academia, Dr. Reed spent the first 10 years of her career as an English language arts and reading teacher as well as a preK-12 reading specialist, working primarily with students from diverse backgrounds who were exhibiting serious reading difficulties. She has authored diagnostic reading assessments and has provided technical assistance in numerous states since 2003.

**Nathan Clemens, Ph.D.** is a Professor and Chair of the Department of Special Education at The University of Texas at Austin. Dr. Clemens studies assessment and interventions for students with reading difficulties, particularly word reading difficulties for students in early grades and reading comprehension difficulties for students in later grades. He has over 70 publications and is leading several federal research grants studying interventions for struggling readers. Dr. Clemens served on the LAC from December 2022 through December 2024.

**Joe Nese, Ph.D.** is a Research Professor at Behavioral Research and Teaching at the University of Oregon. His research focuses on developing and improving systems that support data-based decision making in schools, applying advanced statistical methods and data science principles to educational assessment and measurement, and improving education access and quality. For over 15 years, he worked on developing and evaluating education assessments that are grounded in theory and science, including extensive technical adequacy work with curriculum-based measurement academic assessments used in schools across the U.S. Dr. Nese was the principal investigator (PI) or co-PI on three projects funded by Institute of Education Sciences to develop and validate a scaled computerized assessment system of oral reading fluency that uses speech recognition, advanced psychometrics, and a maximum likelihood measure of prosody to overcome some of the inadequacies of traditional oral reading fluency assessments (R305A140203, R305A200018, R305D200038). His work on reading and assessment has been published in top peer-refereed journals, including *Reading and Writing*, *Educational and Psychological Measurement*, *The Reading Teacher*, *Assessment for Effective Intervention* and others. Dr. Nese joined the Literacy Advisory Committee in May 2025.

## 1.3. Introduction

The components of the Early Literacy Screener and Dyslexia Risk Screener can be administered up to three times a year (fall, winter, spring) to identify students who may be struggling to meet grade-level expectations for early literacy skills or who may be at risk for developing reading difficulties, including dyslexia. Although the screeners do not provide a clinical diagnosis, they help identify students who display characteristics associated with reading difficulties. The Early Literacy Screener and Dyslexia Risk Screener combine measures of fluency, decoding, and automaticity with *i-Ready Inform*<sup>™</sup> for Reading results to produce a placement level for each screener.

### 1.3.1. Early Literacy Screener

Following the administration of *i-Ready Inform* for Reading, a selected *i-Ready Literacy Task* for fluency is administered to assess foundational reading skills that strongly correlate with later reading success. The

*i-Ready Inform* for Reading overall scale score and the fluency task score are combined to produce a composite score. This composite score is reported as one of three Early Literacy Screener placement levels:

- Below Benchmark
- Approaching Benchmark
- On Benchmark

These placement levels help educators identify which students may need additional support as they develop early reading skills. Table 1.1 shows the components of the Early Literacy Screener at each grade.

Table 1.1. Early Literacy Screener Components by Grade and Testing Window

<b>Grade</b>	<b>Fall</b>	<b>Winter</b>	<b>Spring</b>
<b>K</b>	<i>i-Ready Inform</i> Overall Letter Naming Fluency	<i>i-Ready Inform</i> Overall Letter Naming Fluency	<i>i-Ready Inform</i> Overall Letter Naming Fluency
<b>1</b>	<i>i-Ready Inform</i> Overall Word Recognition Fluency	<i>i-Ready Inform</i> Overall Passage Reading Fluency	<i>i-Ready Inform</i> Overall Passage Reading Fluency
<b>2</b>	<i>i-Ready Inform</i> Overall Passage Reading Fluency	<i>i-Ready Inform</i> Overall Passage Reading Fluency	<i>i-Ready Inform</i> Overall Passage Reading Fluency
<b>3</b>	<i>i-Ready Inform</i> Overall Passage Reading Fluency	<i>i-Ready Inform</i> Overall Passage Reading Fluency	<i>i-Ready Inform</i> Overall Passage Reading Fluency

### 1.3.2. Dyslexia Risk Screener

Following the administration of the assessment components for the Early Literacy Screener, students complete a rapid automatized naming (RAN) task and a Pseudoword Decoding Fluency (PWD-F) task, both from the *i-Ready* Literacy Task suite. These tasks assess additional foundational literacy skills that research has identified as possible risk factors for dyslexia.

The Dyslexia Risk Screener identifies students in Grades K–3 who may be demonstrating more substantial reading difficulties. Based on the combination of students’ Early Literacy Screener, RAN and PWD-F placement levels, one of three Dyslexia Risk Screener placement levels is reported:

- At Risk
- Some Risk
- No Observed Risk

These placement levels help educators determine which students may need further evaluation or targeted support to address early signs of reading difficulty. Table 1.2 shows the assessment components for the Dyslexia Risk Screener at each grade and testing window.

Table 1.2. Dyslexia Risk Screener Components by Grade and Testing Window

Grade	Fall	Winter	Spring
<b>K</b>	Early Literacy Screener RAN – Objects	Early Literacy Screener RAN – Objects Pseudo Word Decoding—Fluency	Early Literacy Screener RAN – Objects Pseudo Word Decoding—Fluency
<b>1</b>	Early Literacy Screener RAN – Objects Pseudo Word Decoding—Fluency	Early Literacy Screener RAN – Letters Pseudo Word Decoding—Fluency	Early Literacy Screener RAN – Letters Pseudo Word Decoding—Fluency
<b>2</b>	Early Literacy Screener RAN – Letters Pseudo Word Decoding—Fluency	Early Literacy Screener RAN – Letters Pseudo Word Decoding—Fluency	Early Literacy Screener RAN – Letters Pseudo Word Decoding—Fluency
<b>3</b>	Early Literacy Screener RAN – Letters Pseudo Word Decoding—Fluency	Early Literacy Screener RAN – Letters Pseudo Word Decoding—Fluency	Early Literacy Screener RAN – Letters Pseudo Word Decoding—Fluency

## 1.4. Theoretical Foundation

Evidence-backed findings from the body of research known as the Science of Reading form the foundation of all Curriculum Associates reading products. Curriculum Associates designed *i-Ready Inform* for Reading and the *i-Ready* Literacy Task suite using best practices drawn from decades of research on how children learn to read. This research underscores the importance of systematic, explicit, and intensive early reading instruction and intervention.

During the development of *i-Ready Assessments* and the Early Literacy Screener and Dyslexia Risk Screener, Curriculum Associates reviewed a broad, international body of research across education, cognitive science, neuroscience, linguistics, and developmental psychology. This work also incorporated findings from the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development and other leading contributors to the Science of Reading. Together, this research base guided key decisions about task selection, construct coverage, and alignment to early literacy and dyslexia risk factors.

### 1.4.1. Simple View of Reading

The *Simple View of Reading* is a theoretical framework proposed by Gough and Tunmer (1986) that defines reading comprehension as the product of two essential components: decoding and linguistic comprehension. When either component is underdeveloped, overall reading comprehension is diminished.

According to this model, proficient readers must both decode words accurately and fluently and understand the language used in the text. Limitations in either area can interfere with comprehension. For example, some children may decode words well but still struggle to understand what they read if their language comprehension is limited. Conversely, children with strong oral language skills may have difficulty making meaning from text if their decoding skills are not yet established.

Overall, the *Simple View of Reading* underscores the need to develop both the technical skills of decoding and the broader cognitive and linguistic skills that support comprehension.

## 1.4.2. Science of Reading

The Science of Reading refers to a comprehensive and continuously expanding body of interdisciplinary research conducted over several decades by cognitive scientists, neuroscientists, and educational researchers. This research examines how people learn to read, why some individuals struggle with reading, and which instructional methods are most effective for teaching reading and addressing reading difficulties.

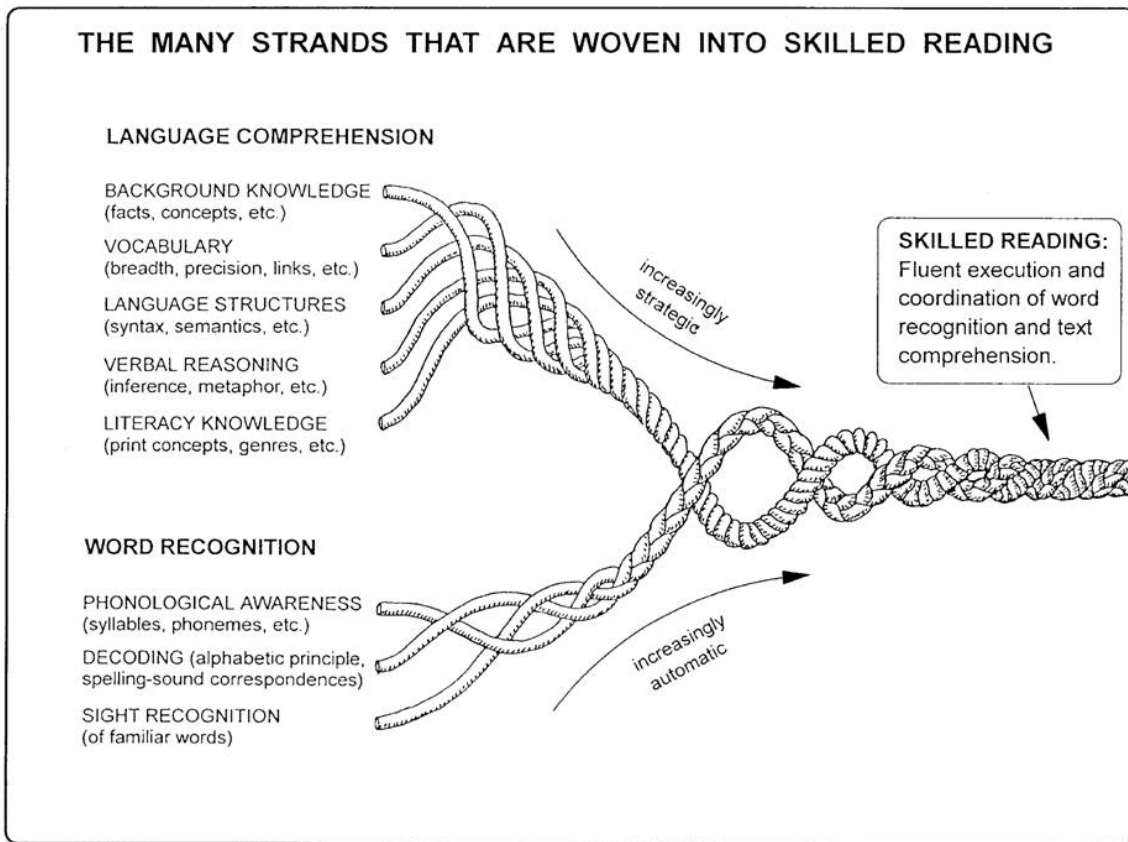
Instruction grounded in the Science of Reading emphasizes the Five Big Ideas of effective early literacy instruction (National Center on Improving Literacy, 2022):

- **Phonemic Awareness.** Identifying and manipulating individual sounds in spoken words.
- **Phonics.** Understanding how letters and letter patterns map to sounds and form spelling patterns.
- **Fluency.** Reading words, phrases, sentences, and passages accurately and with sufficient speed and expression.
- **Vocabulary.** Knowing the meaning of words and how to use them appropriately.
- **Comprehension.** Constructing meaning from text.

At the core of this research base is the Simple View of Reading, which explains that proficient reading depends on two essential components (Figure 1.1):

- **Word Recognition:** efficient decoding of text, accurate sight word recognition, and fluent word reading
- **Language Comprehension:** understanding the elements of spoken language, including vocabulary, sentence structure, and discourse

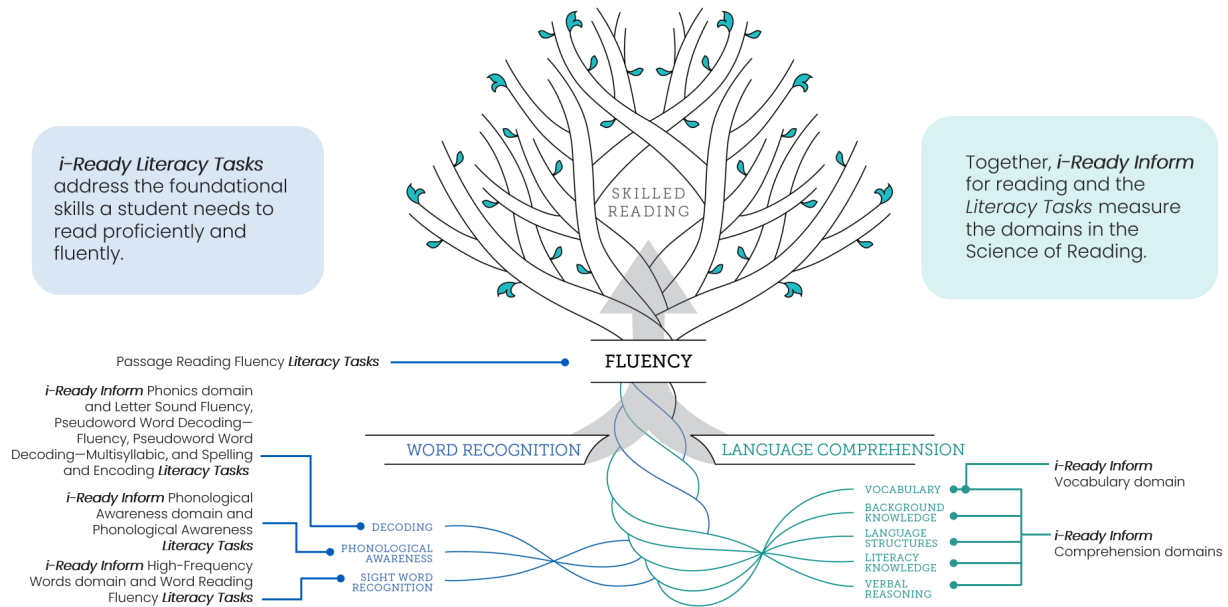
Figure 1.1 depicts Dr. Hollis Scarborough's (2001) Reading Rope, a visual metaphor showing how the Simple View of Reading weaves together multiple strands of word recognition and language comprehension skills to support skilled reading.



**Figure 1.1. The Simple View of Reading.** Dr. Hollis Scarborough's (2001) Reading Rope is a visual metaphor of the interconnectedness and interdependence of knowledge and skills within these two components weave together in the acquisition of skilled reading.

Patterns of student performance across these components can be viewed as intersecting continuums. These patterns help explain the sources of reading difficulties and guide educators in selecting appropriate instructional targets. Universal screening plays a critical role by identifying individual strengths and needs so instruction and intervention can be matched to students' profiles.

Curriculum Associates' *i-Ready Inform* for Reading and the Literacy Task suite are grounded in the Science of Reading and explicitly designed around the Simple View of Reading. Figure 1.2 illustrates how these assessments, which together form the Early Literacy Screener and Dyslexia Risk Screener, align with this theoretical model.



**Figure 1.2. Alignment with the Simple View of Reading. Together, *i-Ready Inform* for Reading and Literacy Tasks align with the Simple View of Reading and are grounded in the Science of Reading.**

### 1.4.3. Importance of Early Literacy Skills for School Success

Over the past several years, a growing number of states have passed legislation or adopted policies requiring schools to use evidence-based methods grounded in the Science of Reading to teach early elementary students how to read. A review of 223 bills passed in 45 states and the District of Columbia between 2019 and 2022 found that nearly all require districts to implement a systematic, rigorous, and evidence-based approach to reading instruction. Student monitoring through screening and assessment is a central component of these laws (Neuman et al., 2023).

More recently, many states have introduced “reading by grade 3” legislation intended to ensure that students reach reading proficiency by the end of third grade. These laws often include early literacy assessments, targeted interventions for struggling readers, funding for literacy programs, progress monitoring, and—in some cases—retention policies for students who do not meet proficiency standards.

Students who are proficient readers by the end of Grade 3 typically demonstrate strong skills across key areas of reading and comprehension. These include:

- **Phonemic Awareness and Phonics:** Proficient readers show solid phonemic awareness and apply phonics rules to decode unfamiliar words. By third grade, they typically recognize most common sight words and decode more complex, multisyllabic words (National Reading Panel, 2000).
- **Vocabulary:** They possess a robust and growing vocabulary, both oral and written, that supports understanding and use a wide range of words in varied contexts, including determining the meaning of unfamiliar words using context clues (National Reading Panel, 2000).

- **Fluency:** Successful third-grade readers read grade-level texts smoothly, accurately, and with appropriate expression. They read at a pace that supports comprehension (National Institute of Child Health and Human Development, 2000).
- **Comprehension:** They understand and interpret literal and inferential meaning in text, identify main ideas and supporting details, summarize content and apply comprehension strategies effectively (Duke & Pearson, 2002).

Together, these characteristics support reading proficiency by the end of third grade and establish the foundation for continued academic success.

#### 1.4.4. Definition of Reading Difficulties, Disabilities, and Dyslexia

Reading difficulties, reading disabilities, and dyslexia have distinct definitions that influence how students are identified and supported. In the U.S., dyslexia is classified as a specific learning disability under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), §300.8(c)(10). To determine eligibility for special education services, schools must follow evaluations and eligibility procedures outlined in IDEA Subchapter II (Part B), §1414 (US Department of Education). The procedures require using multiple assessment tools and strategies to gather functional, developmental, and academic information; no single measure may serve as the sole criterion for identifying a disability or determining educational services.

##### 1.4.4.1 Reading Difficulties

Reading difficulties are challenges students encounter while learning to read. These difficulties often arise from factors such as limited language exposure, inadequate instruction, or socio-economic conditions. Common signs include slow reading rate, weak decoding, limited vocabulary, and poor comprehension. Because these difficulties frequently stem from environmental or instructional factors, many students improve significantly with effective, targeted intervention.

Key characteristics include:

- **Variability:** Difficulties vary widely in type and severity.
- **Environmental and Instructional Factors:** Many stem from limited exposure to print or insufficient instruction.
- **Remediable:** With appropriate interventions, most students can make substantial progress.

These characteristics underscore the importance of universal screening, which helps identify emerging issues early—before they become established.

##### 1.4.4.2 Reading Disabilities

Reading disabilities are specific, persistent conditions that remain despite adequate instruction. Dyslexia is the most common reading disability. These disabilities often reflect neurological differences that affect how the brain processes written language and typically require specialized instruction and long-term supports.

The *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, Fifth Edition* (DSM-5) includes reading disorders under the broader category of “Specific Learning Disorder” (SLD), characterized by academic skill difficulties that significantly interfere with academic achievement or daily functioning. Diagnosis requires evidence of symptoms persisting for at least six months despite targeted intervention.

IDEA, §300.309 defines how schools determine the existence of a specific learning disability. The school’s eligibility team may determine that a child has a specific learning disability if:

(1) The child does not achieve adequately for the child’s age or to meet State-approved grade-level standards in one or more of the following areas, when provided with learning experiences and instruction appropriate for the child’s age or State-approved grade-level standards:

- (i) Oral expression.
- (ii) Listening comprehension.
- (iii) Written expression.
- (iv) Basic reading skill.
- (v) Reading fluency skills.
- (vi) Reading comprehension.
- (vii) Mathematics calculation.
- (viii) Mathematics problem solving.

(2)

(i) The child does not make sufficient progress to meet age or State-approved grade-level standards in one or more of the areas identified in paragraph (a)(1) of this section when using a process based on the child’s response to scientific, research-based intervention; or

(ii) The child exhibits a pattern of strengths and weaknesses in performance, achievement, or both, relative to age, State-approved grade-level standards, or intellectual development, that is determined by the group to be relevant to the identification of a specific learning disability, using appropriate assessments, consistent with §§300.304 and 300.305; and

(3) The group determines that its findings under paragraphs (a)(1) and (2) of this section are not primarily the result of:

- (i) A visual, hearing, or motor disability;
- (ii) An intellectual disability;
- (iii) Emotional disturbance;
- (iv) Cultural factors;
- (v) Environmental or economic disadvantage; or
- (vi) Limited English proficiency.

These requirements highlight the need for high-quality early screening tools that can detect risk before a formal disability determination is necessary.

### 1.4.4.3 Dyslexia

The National Institutes of Health (NIH) (2020) describes dyslexia as:

*a brain-based learning disability that specifically impairs a person's ability to read, including difficulties with reading words or understanding text.*

Dyslexia is unexpected relative to a person's typical cognitive abilities and developmental experiences. Common characteristics include difficulty sounding out words, understanding written text, and quickly naming familiar objects.

The International Dyslexia Association (IDA) identifies key symptoms including difficulties with decoding (single word reading), reading fluency, and spelling, often due to underlying phonological processing weaknesses. In 2005, the IDA adopted its widely used definition of dyslexia:

*Dyslexia is a specific learning disability characterized by difficulties in word reading and/or spelling that involve accuracy, speed, or both and vary depending on the orthography. These difficulties occur along a continuum of severity and persist even with instruction that is effective for the individual's peers. The causes of dyslexia are complex and involve combinations of genetic, neurobiological, and environmental influences that interact throughout development. Underlying difficulties with phonological and morphological processing are common but not universal, and early oral language weaknesses often foreshadow literacy challenges. Secondary consequences include reading comprehension problems and reduced reading and writing experience that can impede growth in language, knowledge, written expression, and overall academic achievement. Psychological well-being and employment opportunities also may be affected. Although identification and targeted instruction are important at any age, language and literacy support before and during the early years of education is particularly effective.*

Many states have since incorporated this definition into legislation and guidance, reinforcing the need for early identification and research-aligned screening tools.

### 1.4.5. National Outlook for Students with Reading Difficulties

National research and policy trends highlight both the widespread nature of early reading difficulties and the urgency of identifying risk early to prevent long-term academic consequences.

Third grade is often considered a critical point in a student's academic development because children who have not developed fluent, proficient reading skills by this stage begin to fall behind, and the achievement gap typically widens over time (Wennersten, 2013). The Annie E. Casey Foundation's KIDS COUNT special report, "Early Warning: Why Reading by the End of Third Grade Matters" (Fiester, 2010), summarizes decades of research demonstrating that students who do not reach grade-level proficiency by the end of third grade face ongoing academic difficulties, are more likely to fall behind in subsequent grades, have a higher risk of not graduating on time, and experience reduced economic opportunities later in life.

Estimating the prevalence of reading difficulties, including dyslexia, is challenging because definitions and diagnostic thresholds vary. According to the National Center for Education Statistics, 15% of students ages 3–21 received special education services under IDEA in 2022–2023, and 32% of these students were identified as having specific learning disabilities, including dyslexia (National Center for Education Statistics, 2024). Yet this figure represents only students formally identified for services. Many more experience reading difficulties without receiving a formal diagnosis or special education support.

The International Dyslexia Association (IDA) estimates that 15–20% of the population exhibits symptoms of dyslexia—such as slow or inaccurate reading, poor spelling, or mixing up similar words (IDA, 2020). The IDA strongly advocates for proactive, early screening and intervention, emphasizing that a “wait and fail” model delays support until after repeated instructional failure. Research indicates that early signs of dyslexia may not only be observable in kindergarten but can appear as early as preschool (Gaab, 2017).

#### 1.4.5.1 State Education Codes for Literacy/Dyslexia Screening and Intervention

State literacy legislation increasingly emphasizes the importance of early identification and intervention for reading difficulties. States have progressed from inconsistent practices to more standardized, data-driven approaches requiring universal screening, evidence-based interventions, and support for educators.

States differ in how they identify and support students who are not meeting grade-level expectations or who exhibit characteristics of dyslexia. Many states have adopted dyslexia statutes addressing one or more policy components: early identification, intervention, family engagement, teacher preparation, dyslexia specialists, task forces or advisory councils, monitoring and accountability, and state-developed resources (Keily, 2018). As of 2024, all but one state had passed at least one bill addressing dyslexia in K–12 education (National Center on Improving Literacy, 2024).

The National Center on Improving Literacy (2019) identified six common features of state dyslexia laws:

- a common definition of dyslexia
- universal screening for dyslexia risk in elementary school
- early academic intervention
- evidence-based intervention methods
- explicit, direct, and/or structured instructional sequences
- professional development to support these practices

Together, these national data and policy trends underscore a clear need: schools must identify reading risk early and respond with timely, targeted support. Universal screening provides a practical, equitable approach for detecting early signs of reading difficulty and dyslexia risk in Grades K–3, when intervention is most likely to prevent later, more persistent challenges. The next section describes the rationale for universal screening and explains how the Early Literacy Screener and Dyslexia Risk Screener support early identification and instructional decision-making.

## 1.4.6. Universal Screening for Reading Difficulties

### 1.4.6.1 Rationale for and Benefits of Early Screening

When students continue to struggle with literacy skills despite receiving high-quality instruction within a Response to Intervention (RTI)/Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) framework, a formal and comprehensive evaluation may be needed to determine whether the student has a specific learning disability, such as dyslexia. This type of evaluation determines eligibility for special education and related services.

However, schools should not wait for a clinical evaluation to begin identifying students who may be at risk. Universal screening offers an instructionally focused, proactive approach that identifies students who may need additional support long before a comprehensive evaluation is warranted. Consistent with distinctions described in Section 1.4.4, screening does not diagnose dyslexia or establish IDEA eligibility. Instead, it provides early, actionable evidence about student performance and risk characteristics so educators can respond with targeted instruction and ongoing monitoring.

The Early Literacy Screener and Dyslexia Risk Screener were designed to support this purpose by combining multiple direct measures of early literacy skills to guide instructional next steps and identify patterns associated with dyslexia risk.

### 1.4.6.2 Teacher Judgment vs. Direct Assessment

Research on teacher judgment underscores why screening must include objective, standardized measures. Studies comparing teachers' judgments with direct assessments show moderate accuracy overall but consistent overestimation of performance for low-achieving readers. In a review of 16 studies, Hoge and Coladarci (1989) found substantial variability in judgment accuracy influenced by student and teacher characteristics. Feinberg and Shapiro (2009) similarly found that teachers overestimated the performance of low-performing readers, and Begeny and Mann (2011) found moderate correlations but noted higher accuracy for high-performing students. These findings indicate that while teacher expertise is valuable, screening decisions should be supported by systematic measures of reading performance.

### 1.4.6.3 Importance of Early and Accurate Identification

Given the importance of early identification, research increasingly focuses on detecting early signs of dyslexia risk—sometimes as early as preschool. Screening in kindergarten through Grade 3 plays a crucial role in supporting literacy development by enabling intervention before difficulties escalate and become harder to remediate. However, universal screening requires careful implementation and thoughtful interpretation. As with any educational decision-making tool, schools should weigh benefits and limitations and use screening results as part of a comprehensive evidence base.

Benefits of Universal Screening:

- **Early intervention and improved outcomes.**

Early screening facilitates timely intervention. Addressing reading difficulties early increases the likelihood that students will catch up with their peers and can reduce frustration and emotional distress related to reading challenges.

- **Efficient resource allocation.**

Screening helps educators allocate time and support to students who need it most, increasing the overall efficiency of intervention systems.

- **Individualized learning plans.**

Early identification enables educators to design evidence-based intervention plans tailored to students' specific needs.

- **Parental involvement.**

Screening provides families with valuable information about their child's reading development and fosters collaboration between home and school.

- **Cost effectiveness.**

Early intervention often reduces the need for more intensive—and more costly—supports later in a student's academic career.

Drawbacks of Universal Screening:

- **Misidentification.**

As with any assessment, screening can produce false positives and false negatives. Developmental variability and tool selection influence these outcomes. Although no screener can eliminate misclassification entirely, maximizing sensitivity and specificity helps improve accuracy.

- **Resource allocation.**

Implementing universal screening and providing follow-up interventions require time, personnel, and financial resources. The National Center on Improving Literacy (NCIL) notes that screening often identifies a large number of students as at risk, which can elevate false-positive rates and strain available supports.

- **Overassessment.**

Multiple measures or poorly aligned assessments can create undue testing burden and reduce instructional time. Progress monitoring must be balanced so that students have sufficient time to practice and apply new skills.

Other Concerns:

- **Equity.**

Under-resourced schools may lack equitable access to high-quality screening tools or interventions, creating disparities in implementation and outcomes.

- **Follow-up and consistency.**

Screening is only effective when followed by high-quality interventions and ongoing progress monitoring. If a screener identifies a large proportion of students as at risk, schools may need to examine the quality of core instruction to ensure it meets students' needs.

Despite these challenges, there is broad consensus that early identification and intervention are essential. Many states require universal screening in Grades K–2, with several extending screening through Grade 3 and beyond. Organizations such as the International Dyslexia Association (IDA) and the National Center on Improving Literacy (NCIL) provide guidance on best practices to support schools in implementing effective universal screening systems.

### 1.4.7. Purposes and Characteristics of Universal Screening Tools

Effective universal screening requires high-quality tools that align with both research-supported practices and practical considerations for implementation. As discussed previously, screening decisions must be timely, equitable, and instructionally meaningful. To meet these expectations, schools need screeners that provide accurate, actionable information while remaining feasible to administer several times a year. The characteristics below—drawn from national organizations, research, and state guidance—define what educators should look for in a universal screener and support the rationale for the Early Literacy Screener and Dyslexia Risk Screener.

The IDA publishes a fact sheet titled “Universal Screening: K–2 Reading,” which explains that screening measures are typically brief assessments of specific skills that are highly predictive of later literacy outcomes. These tools help differentiate between students who require intervention and those who do not. According to the IDA, universal screening tools are:

- quick, targeted assessments of discrete skills that indicate whether students are making adequate progress in reading achievement
- designed with alternate equivalent forms for administration three to four times a year
- accompanied by standardized directions for administration and scoring
- supported by established reliability and validity evidence

In addition to these core characteristics, Decoding Dyslexia CA (2023), a state affiliate of the national Decoding Dyslexia movement, builds on the IDA framework by emphasizing features that support equitable, large-scale implementation in schools, specifically: brief and easy to administer, score, and interpret; low cost; and capable of accurately classifying students at risk. Together, these perspectives underscore the need for screening tools that maintain measurement quality while remaining feasible and equitable for widespread use.

When aligned with high-quality implementation practices, such tools help ensure that screening results are trustworthy, instructionally actionable, and suited to the multi-tiered systems used in schools. These characteristics also guided the design of the Early Literacy Screener and Dyslexia Risk Screener, which use

direct measures of foundational literacy and fluency skills alongside *i-Ready Inform* for Reading results to support accurate risk identification and instructional planning.

1.4.7.1 Literacy Skills Best Assessed for Universal Screening by Grade Level

Research shows that screening is most effective when assessments focus on key literacy domains that predict future reading performance. The IDA recommends that screeners emphasize grade-specific skills known to support word recognition, language comprehension, and reading fluency. Table 1.3 summarizes the IDA-recommended skill domains for kindergarten through Grade 2.

Table 1.3. Universal Screener Recommended Key Skill Domains

Grade	Key Skill Domains
<b>K</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• phonological awareness, including phoneme segmentation, blending, onset and rime</li> <li>• rapid automatic naming, including letter naming fluency</li> <li>• letter sound association</li> <li>• phonological memory, including non-word repetition</li> </ul>
<b>1</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• phoneme awareness, specifically phoneme segmentation, blending, and manipulation</li> <li>• letter naming fluency</li> <li>• letter sound association</li> <li>• phonological memory, including nonword repetition</li> <li>• oral vocabulary</li> <li>• word recognition fluency (i.e., accuracy and rate)</li> </ul>
<b>2</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• word identification (real and nonsense)</li> <li>• oral reading fluency</li> <li>• reading comprehension</li> </ul>

Because these skill domains are highly predictive of later reading success, a universal screener must measure them directly and accurately. The Early Literacy Screener and Dyslexia Risk Screener incorporate these research-supported domains through *i-Ready Inform* for Reading and brief, standardized Literacy Tasks. By aligning with the characteristics identified by IDA and other experts, the screeners provide reliable, efficient, and instructionally meaningful ways to identify students at risk for reading difficulties—including dyslexia—early, when intervention is most effective.

1.5. Validity Framework

The *Standards for Educational and Psychological Testing* (AERA et al., 2014) states, “Validity refers to the degree to which evidence and theory support the interpretations of test scores for proposed uses of tests” (p. 14). Further, Standard 1.0 states, “Clear articulation of each intended test score interpretation for a specified use should be set forth, and appropriate validity evidence in support of each intended interpretation should be provided” (p. 23). Building a validity argument requires gathering and documenting evidence throughout the design, development, administration, and reporting phases of the assessment cycle that either lends support for, or discredits the intended uses for, the assessment. The validity framework, including internal, external,

and procedural evidence (Kane, 2006, 2013), begins with our theory of action from which our assessment claims are derived and around which our validity argument is constructed.

### 1.5.1. Theory of Action

Building on the need, purpose, and research foundations summarized earlier, this section presents the theory of action that guided the design of the Early Literacy Screener and Dyslexia Risk Screener. As schools increasingly adopt universal screening practices, a clear theory of action helps articulate how the screener is intended to support early detection, guide instruction, and improve literacy outcomes for students in Grades K–3.

A theory of action is a conceptual framework that explains how and why a particular intervention or set of activities is expected to lead to desired outcomes. It articulates the assumptions, mechanisms, and causal pathways that link actions to results. By outlining each step—from inputs to long-term outcomes—a theory of action helps stakeholders understand the rationale behind an approach, supports implementation planning, guides evaluation, and informs continuous improvement.

Most theories of action include several components:

- **Inputs or assumptions** that guide design decisions
- **Activities** that educators and systems engage in
- **Outputs** in the form of data, insights, and instructional actions
- **Short-term, intermediate, and long-term outcomes** for students and educators
- **Contextual conditions** that influence effectiveness

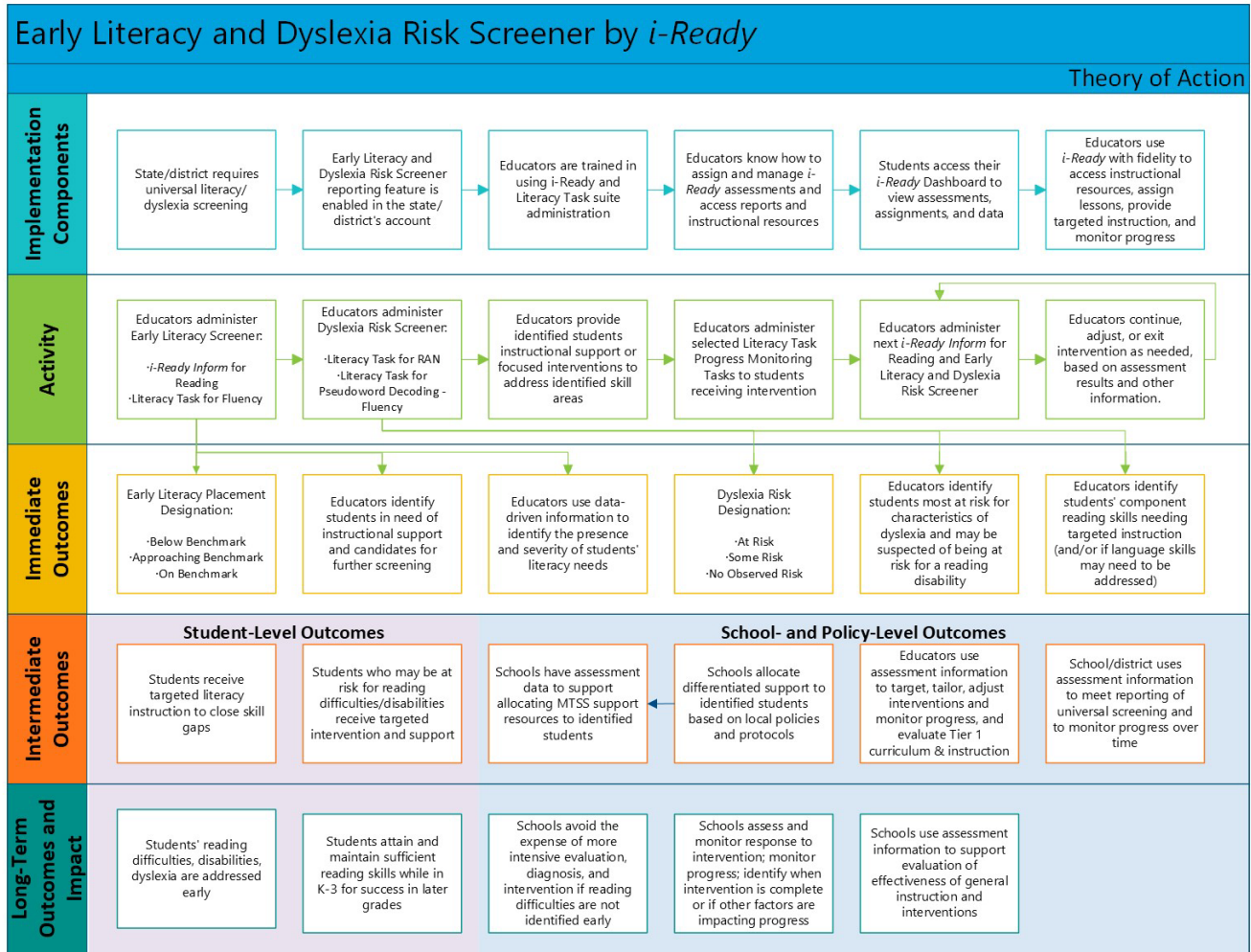
These components are typically illustrated in a flowchart that depicts how actions and assumptions work together to produce intended results.

In this section, we present the theory of action for the Early Literacy Screener and Dyslexia Risk Screener, which explains how early, accurate identification of reading difficulties supports students' literacy development. The theory describes how screening results lead to timely and targeted instruction, ongoing monitoring, and educational decisions that ultimately support stronger reading outcomes.

Successful implementation of early literacy screening requires collaboration among key stakeholders—including students, teachers, school and district leaders—who play essential roles in administering the screener, interpreting results, providing instruction and interventions, and monitoring academic progress. This screener-specific theory of action is embedded within Curriculum Associates' broader theory of action that guides the development of our curriculum, instruction, and assessment products.

At the core of the theory of action, shown in Figure 1.3, is our belief that students in Grades K–3 who are identified through the Early Literacy Screener and Dyslexia Risk Screener as being at risk for reading difficulties, disabilities, and/or dyslexia—and who receive appropriate, targeted instruction and

interventions—are more likely to develop the reading skills needed for on-grade-level performance and long-term academic success than students who are not identified early or do not receive intervention. Additionally, the screener provides educators with reliable, accurate classification of students at risk of reading difficulties, meeting district and state screening and reporting requirements and offering data-driven information to guide reading instruction and intervention.



**Figure 1.3. Early Literacy Screener and Dyslexia Risk Screener Theory of Action. This Theory of Action strengthens the validity argument by mapping the causal pathways that link the screener's processes to its intended immediate, intermediate, and long-term outcomes for students and educators.**

### 1.5.2. Purpose

The Early Literacy Screener and Dyslexia Risk Screener are designed to meet universal dyslexia screening requirements established in many states. Several states require universal screening for all students in Grades K–3 to identify dyslexia risk factors, particularly when an academic screener is not first used to determine which students need further evaluation.

The Early Literacy Screener and Dyslexia Risk Screener can be used flexibly to meet a state’s specific requirements. Schools may administer both screeners to fully screen all Grade K–3 students for potential reading difficulties, including dyslexia. Alternatively, schools may use the Early Literacy Screener to identify students who should receive additional screening for dyslexia risk factors through the Dyslexia Risk Screener. This flexibility allows districts and schools to align their screening approach with state policies and instructional needs.

### 1.5.3. Screener Claims

Assessment claims are broad statements describing the intended interpretation and use of assessment results. Early Literacy Screener placement levels and Dyslexia Risk Screener placement levels indicate how well students perform relative to grade-level reading expectations, based on typical instructional scope and sequence in U.S. elementary schools.

#### 1.5.3.1 Claims Related to the Interpretation of Scores or Placement Levels

When used as individual screeners or together, the *i-Ready* Early Literacy Screener and the Dyslexia Risk Screener:

- *Measure* foundational literacy skills to determine if students are meeting grade-level expectations in reading.
- *Measure* literacy skills that are key, research-based indicators of reading difficulties (Early Literacy Screener) and reading disabilities, including dyslexia (Dyslexia Risk Screener).
- *Identify* specific reading skills that would likely benefit from targeted instruction.
- *Report* reliable, criterion-referenced informed placement levels to identify students who may be struggling to meet grade-level expectations for early literacy skills (Early Literacy Screener) or who may be at risk for developing reading difficulties, including dyslexia (Dyslexia Risk Screener).
- *Support* program evaluation to determine if general reading instruction is meeting students’ learning needs.
- *Support* meeting state or district requirements for universal literacy screening and dyslexia.

#### 1.5.3.2 Claims Related to the Intended Uses of the Scores or Placement Levels

Throughout this technical manual, validity evidence is provided to support using *i-Ready* Early Literacy Screener scores and placement levels and Dyslexia Risk Screener placement levels in order to:

- *Identify* students who may benefit from differentiated instruction in reading, especially those who are not meeting grade-level expectations and need additional instructional support or focused interventions.
- *Identify* students who may be at risk for developing reading difficulties, including dyslexia.
- *Support* program evaluation of the efficacy of Tier 1 literacy instruction in meeting students’ needs.

- *Provide* brief, focused assessments to address state and district requirements for universal literacy screening.

#### 1.5.4. Validation Process

Validation is the process of developing and substantiating a validity argument. “Validation logically begins with an explicit statement of the proposed interpretation of the test scores, along with a rationale for the relevance of the interpretation to the proposed use” (AERA et al., 2014, p. 11). The screeners’ claims and rationales presented above in Section 1.5.3 address this aspect of the validity argument.

To support and defend the assessment claims, information in each chapter supports five sources of validity evidence:

- test content
- response process
- internal structure
- relationships with other variables
- test consequences

# Chapter 2. Screener Development

## 2.1. Chapter Summary

Chapter 2 describes the content, structure, and development of the Early Literacy Screener and Dyslexia Risk Screener and explains how each screener’s components support the validity argument introduced in Chapter 1. The screeners combine results from *i-Ready Inform* for Reading (a broad measure of foundational literacy skills in Grades K–3) with selected *i-Ready* Literacy Tasks (brief, one-to-one measures of fluency, decoding, and automaticity). Together, these components represent key early literacy domains associated with later reading success and reading difficulties, including dyslexia.

This chapter summarizes (a) the constructs measured, (b) the rationale for including each construct and Literacy Task, and (c) key administration and scoring features that support standardized use. These elements provide validity evidence based on test content by demonstrating that the screener’s tasks appropriately sample the skills the screener is intended to measure and use for classification and instructional decision-making.

## 2.2. Constructs Measured

This section describes the literacy skills measured by the Early Literacy Screener and Dyslexia Risk Screener and explains how each construct supports each screener’s intended interpretations described in Chapter 1 (i.e., early identification of students at risk and guidance for targeted instruction). For each construct identified by the International Dyslexia Association (IDA) as important for universal screening in Grades K–2, we (a) summarize its relationship to reading development and reading difficulties, (b) explain how the construct is represented in *i-Ready Inform* for Reading and/or in the Literacy Tasks used in the screener, and (c) explain administration and scoring procedures. Because IDA guidance does not explicitly address Grade 3, the screener applies Grade 2 guidance when identifying constructs and tasks for Grade 3.

Additional information about the development of *i-Ready Inform* for Reading appears in the *i-Ready Assessments and Growth Monitoring Technical Manual* (2025).

### 2.2.1. *i-Ready Inform* for Reading

*i-Ready Inform* for Reading measures a broad set of foundational literacy skills across Grades K–3 and serves as the core academic screener within the Early Literacy Screener. Table 2.1 and Table 2.2 summarize the domains measured at each grade. These domains include (as applicable by grade) phonological awareness, phonics, high-frequency word recognition, vocabulary, and comprehension. In the Early Literacy Screener, the *i-Ready Inform* overall scale score contributes to the Early Literacy Screener composite (see Chapter 1), supporting a broad estimate of early literacy proficiency aligned with the screener’s intended use.

Table 2.1. *i-Ready Inform*: Foundational Literacy Skills Measured at Grades K–3

Grades K–2	Grade 3
<p><b>Grades K–2 Phonological Awareness</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rhyme Recognition</li> <li>• Syllable Blending and Segmenting</li> <li>• Onset and Rime Blending and Segmenting</li> <li>• Phoneme Identification, Isolation, and Pronunciation</li> <li>• Phoneme Blending and Segmentation</li> <li>• Phoneme Addition, Deletion, and Substitution</li> <li>• (Grade 2 students will receive Phonological Awareness items if their score in the Phonics domain is less than 421.)</li> </ul>	<p><b>Grade 3 Phonological Awareness</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• N/A</li> </ul>
<p><b>Grades K–2 Phonics</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Alphabetic Knowledge</li> <li>• Letter Recognition</li> <li>• Letter–Sound Correspondence</li> <li>• Sound–Spellings</li> <li>• Short and Long Vowels</li> <li>• R-Controlled Vowels</li> <li>• Digraphs and Diphthongs</li> <li>• Vowel Patterns</li> <li>• Silent Letters</li> <li>• Decoding and Encoding One-Syllable Words</li> <li>• Sound-by-Sound Blending</li> <li>• Beginning and Ending Blends</li> <li>• Decoding and Encoding Multi-Syllable Words</li> <li>• Multi-Syllable Decoding Strategies</li> <li>• Inflectional Endings</li> <li>• Words with Prefixes</li> <li>• Words with Suffixes</li> </ul>	<p><b>Grade 3 Phonics</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Decoding and Encoding Multi-Syllable Words, including with Affixes</li> <li>• Decoding/Encoding Multi-Syllable Words with Vowel Variants, Vowel Pairs, and Schwa Sounds</li> <li>• Identifying Syllable Sounds and Patterns</li> <li>• Decoding Irregularly Spelled Words</li> </ul>
<p><b>Grades K–2 High-Frequency Words</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Words from Zeno, Dolch, and Fry lists</li> <li>• Recognition of HFWs in isolation</li> <li>• Recognition of HFWs among other words</li> <li>• Spelling of HFWs</li> </ul>	<p><b>Grade 3 High-Frequency Words</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• (Grade 3 students will receive High-Frequency Word items if their score in the Phonics domain is below 421.)</li> </ul>

Table 2.2. Additional Reading Skills Assessed in *i-Ready Inform* (K–3)

<b>Grades K–2</b>	<b>Grade 3</b>
<p><b>Grades K–2 Vocabulary</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Understand General Academic and Domain-Specific Vocabulary</li> <li>• Identify Word Relationships (Synonyms/Antonyms)</li> <li>• Sort Images That Represent Words into Conceptual Categories</li> </ul>	<p><b>Grade 3 Vocabulary</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Understand General Academic and Domain-Specific Vocabulary</li> <li>• Determine Word Meaning Using Base Words and Affixes</li> <li>• Use a Glossary to Determine/ Clarify Word Meaning</li> <li>• Understand Word Families</li> <li>• Analyze Word Relationships</li> </ul>
<p><b>Grades K–2 Comprehension: Informational Text</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ask/Answer Questions about Key Details</li> <li>• Identify the Main Topic or Main Idea</li> <li>• Identify Reasons That Support Specific Points</li> <li>• Recount or Retell Text</li> <li>• Determine Word Meanings</li> <li>• Connect Words and Pictures/Explain How Images Support Text</li> <li>• Use Text Features</li> <li>• Describe Connections between Ideas, Events, and Procedures</li> <li>• Identify Author’s Purpose</li> <li>• Compare and Contrast Key Details within and between Two Texts</li> </ul>	<p><b>Grade 3 Comprehension: Informational Text</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ask Questions about Key Ideas</li> <li>• Identify Main Idea/Key Details</li> <li>• Cite Textual Evidence</li> <li>• Make Inferences</li> <li>• Retell or Summarize Text</li> <li>• Demonstrate Understanding of Unfamiliar Words</li> <li>• Describe or Analyze Relationships between Ideas and Events in Scientific, Historical, and Technical Texts</li> <li>• Demonstrate Understanding of Unfamiliar Words</li> <li>• Identify or Analyze Author’s Point of View or Purpose</li> <li>• Evaluate Arguments</li> <li>• Connect Text and Visuals</li> <li>• Use or Interpret Text Features</li> <li>• Compare Author’s Point of View in Two Texts</li> <li>• Analyze and Compare Text Structures within One Text or between Two Texts</li> <li>• Find and Integrate Information from Multiple Sources</li> </ul>

<b>Grades K–2 Comprehension: Literature</b>	<b>Grade 3 Comprehension: Literature</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ask/Answer Questions about Stories</li> <li>• Identify/Describe Characters, Setting, Events</li> <li>• Describe Parts of a Story</li> <li>• Recount Stories</li> <li>• Determine Word Meanings</li> <li>• Identify Sensory Words/ Phrases</li> <li>• Describe How Authors Use Words/Sounds in Special Ways (e.g., alliteration)</li> <li>• Connect Words and Pictures</li> <li>• Determine Central Message</li> <li>• Identify Point of View</li> <li>• Compare and Contrast Story Elements within One Story or between Two Stories</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ask Questions about Stories</li> <li>• Make Inferences</li> <li>• Cite Textual Evidence</li> <li>• Determine Theme/Central Message of a Story/Poem</li> <li>• Recount or Summarize Story Events</li> <li>• Understand/Describe Characters, Settings, Events</li> <li>• Interpret Figurative Language</li> <li>• Determine Point of View in a Story</li> <li>• Connect Words and Pictures</li> <li>• Analyze Structure and Elements of Stories/Plays/Poems</li> <li>• Compare and Contrast Stories (e.g., by Same Author, in Same Genre, Similar Topics/Themes)</li> <li>• Interpret Allusions</li> <li>• Summarize Text</li> </ul>

### 2.2.2. *i-Ready Literacy Tasks*

The *i-Ready Assessment* includes a suite of Literacy Tasks that teachers can print and administer one-on-one to measure early reading and fluency skills that are best evaluated through direct observation and oral responding. Literacy Tasks provide targeted evidence about skills that are central to early reading development and dyslexia risk and that are not fully captured by an online adaptive assessment (e.g., timed oral fluency, rapid naming, and pseudoword decoding).

Each Literacy Task type includes multiple Benchmark Task forms (administered up to three times per year), and for some tasks, optional Progress Monitoring Tasks for more frequent progress checks. Table 2.3 lists all available *i-Ready Literacy Tasks*. The specific tasks used in the Early Literacy Screener and Dyslexia Risk Screener are listed in Chapter 1 (Table 1.1 and Table 1.2).

Table 2.3. *i-Ready Literacy Tasks* and Subtasks by Grade Level and Administration

<b>Task</b>	<b>Subtask</b>	<b>Abbreviation</b>	<b>K</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Letter Naming Fluency</b>	--	LNF	✓	✓	F				
<b>Letter Sound Fluency</b>	--	LSF	✓	✓	F				
<b>Word Recognition Fluency</b>	--	WRF	✓	✓	✓	✓			
<b>Pseudoword Decoding—Fluency</b>	--	PWD-F	✓	✓	✓	✓			
<b>Pseudoword Decoding—Multisyllabic</b>	--	PWD-M			✓	✓			
<b>Rapid Automatized Naming</b>	Colors	RAN C	WS	✓					
<b>Rapid Automatized Naming</b>	Letters	RAN L	S	✓	✓	✓			
<b>Rapid Automatized Naming</b>	Numbers	RAN N		✓	✓	✓			

<b>Rapid Automatized Naming</b>	Objects	RAN O	✓	✓					
<b>Phonological Awareness</b>	Blending	PA BL	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
<b>Phonological Awareness</b>	Manipulation	PA M	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
<b>Phonological Awareness</b>	Segmentation	PA SEG	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
<b>Phonological Awareness</b>	Segmentation Fluency	PA SF	✓	✓					
<b>Phonological Awareness</b>	Syllables	PA SYL	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
<b>Spelling &amp; Encoding</b>	--	SP & EN		✓	✓	✓			
<b>Passage Reading Fluency</b>	--	PRF		WS	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

Note: ✓ denotes availability for all administrations; F, W, and S denote availability during the fall, winter, and spring administrations, respectively.

### 2.2.3. Alignment to Recommended Screening Domains

Table 2.4 shows how *i-Ready Inform* for Reading domains and the Literacy Tasks used in the Early Literacy Screener and Dyslexia Screener align with IDA-recommended screening skill domains. This alignment supports validity evidence based on test content by demonstrating that each screener’s placement levels are derived from measures that represent key predictors of reading performance and dyslexia risk.

The Early Literacy Screener and Dyslexia Risk Screener depart from IDA guidance in two limited ways:

- **Phonological memory (Grades K–1).** The screeners do not include a separate phonological memory task; instead, *i-Ready Inform* for Reading provides indirect evidence through phonological awareness items that place demands on phonological memory.
- **RAN beyond kindergarten.** While IDA guidance emphasizes RAN at kindergarten, the Dyslexia Risk Screener includes RAN across Grades K–3. Research identifies RAN as a strong predictor of reading difficulty, and many states require RAN screening beyond kindergarten.

Table 2.4. IDA Recommended Key Skill Domains for Universal Screeners

Grade	Key Skill Domains	Early Literacy Screener: <i>i-Ready Inform</i>	Early Literacy Screener: Literacy Task	Dyslexia Risk Screener	Other Literacy Tasks
<b>K</b>	phonological awareness including phoneme segmentation, blending, onset and rime	Phonological Awareness Domain			Phonological Awareness
<b>K</b>	rapid automatic naming including letter naming fluency		Letter Naming Fluency*	RAN Objects	RAN Colors
<b>K</b>	letter sound association	Phonics Domain		Pseudoword Decoding—Fluency (winter, spring)	Letter Sound Fluency

1	phoneme awareness, specifically phoneme segmentation, blending, and manipulation	Phonological Awareness Domain			Phonological Awareness
1	letter naming fluency	Phonics Domain			Letter Naming Fluency
1	letter sound association	Phonics Domain			Letter Sound Fluency
1	oral vocabulary	Vocabulary Domain			
1	word recognition fluency (i.e., accuracy and rate)	High Frequency Word Domain	Word Recognition Fluency (fall)	Pseudoword Decoding—Fluency	
2	word identification (real and nonsense)	High Frequency Word Domain		Pseudoword Decoding—Fluency	Word Recognition Fluency
2	oral reading fluency		Passage Reading Fluency		
2	reading comprehension	Comprehension Domain			
3	word identification (real and nonsense)	High Frequency Word Domain		Pseudoword Decoding — Fluency	Word Recognition Fluency
3	oral reading fluency		Passage Reading Fluency		
3	reading comprehension	Comprehension Domain	Passage Reading Fluency (Retelling component optional)		

\*Letter Naming Fluency at kindergarten is an important predictor of future reading success but it is not a RAN task, as students are still developing their knowledge of letter names. It is not until letter name knowledge is fully secure that it becomes a RAN task.

In the sections that follow, we define each construct and explain how the screener operationalizes it through *i-Ready Inform* for Reading and specific Literacy Tasks.

### 2.2.3.1 Phonological Awareness

Phonological awareness (PA) is the skill of recognizing and manipulating the sounds of spoken language (e.g., rhyming, syllables, onset–rime, and phoneme blending/segmentation/manipulation). PA supports decoding by helping students acquire the alphabetic principle and map sounds to letters and letter patterns. Early PA skills predict later reading outcomes, and weaknesses increase risk for reading difficulty.

**How the screener measures phonological awareness.** In Grades K–2, *i-Ready Inform* for Reading includes a Phonological Awareness domain that contributes to the Early Literacy Screener composite score. Table 2.4 lists

the associated PA skill targets, supporting the intended interpretation that low performance may indicate risk in foundational skills that underlie later decoding and fluency.

### 2.2.3.2 Rapid Automated Naming

Rapid Automated Naming (RAN) measures how quickly students can name familiar stimuli (e.g., colors, objects, letters, or numbers randomly presented in a repeated array. RAN is associated with reading automaticity and fluency and has demonstrated predictive relations to later reading outcomes.

Research consistently shows that RAN is a strong predictor of current and future reading performance in early elementary grades. In skilled readers, RAN performance relates to reading rate and comprehension (Arnell et al., 2009). RAN predicts reading development prior to formal reading instruction, with alphanumeric tasks showing the strongest associations once students gain familiarity with print (Meyer et al., 1998). A meta-analysis of 67 studies found that RAN measured in preschool or kindergarten predicts later word reading, fluency, and comprehension (McWeeny et al., 2022), indicating that RAN makes a unique contribution to reading outcomes beyond other early literacy skills.

**How the screener measures rapid automatized naming.** The Dyslexia Risk Screener includes:

- **RAN Objects** is administered in kindergarten (fall, winter, spring) and Grade 1 fall to accommodate students who have not yet developed automatic letter naming.
- **RAN Letters** is administered beginning Grade 1 winter and continuing through Grades 2–3 to reflect typical development of letter-naming automaticity.

Including RAN supports the Dyslexia Risk Indicator interpretation by sampling automaticity skills associated with dyslexia risk.

### 2.2.3.3 Letter Sound Association

Letter–sound knowledge supports early decoding because students must map graphemes to phonemes to read unfamiliar words. Research shows that letter-name knowledge often supports acquisition of letter-sound knowledge, particularly early in development, and that letter-sound knowledge supports increasingly sophisticated phonemic processing and decoding.

Research consistently shows that knowing letter names supports the acquisition of basic letter–sound correspondences, largely because many letter names contain their associated sounds. Share (2004) demonstrated that letter-name knowledge significantly influences kindergarteners’ learning of letter sounds, and Evans (2006) found that letter-name knowledge—more than phonological awareness—uniquely predicts early letter-sound learning.

Beyond letter names, studies highlight the role of letter-sound knowledge in developing phoneme awareness and in mapping graphemes to phonemes, both essential for learning to read. Understanding how letter-sound fluency and letter-name fluency contribute to reading development is also important for identifying children at risk for reading difficulties, including dyslexia.

Research examining the relationship between phonological awareness and letter-sound learning suggests that letter-sound knowledge may drive growth in deeper phonemic skills. Foy and Mann (2006) reported that while letter-sound knowledge does not strongly support rhyme awareness or shallow phoneme awareness, it is associated with more advanced phonemic manipulation—particularly for irregularly named letters (e.g., h, j, k, q, r, w, y), which appear to support explicit phoneme-level processing.

**How the screener measures letter–sound association.** The screener emphasizes letter–sound skills primarily through:

- *i-Ready Inform* for Reading Phonics items (letter–sound correspondence and decoding/encoding skills); and
- Pseudoword Decoding—Fluency (PWD-F) in the Dyslexia Risk Screener (Grades K–3), which depends on letter–sound knowledge and provides a direct indicator of phonetic decoding efficiency.

Although the Literacy Task suite includes Letter Sound Fluency, the screener relies on Letter Naming Fluency in kindergarten and PWD-F for decoding risk, consistent with the screener’s early-grade emphasis on robust predictors of later outcomes.

#### 2.2.3.4 Letter Name Association

Letter naming fluency (LNF) reflects the speed and accuracy of naming letters. In kindergarten, letter-name knowledge is a strong predictor of later reading and provides an efficient index of early print knowledge and emerging automaticity.

A large body of research shows that letter-name knowledge is a strong early predictor of letter-sound knowledge, phonological sensitivity, and later reading achievement (Adams, 1990; Burgess & Lonigan, 1998; Byrne & Fielding-Barnsley, 1989; Calfee & Drum, 1979; Chall, 1967; Stevenson & Neuman, 1986; Stuart & Colheart, 1988; Wagner et al., 1994). Longitudinal studies consistently find that letter-name knowledge provides an early advantage because it precedes and supports the development of letter-sound knowledge.

Clemens et al. (2017) reported that although letter-naming and letter-sound fluency are highly correlated at kindergarten entry, letter-naming fluency is the stronger predictor of oral reading fluency through Grade 1. By Grades 2–3, however, letter-sound fluency becomes more predictive. Blaiklock (2004) found a similar pattern: letter-name knowledge best predicted reading performance during the first year of school, but once most children had mastered letter names, letter-sound knowledge became the stronger predictor.

Other studies reinforce the early importance of letter-name knowledge. Evans (2006) showed that in kindergarten it predicts letter-sound knowledge more strongly than cognitive ability or phonological awareness, and it predicts word reading in Grade 1 more strongly than letter-sound knowledge. Catts et al. (2001) likewise found that kindergarten letter identification was the single best predictor of reading difficulties in Grade 2.

**How the screener measures letter naming.** The Early Literacy Screener includes LNF (mixed case) in kindergarten (fall, winter, spring), supporting early identification of students whose alphabet knowledge and naming automaticity may impede later decoding and fluency.

### 2.2.3.5 Oral Vocabulary

Oral vocabulary supports comprehension and broader language development and contributes to reading success, particularly as texts become more complex.

**How the screener measures vocabulary.** *i-Ready Inform* for Reading relies on students' receptive oral vocabulary, as many items for Grades K-3 provide audio supports that reduce construct-irrelevant barriers related to reading directions. *i-Ready Inform* for Reading also includes a Vocabulary domain. Some Literacy Tasks also elicit oral responding (e.g., Passage Reading Fluency retell), providing additional indirect evidence related to expressive language demands in early reading.

### 2.2.3.6 Oral Reading Fluency

Oral reading fluency (ORF)—accuracy, rate, and prosody—reflects the degree of automaticity in component reading skills and supports comprehension. ORF is widely used as an indicator of reading proficiency and as a marker for potential reading difficulty.

Research consistently identifies ORF as a strong indicator of overall reading achievement and a sensitive marker of reading difficulties. Early ORF performance reliably predicts later reading proficiency (Fuchs et al., 2001), and ORF assessments effectively identify students at risk for reading problems (Rasinski et al., 2005). Longitudinal evidence shows that ORF remains relatively stable over time, reinforcing its value as a predictor of long-term reading outcomes (Schilling et al., 2007).

**How the screener measures oral reading fluency.** Because *i-Ready Inform* for Reading does not directly measure oral reading fluency, the Early Literacy Screener includes a grade-appropriate oral fluency task:

- Kindergarten: Letter Naming Fluency
- Grade 1 fall: Word Recognition Fluency
- Grade 1 winter/spring and Grades 2–3: Passage Reading Fluency

This design supports the validity argument by ensuring the screener includes a direct oral fluency measure aligned to intended use.

### 2.2.3.7 Word Recognition Fluency

Word recognition fluency (WRF) reflects automatic recognition of common words, supporting efficient reading and comprehension. Readers who have word recognition fluency can focus more on comprehending the text rather than decoding individual words.

Research on word-recognition fluency highlights the central role of automatic word reading in developing skilled reading and in identifying students at risk for reading difficulties. Early mastery of word-recognition skills strongly predicts later reading success (Perfetti, 1985), while weaknesses in word-recognition fluency serve as early markers of reading disabilities, including dyslexia (Torgesen, 2000). Students who struggle with rapid, accurate word recognition are more likely to experience broader challenges in comprehension and overall literacy development.

**How the screener measures word recognition fluency.** *i-Ready Inform* for Reading includes a High Frequency Word domain. The Early Literacy Screener adds WRF in Grade 1 fall to provide a timed oral measure at a point when many students are transitioning from letter-level skills to word-level automaticity. In later windows, Passage Reading Fluency provides a broader fluency index that also reflects word recognition skill.

#### 2.2.3.8 Word Identification (real word and nonword)

Automatic word recognition is the skill of quickly and accurately recognizing and reading words without needing to sound them out letter by letter. This skill relies on the component skills of phonemic awareness, phonics, structural analysis, and decoding.

Nonword (pseudoword) decoding tasks provide a direct measure of phonological decoding because students cannot rely on memorized word forms or contextual cues. This makes pseudoword decoding particularly useful for identifying decoding weaknesses associated with dyslexia risk and for reducing false positives in multi-step screening approaches.

Studies consistently show that difficulties with phonological decoding—especially when reading nonwords—are a defining feature of dyslexia. Individuals with dyslexia perform markedly worse on nonword reading than on real-word reading, highlighting weaknesses in phonological processing (Griffiths & Snowling, 2002). Reviews of nonword-reading research confirm that these phonological deficits are central to dyslexia (Rack et al., 1992). Screening work by Compton et al. (2010) further demonstrates that measures of phonemic decoding efficiency using nonwords are particularly effective, reducing false positives more than assessments of sight-word efficiency or broader word-reading skills.

**How the screener measures decoding efficiency.** The Dyslexia Risk Screener includes Pseudoword Decoding—Fluency (PWD-F) in Grades K–3 beginning in kindergarten winter. This task strengthens the validity argument for dyslexia risk classification because it directly samples phonetic decoding skills central to the construct and supports differentiated interpretation beyond general reading difficulty. (Appendix B documents the redesign of the Literacy Task for Pseudoword Decoding, effective fall 2024.)

#### 2.2.3.9 Phonological Memory

Phonological memory supports temporary storage and manipulation of speech sounds and can contribute to performance on tasks requiring phoneme manipulation.

Research shows that phonological-memory and working-memory weaknesses do not consistently co-occur with developmental language disorders or dyslexia (Gray et al., 2019). Evidence suggests that the

verbal-memory and phonological deficits seen in dyslexia arise from a shared underlying difficulty in encoding speech sounds, rather than from separate, independent impairments (Tijms, 2004).

**How the screener measures phonological memory.** *i-Ready Inform* for Reading provides indirect evidence through phonological awareness items requiring manipulation of sound sequences, which place demands on phonological memory.

## 2.3. Screener Administration

### 2.3.1. Administration Windows

Table 2.5 shows recommended testing windows aligned to *i-Ready Inform* for Reading Schedule. State policies may specify required windows. These windows support consistent interpretation of results over time and allow schools to monitor growth and instructional response.

Table 2.5. Recommended Test Administration Windows

<b>Grade</b>	<b>Fall August 1 – November 15</b>	<b>Winter November 16 – March 1</b>	<b>Spring March 2 – June 15</b>
<b>K</b>	Four to six weeks into the school year	12–18 weeks after the fall administration	12–18 weeks after the winter administration
<b>1–3</b>	Start as soon as possible	12–18 weeks after the fall administration	12–18 weeks after the winter administration

### 2.3.2. Testing Experience

*i-Ready Inform* for Reading is an online computer-adaptive assessment that adjusts to each student’s performance to estimate domain levels efficiently. Literacy Tasks are administered one-to-one using a standardized teacher script and accompanying student materials.

Each Literacy Task has a teacher form and a printed student form. Teacher forms include detailed task administration scripts designed to support accurate and consistent administration across students. Scripts are formatted for readability with visual cues and callouts to highlight critical information. Text to be read aloud to students appears in a blue to distinguish it from directions intended for the administrator.

For every task, the administrator reads the instructions aloud and ensures the student understands how to respond. Each task includes practice items to confirm the student’s understanding of the task before the timed portion begins.

Task administrators may use the digital scoring mode, which provides an on-screen script, embedded timer, and automated score calculation with real-time syncing.

### 2.3.3. Screener Content, Administration, and Scoring

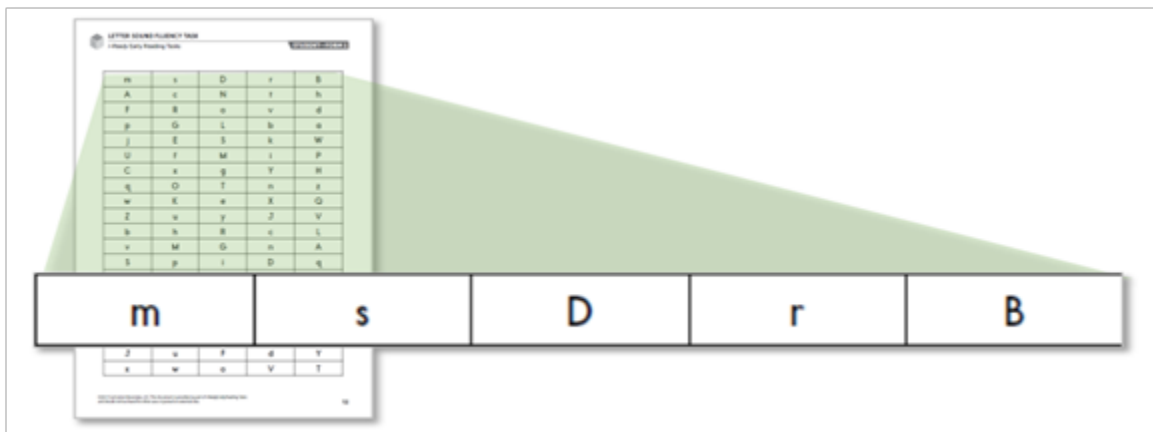
This section summarizes the Literacy Tasks used in the Early Literacy Screener and Dyslexia Risk Screener. These tasks provide direct evidence for fluency, decoding, and automaticity—supporting the intended interpretations and uses described in Chapter 1.

#### 2.3.3.1 Early Literacy Screener Tasks

### Letter Naming Fluency (LNF)

Letter Naming Fluency (LNF) (mixed case) is administered in kindergarten (fall, winter, and spring). LNF provides a brief measure of early alphabet knowledge and naming automaticity, supporting the early identification of students whose limited print knowledge may hinder later reading development.

LNF – mixed-case (Figure 2.1) presents mixed-case letters (a, B, C, D, e, m, n, r, S, t) repeated in a 5 x 20 matrix.



**Figure 2.1. Letter Naming Fluency.** The i-Ready Literacy Task for Letter Naming Fluency measures alphabet knowledge by having students name as many letters as possible in one minute.

Students first complete a 10-letter practice activity. During the one-minute timed portion, if a student pauses longer than six seconds, the teacher may supply the correct letter name and prompt the student to continue. The score is the number of letters named correctly in one minute. Word Recognition Fluency (WRF)

Word Recognition Fluency (WRF) is administered in Grade 1 fall. This task measures automatic recognition of high-frequency words at a developmentally appropriate point when students typically transition from letter-level decoding to more fluent word-level processing. The WRF Benchmark Task includes primarily single-syllable words (two to six letters) and a few two-syllable words.

After a practice set of ten words, students read as many high-frequency words as possible in one minute (Figure 2.2).

**GRADE 1 WORD RECOGNITION FLUENCY TASK**  
i-Ready Literacy Tasks

**DIRECTIONS**

**To prepare for and practice the task with the student:**

1 Preview and practice the task with the student by showing them the Practice page. Point to the practice rows and say:  
*When I say "GO!" point to each word and read it out loud as quickly as you can.*  
*You'll start here* <point to leftmost word of top practice row>  
*and go this way* <touch the next two words, working from left to right, in sequence>,  
*then go on to the next row. If you get stuck, I'll help you. Are you ready to point and go as quickly as you can? GO!*

2 Listen as the student reads the words in the practice rows.  
If the student incorrectly reads a word, give them the correct word after they have finished both rows. You might say: *This is the word* <correct word>.

at	so	he	if	or
on	I	is	an	by

Have the student repeat the practice rows up to three times maximum until they have correctly read all the words. If after three attempts the student continues to incorrectly read words, move on to the next step of the task since it contains additional words the student may be able to read.

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2

**Figure 2.2. Word Recognition Fluency. The *i-Ready Literacy Task* for Word Recognition Fluency measures recognition of common words that frequently appear in texts. The example shown is the Grade 1 practice activity.**

The score is the number of words read correctly, including self-corrections. Passage Reading Fluency (PRF)

Passage Reading Fluency (PRF) is administered in Grade 1 winter and spring and in Grades 2–3. PRF provides direct evidence of connected-text fluency and supports instructional decisions related to automaticity and the comprehension demands not fully captured by *i-Ready Inform* for Reading.

Each PRF form includes two grade-appropriate passages—one literary and one informational—and a third backup passage in case of disruptions, scoring errors, or other issues. Backup passages may be either genre.

PRF yields indices of accuracy, Words Correct Per Minute (WCPM), prosody, and comprehension through retelling.<sup>1</sup> The teacher administration packet includes the script and detailed scoring rules identifying what counts as an error.

Passages target grade-appropriate readability and complexity (Table 2.8). In Grades 1–2, texts are highly decodable to reflect expected phonics patterns. Readability and complexity increase within and across grade levels based on Common Core State Standards recommendations and are evaluated both quantitatively and

<sup>1</sup> Retelling comprehension and prosody scores do not contribute to the Early Literacy Screener composite score.

qualitatively. Passage lengths range from 125-150 words in grade 1, 150-200 in grade 2, and 200-224 in Grade 3.

Both Lexile and ATOS quantitative tools evaluate passage readability. Table 2.6 presents target difficulty ranges.

Table 2.6. Text Readability Targets for Passage Reading Fluency

Grade Placement	Lexile Range	ATOS Range
Grade 1	90–325	1.57–2.52
Grade 2	565–745	2.75–3.62
Grade 3	685–855	3.89–4.69

Grades 1 and 2 passages include at least 75 percent decodable or high-frequency irregular words appropriate for the grade. The remaining 25 percent may include story or content words that are not fully decodable but remain grade-appropriate. Grade 3 passages are grade-appropriate in readability and vocabulary without a required decodability percentage.

Students have one minute to read each of the two passages aloud. As the student reads, the teacher marks the words read incorrectly. Educators may score by hand and enter results manually into the system or use the digital scoring mode (see section 2.2.2).

### 2.3.3.2 Dyslexia Risk Screener Literacy Tasks

## Pseudoword Decoding – Fluency (PWD-F)

Pseudoword Decoding – Fluency (PWD-F) is administered in Grades K–3, beginning in kindergarten winter. PWD-F measures phonological decoding efficiency, a core feature of dyslexia risk, and provides more specific evidence of risk than real-word tasks that may allow for memorization or contextual guessing.

PWD-F forms are not grade specific. Each form has 50 pseudowords arranged according to a typical phonics instruction progression based on sound spellings. For example, fall forms begin with vowel-consonant (VC) patterns, progress to CVC words, then to V-C-e long-vowel spellings, and eventually to one-syllable VCC, CVCC, CCVC or CCVCC words containing consonant digraphs or blends. Benchmark Task forms follow the same blueprint, with difficulty increasing across the academic year.

Figure 2.3 illustrates the progression of skills samples on a form, beginning with single-syllable pseudowords with regular spellings and ending with a few two-syllable pseudowords with simple syllable patterns that older readers should recognize easily. Students complete a practice set of ten words (or five words for kindergarten) and may repeat the practice up to three times until all pseudowords are read correctly.

Students read for one minute. Administrators provide the correct word after a pause exceeding the time limit (six seconds in kindergarten; three seconds in Grades 1–3).

The figure shows a sample PWD-F form on the left and two enlarged sections on the right. The form is a 5x15 grid of pseudowords. The first two rows are single-syllable words, and the last three rows are two-syllable words. The enlarged sections show the first two rows and the last two rows of the form.

ix	ut	vam	tob	jed
pag	fum	vot	hin	sog
joard	rudden	clure	lossip	hetlup
yoxes	nelding	kunvit	fipper	zanging

**Figure 2.3. Pseudoword Decoding-Fluency Task (PWD-F).** This example shows the progression of skills measured on a form, from single-syllable words to two-syllable words.

The student's raw score is the number of correct responses within the one-minute time limit, including self-corrections and excluding supplied by the administrator. Rapid Automatized Naming (RAN)

Rapid Automatized Naming (RAN) includes RAN Objects and RAN Letters. RAN Objects is administered in kindergarten and Grade 1 fall; RAN Letters begins in Grade 1 winter and continues in Grades 2–3 across all testing windows.

RAN provides an index of naming automaticity associated with reading fluency and dyslexia risk. It complements decoding measures by sampling a distinct but related cognitive process involved in fluent reading.

RAN Objects presents five familiar objects (book, hand, dog, chair, moon) repeated randomly in a 5 x 15 matrix of 75 stimuli. RAN Letters presents eight high-frequency letters (A, C, e, M, n, o, S, t) repeated randomly in a 5 x 20 matrix of 100 stimuli. Students complete a two-row practice activity with 10 objects or 10 letters before the timed activity.

Figure 2.4 and Figure 2.5 show examples of stimuli and task administration directions.

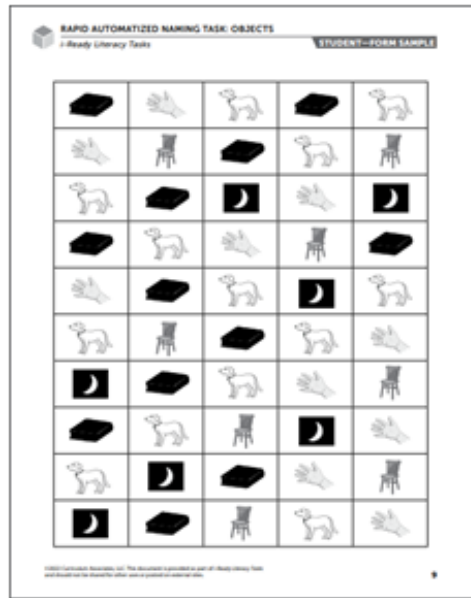


Figure 2.4. Rapid Automatized Naming for Objects. This excerpt is from RAN Objects.

**RAPID AUTOMATIZED NAMING TASK: OBJECTS**  
i-Ready Literacy Tasks

**DIRECTIONS**

**To administer the task:**

- When practice is complete, remove the Practice page and hand the Student page to the student. Immediately say:  
*Just like you did in practice, when I say "GO!" point to each thing and say its name.*  
*Start here* <point to top-left object of form>  
*and go this way* <touch the next two objects, working from left to right, in sequence>.  
*If you get stuck, I'll help you so you can keep going. Are you ready to point and go as quickly as you can?*
- Immediately start the timer to count down **60 seconds** and say: **GO!**
- As the student names each object on the Student page, put a corresponding check above the object name on the Teacher page to note a correct response. If the student incorrectly names an object, put an X above the object name on the Teacher page.  
If the student pauses for **more than three seconds**, give the student the correct response and tell them to keep going. Then put an X above the object name on the Teacher page.  
Below is a sample marked-up row:

✓	✓	✓	X	✓
Book	Dog	Hand	Chair	Moon

- When the timer has counted down **60 seconds**, end the task. Say:  
**STOP! You worked so hard! We are now done with this task.**

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**RAPID AUTOMATIZED NAMING TASK: LETTERS**  
i-Ready Literacy Tasks

**DIRECTIONS**

**To administer the task:**

- When practice is complete, remove the Practice page and hand the Student page to the student. Immediately say:  
*Just like you did in practice, when I say "GO!" point to each letter and say its name.*  
*Start here* <point to top-left letter of form>  
*and go this way* <touch the next two letters, working from left to right, in sequence>.  
*If you get stuck, I'll help you so you can keep going. Are you ready to point and go as quickly as you can?*
- Immediately start the timer to count down **60 seconds** and say: **GO!**
- As the student names each letter on the Student page, put a corresponding check above the letter on the Teacher page to note a correct response. If the student incorrectly names a letter, put an X above the letter on the Teacher page.  
If the student pauses for **more than three seconds**, give the student the correct response and tell them to keep going. Then put an X above the letter on the Teacher page.  
Below is a sample marked-up row:

✓	✓	✓	X	✓
e	t	S	A	o

- When the timer has counted down **60 seconds**, end the task. Say:  
**STOP! You worked so hard! We are now done with this task.**

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Figure 2.5. Rapid Automatized Naming Task Administration. These excerpts show administration directions for RAN Objects (left) and RAN Letters (right).

The student’s raw score is the number of stimuli named accurately within one-minute.

The Literacy Tasks included in the Early Literacy Screener and the Dyslexia Risk Screener—Letter Naming Fluency, Word Recognition Fluency, Passage Reading Fluency, Pseudoword Decoding—Fluency, and Rapid Automatized Naming—provide direct evidence for the foundational skills identified in Chapter 1 as essential

to early reading development and dyslexia risk identification. Each task targets a specific construct (e.g., alphabet knowledge, automatic word recognition, connected-text fluency, phonological decoding, naming speed) and uses standardized administration and scoring procedures that support valid score interpretations. Timed one-minute administrations, controlled practice opportunities, and clearly defined scoring rules strengthen the reliability and comparability of results across students and testing windows. Together, these design and administration features contribute to the validity argument by ensuring that task scores reflect the intended skills rather than construct-irrelevant factors such as inconsistent administration, variable opportunity to respond, or reliance on memorized words or contextual cues.

# Chapter 3. Screener Models

## 3.1. Chapter Summary

Chapter 3 explains how the Early Literacy Screener and Dyslexia Risk Screener translate assessment results into risk placement levels that support the intended interpretations and uses described in Chapter 1. The Early Literacy Screener is a compensatory model that combines scores from the *i-Ready Inform* for Reading and a grade-appropriate fluency Literacy Task into a single composite score. Based on the composite score, each student is assigned to one of three placement levels—Below Benchmark, Approaching Benchmark, or On Benchmark—to help educators identify students who may benefit from targeted instruction or intervention.

The Dyslexia Risk Screener uses a different logic. Rather than combining component scores, it applies a partial conjunctive model that evaluates placement levels across the component measures. Specifically, it considers the Early Literacy Screener placement level along with performance on Rapid Automatized Naming (RAN) and Pseudoword Decoding – Fluency (PWD-F) to report one of three Dyslexia Risk placement levels—At Risk, Some Risk, and No Observed Risk—based on placement level patterns across measures. This approach aligns with the screener’s intended interpretations in Chapter 1 by emphasizing a holistic view of performance across key risk-related domains and reducing reliance on any single score.

The following sections describe how the components of the screener models are combined and the process of establishing placement levels.

## 3.2. Early Literacy Screener Model

After students complete *i-Ready Inform* for Reading and the grade-appropriate fluency Literacy Task designated for their grade and testing window, the *i-Ready* system calculates a composite score based on both components.

The Early Literacy Screener uses a compensatory model, allowing strong performance on one component to offset weaker performance on the other. Specifically, the *i-Ready Inform* for Reading overall scale score and the selected fluency task score (see Table 1.1) are combined to produce a single composite score that supports broad screening and instructional decision-making.

Before describing the composite score calculation, the next section summarizes how *i-Ready Inform* for Reading and Literacy Task components are scaled.

### 3.2.1. Early Literacy Screener Components

This section explains how scores from *i-Ready Inform* and Literacy Tasks are scaled and combined to produce the Early Literacy Screener composite score.

*i-Ready Inform* for reading uses a unidimensional Rasch model to create a vertical scale ranging from 100 to 800. Detailed calibration and scaling information is available in the *i-Ready Inform and Growth Monitoring Assessments Technical Manual* (2025). Student responses are used to estimate proficiency ( $\theta$ ) using maximum likelihood estimation based on item difficulty parameters, which are calibrated using the Rasch model. A linear transformation of the proficiency estimate on the underlying logit scale produces the vertical scale:  $\hat{\theta}_R$  for Reading. A single transformation is applied across the entire scale. This transformation supports score interpretation. The distribution of the reported scale scores remain proportionally congruent with the distributions of the estimated  $\theta$  scores, and the conditional standard errors are proportionally scaled relative to the slope constant and maintain the same convex, U-shaped pattern on both the  $\theta$  metric and reported score scale. This transformation ensures that scores are interpretable and consistent across grade levels and testing windows.

All estimates at *i-Ready Inform* for Reading overall test level are transformed from their operational  $\theta$  (or logit) scale to a scale score using the linear transformation function:

$$\text{Unrounded Reading Scale Score} = 499.38 + (37.81 \times \hat{\theta}_R).$$

Scores are rounded to the nearest integer. Any scale score below 100 is replaced with the lowest observable scale score (LOSS) of 100, and any score above 800 is replaced with the highest observable scale score (HOSS) of 800.

Literacy Task scores are based on the number of correct responses within one minute. Detailed scoring information is available in the *i-Ready Literacy Tasks Technical Manual* (2026).

- Letter Naming Fluency (LNF): 0–100 letters correct in one minute.
- Word Recognition Fluency (WRF, Grade 1): 0–55 words correct in one minute.
- Passage Reading Fluency (PRF): average of two passages; each passage score is number of words correct in one minute (passage lengths vary by grade).

### 3.2.2. Early Literacy Composite Scale

This section explains how scores from *i-Ready Inform* and Literacy Tasks are scaled and combined to produce the Early Literacy Screener composite score.

To combine *i-Ready Inform* for Reading and the fluency measure in a compensatory model, each component is transformed to a z-score using the mean and standard deviation of the population distribution:

$$z = (x - \mu) / \sigma \tag{1}$$

where  $x$  is *i-Ready Inform* for Reading overall score or the fluency measure score,  $\mu$  is the respective population mean, and  $\sigma$  is the respective population standard deviation.

The resulting scores have a mean of zero and a standard deviation of one. This allows summing the z-scores across components while maintaining the relative placement of each score within the separate distributions. High scores on one component can compensate for lower scores on another component (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2019).

The composite score ( $Composite_z$ ) is a weighted sum of the component z-scores:

$$Composite_z = Diagnostic_z * w_1 + Fluency_z * w_1 \quad (2)$$

where  $Diagnostic_z$  is the z-score transformation of the *i-Ready Inform* for Reading overall score,  $Fluency_z$  is the z-score transformation of the Fluency measure (LNF, WRF, or PRF), and  $w_1$  is the weight associated with each component z-score. Equal weights are typically used (e.g.,  $w_1 = w_2 = 0.5$ ). Equal weighting maintains transparency and preserves relative placement within each component distribution.

For a weighted average, the sum of the weights should equal 1.0, which maintains some of the psychometric properties associated with the component scores. For this reason, the degree to which the individual assessment distributions differ from a normal distribution may distort the measurement properties and usefulness of the composite score (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2019). For ease of use and interpretation, the  $Composite_z$  can be transformed to another scale score metric or to the scale score metric of one of the component scores by using the same population mean and standard deviation.

For ease of interpretation, the composite Z-score was linearly transformed to *i-Ready Inform* overall scale using the mean/standard deviation method, resulting in a scale ranging from 100 to 800. This approach applies in Grades K–3 for fall, winter, and spring, except Grade 1 fall which uses equipercentile linking between *i-Ready Inform* and WRF due to shape differences in the component distributions. This equipercentile transformation also yields a composite scale similar to *i-Ready Inform* for Reading scale.

### 3.2.3. Early Literacy Standard Setting

This section describes how composite scores are used to assign an Early Literacy Screener placement level, which reflects literacy development relative to grade-level expectations and instructional needs. The system reports one of three placement levels:

- Below Benchmark
- Approaching Benchmark
- On Benchmark

To support appropriate interpretation and use, Curriculum Associates established cut scores using Evidence-Based Standard Setting methodology (EBSS; McClarty et al., 2013) that integrates normative data, criterion-referenced benchmarks, and classification accuracy analyses linked to external reading measures (e.g., DIBELS). McClarty et al. (2013) describe standard setting as an evidence-based process that relies on multiple sources of information to support the use of cut scores for performance classifications. A key component of this evaluation is the use of external data to examine whether students classified at different

performance levels show meaningful differences in outcomes. This procedure provides validity evidence for the interpretation that the placement levels meaningfully differentiate students who are likely to require different levels of instructional support.

Placement levels are determined by setting two cut scores on the Early Literacy Screener composite scale using the EBSS methodology by first calculating the sensitivity and specificity of each possible composite score using data gathered in winter, spring, and fall 2023 and the DIBELS 8 Red/Yellow composite score cut. This generated Receiver Operator Characteristic (ROC) curves for the composite scale compared to DIBELS 8 Red/Yellow performance level cut. Next, we identified the Early Literacy Screener optimal composite score that maximized specificity and sensitivity when compared to the DIBELS Red/Yellow cut. That is, we identified composite scores where both sensitivity and specificity are equal to or greater than 0.70. This identifies the Early Literacy Screener composite score with the minimum difference between sensitivity and specificity.

Anchoring on the composite score scale from the ROC analyses various data points were identified. Both normative and criterion referenced data points were identified on the composite score scale. The following data points helped inform the location of the cuts based on normative data, criterion-referenced benchmarks, and classification accuracy:

- composite score associated with the 25<sup>th</sup> and 50<sup>th</sup> percentile for *Inform* norms (2023-2024)
- composite score associated with the 25<sup>th</sup> and 50<sup>th</sup> percentile for impact data based on the operational data available in the *i-Ready* system for *Inform*
- composite score associated with the 25<sup>th</sup> and 50<sup>th</sup> percentile for impact data based on the operational data available in the *i-Ready* system for the associated fluency Literacy Task
- composite score associated with the Early- and Mid-year cuts for *Inform*.
- composite score associated with the On Level cut for Literacy Tasks.
- composite score where both sensitivity and specificity are equal to or greater than 0.70 relative to the DIBELS Red/Yellow cut

Internal expert judges evaluated the clustering of data points that supported the cut score between Below Benchmark and Approaching Benchmark. Consideration was given based on the quality and the representativeness of the data; evaluation of impact data and classification accuracy results for each point to determine if the cut scores would meaningfully differentiate students.

Once the Below/Approaching cut score was established, then it was used to inform the cut score for the Approaching Benchmark and On Benchmark designation. Once individual cut scores were set for each grade level and testing window, then a vertical articulation process examined impact data for reasonableness of the cuts across testing windows within a grade and then across grades.

Appendix C provides the composite cut scores for all grades and testing windows for the Below/Approaching cut and the Approaching/On cut. For all grades and testing windows, the composite score is reported on the Z-score scale, except for Grade 1 fall, which is reported on *the i-Ready Inform* for Reading scale due the equiperecentile linking process.

For the kindergarten fall window, an additional category “Below Benchmark (<10<sup>th</sup> percentile) is used to further differentiate the lowest performing students. Students in the Below Benchmark placement level may need additional instruction or an intervention to help them reach on grade level performance.

### 3.3. Dyslexia Risk Screener Model

This section describes the model used to determine Dyslexia Risk Screener placement levels based on student placement levels across the component assessments.

The Dyslexia Risk Screener uses a partial conjunctive model, in which placement levels on each component assessment determine the overall placement level. Unlike a compensatory model, strong performance on one component does not fully compensate for low performance on another. Scores are not combined or aggregated; instead, placement levels are reviewed independently and then considered together. This approach supports a holistic interpretation of performance across key literacy indicators.

Because the screener evaluates component placements rather than scores, combining or standardizing scores would not yield interpretable or developmentally meaningful results. Instead, the model uses a coarser, placement-level approach that produces a profile of student placements across the component assessments.

#### 3.3.1. Dyslexia Risk Screener Components

The Dyslexia Risk Screener placement levels are based on placement levels from the Early Literacy Screener and two additional Literacy Tasks (RAN and PWD-F). Placement levels for each task were established during standard setting for the Literacy Tasks, documented in detail in the *i-Ready Literacy Task Technical Manual* (2026) and summarized here to describe how Dyslexia Risk Indicators were determined. Based on the combination of placement levels across these components, each placement profile maps to one of three Dyslexia Risk Screener placement levels:

- At Risk
- Some Risk
- No Observed Risk

Placement profiles for the Dyslexia Risk Screener were developed through expert judgment supported by developmental research and operational data. Subject matter experts reviewed all possible combinations of placement levels and considered grade-level expectations and developmentally appropriate interpretations of one-minute tasks. This process supports the validity argument by demonstrating that the model reflects current understanding of early literacy development and dyslexia risk and by documenting how the design decisions align with intended use.

### 3.3.2. Dyslexia Risk Screener Profiles

This section outlines how expert judgment, developmental research, and student performance data were used to determine the profiles that define each Dyslexia Risk Screener placement level.

Placement levels were determined by evaluating combinations of placement levels from the Early Literacy Screener and the Literacy Tasks for Rapid Automatized Naming (RAN) and Pseudoword Decoding Fluency (PWD-F). In a partial conjunctive model, no single strong score fully compensates for a low score on another component, as would be the case in a compensatory model. However, this model is not strictly conjunctive; a single low placement does not automatically result in an “at risk” placement level. Instead, subject matter experts (SMEs) evaluated patterns of placement levels across components and allowed certain developmentally appropriate patterns of higher placements to moderate, though not erase, the influence of lower placements. This ensures that placement levels reflect the combined pattern of performance across components and align with how early literacy skills develop.

A team of Curriculum Associates SMEs—including specialists in early childhood development, special education, elementary language arts instruction and assessment, school psychology, and psychometrics—used professional judgment and student data to map each placement level combination to one of three Dyslexia Risk Screener placement levels. All possible placement combinations were reviewed to determine whether the pattern of performance was consistent with each risk level. This approach supports a holistic understanding of literacy development.

For each grade and testing window, SMEs identified all possible placement level combinations across the components and examined their frequency using data from the 2024-2025 school year. While some combinations occurred infrequently, each was reflected in the data.

SMEs also considered early childhood development factors—including cognitive growth, executive functioning skills, and pre-kindergarten literacy exposure—when determining the relative influence of each component on the overall Dyslexia Risk Screener placement levels. In general, the Early Literacy Screener carried the most influence because it assesses a broader range of literacy skills, providing a more complete picture of early literacy development than single, one-minute tasks. As students advance in grade and gain literacy experience, performance on RAN Letters and PWD-F becomes increasingly informative.

Because pseudoword decoding may be unfamiliar to young children, the kindergarten fall administration does not include a decoding task. When pseudoword decoding is introduced in winter and spring, SMEs interpreted results cautiously. By Grade 1—and especially in Grades 2 and 3—pseudoword decoding is a more reliable indicator of decoding difficulties.

Similarly, early literacy experiences and concepts of print vary widely among kindergarten students. As a result, below-grade-level performance on pseudoword decoding task was not considered pivotal in determining risk for kindergarten winter. For example, for the kindergarten winter administration, students performing on grade level on both the Literacy Screener and RAN but below grade level on the decoding task would still receive a “no observed risk” placement level.

Low performance on RAN—especially RAN Colors— was also interpreted cautiously, particularly when other components indicated appropriate literacy development. In Grades 2 and 3, RAN score outliers signal speech or language considerations rather than dyslexia risk, and in such cases, additional follow-up may be recommended.

Throughout the process, SMEs reviewed impact data to ensure that the distribution of students across risk levels was developmentally appropriate and aligned with empirical patterns of early literacy performance. This expert-driven, developmentally informed approach ensures that Dyslexia Risk Screener placement levels reflect a comprehensive understanding of student literacy skills.

Table 3.1 presents the placement profiles associated with each Dyslexia Risk Screener placement level for the Grade 2 winter testing window. Appendix A provides profiles for all grades and testing windows.

Table 3.1. Example Dyslexia Risk Screener Risk Designations (Grade 2 Winter)

<b>Dyslexia Risk Screener Placement Level</b>	<b>Literacy Screener Composite Score Placement Level</b>	<b>RAN Letters Task Placement Level</b>	<b>PWD-F Placement Level</b>
<b>No Observed Risk</b>	On Benchmark	On	Above
<b>No Observed Risk</b>	On Benchmark	On	Below
<b>No Observed Risk</b>	On Benchmark	Below	Above
<b>No Observed Risk</b>	On Benchmark	On	On
<b>No Observed Risk</b>	On Benchmark	Below	On
<b>Some Risk</b>	On Benchmark	Below	Below
<b>Some Risk</b>	Approaching Benchmark	On	Above
<b>Some Risk</b>	Approaching Benchmark	On	Below
<b>Some Risk</b>	Approaching Benchmark	Below	Above
<b>Some Risk</b>	Below Benchmark	On	Above
<b>Some Risk</b>	Below Benchmark	Below	Above
<b>Some Risk</b>	Approaching Benchmark	On	On
<b>Some Risk</b>	Approaching Benchmark	Below	On
<b>Some Risk</b>	Below Benchmark	On	On
<b>Some Risk</b>	Below Benchmark	Below	On
<b>Some Risk</b>	Approaching Benchmark	Below	Below
<b>At Risk</b>	Below Benchmark	On	Below
<b>At Risk</b>	Below Benchmark	Below	Below

# Chapter 4. Reliability

## 4.1. Chapter Summary

Chapter 4 focuses on the reliability of scores from individual components of the screeners (i.e., Inform for reading, Literacy Tasks) and the Early Literacy Screener composite score. Reliability, in this context, refers to the consistency and precision of test scores in measuring students' true proficiencies. The chapter discusses three methods of calculating reliability, including marginal reliability, alternate form reliability, and stratified coefficient alpha reliability. The reliability coefficients are used to assess the strength of relationships between different test forms, whether administered concurrently or across two testing windows, and test score consistency.

## 4.2. *i-Ready Inform for Reading*

Marginal reliability coefficients estimate the theoretical correlation between parallel forms of a test. In this case, the CTT definition of reliability is extended for use in an IRT-based CAT, in which students are administered different combinations of items and only test once within an administration window. The reliability estimates for the *i-Ready Inform for Reading* scores are the marginal reliability estimates from the spring 2023 administration and are shown in Table 4.1. The results show high reliability coefficients (all above .95). Additional details are available in *i-Ready Assessments and Growth Monitoring Technical Manual (2025)*, available upon request.

Table 4.1. *i-Ready Inform* Reading Marginal Reliabilities

Grade	N	Marginal Reliability
K	1,878,648	0.951
1	2,175,773	0.967
2	2,328,438	0.969
3	2,486,736	0.973

## 4.3. *i-Ready Literacy Tasks*

For *i-Ready Literacy Tasks*, reliability is evaluated through two sources of evidence: concurrent alternate form reliability, which examines the consistency of scores when students complete different forms of the same task on the same day and delayed alternate form reliability, which evaluates consistency of scores when different forms are administered during different testing windows (e.g., fall and winter). This section summarizes the reliability analyses and results for the Literacy Tasks and grade levels included in the screeners. Additional details are available in [i-Ready Literacy Tasks Technical Report \(2026\)](#).

For concurrent alternate form reliability, students were administered two versions of the same Literacy Task within the same day. Table 4.2 provides descriptive statistics (mean and standard deviations for each Literacy task form), the Pearson correlation coefficient ( $r$ ), the lower and upper bound based on a 95% confidence

interval, and the number of students ( $N$ ) who were administered the two forms of each Literacy Task. All reliability coefficients exceeded .83, indicating that different forms of each Literacy Task administered at the same time produce consistent scores and are consistent in measuring the same construct.

Table 4.2. Alternate Form Reliability: Concurrent Administration

<b>i-Ready Literacy Task</b>	<b>Grade</b>	<b>Mean Task 1</b>	<b>SD Task 1</b>	<b>Mean Task 2</b>	<b>SD Task 2</b>	<b><math>N</math></b>	<b><math>r</math></b>	<b>Lower Bound</b>	<b>Upper Bound</b>
<b>RAN Objects</b>	K	34	11.0	35	11.3	129	0.89	0.85	0.92
<b>RAN Objects</b>	1	47	11.2	47	11.8	119	0.83	0.77	0.88
<b>RAN Letters</b>	1	59	17.6	58	19.5	156	0.90	0.86	0.92
<b>RAN Letters</b>	2	74	21.4	74	22.4	145	0.94	0.91	0.95
<b>RAN Letters</b>	3	87	17.2	88	15.9	143	0.89	0.86	0.92
<b>Letter Naming Fluency: Mixed Case</b>	K	34	14.9	35	13.9	147	0.94	0.92	0.96
<b>Word Recognition Fluency</b>	1	36	19.4	35	20.0	162	0.97	0.97	0.98
<b>Pseudoword Decoding—Fluency</b>	K	12	8.1	12	9.1	61	0.94	0.90	0.96
<b>Pseudoword Decoding—Fluency</b>	1	18	12.3	18	11.6	222	0.94	0.92	0.95
<b>Pseudoword Decoding—Fluency</b>	2	19	15.1	21	15.6	132	0.83	0.77	0.88
<b>Pseudoword Decoding—Fluency</b>	3	31	12.5	33	12.9	153	0.94	0.92	0.96
<b>Passage Reading Fluency</b>	1	50	35.1	49	33.8	148	0.96	0.95	0.97
<b>Passage Reading Fluency</b>	2	78	37.4	80	37.5	109	0.97	0.96	0.98
<b>Passage Reading Fluency</b>	3	110	42.4	100	40.9	110	0.95	0.93	0.97

Note:  $SD$  = standard deviation,  $N$  = sample size,  $r$  = Pearson correlation.

Delayed alternate form reliability was assessed using data from different testing windows (e.g., fall vs. spring), reflecting real-world usage. Table 4.3 presents the Pearson correlation coefficients ( $r$ ) for delayed alternate forms administered at two points in time (i.e., fall and spring or winter and spring), along with descriptive statistics (n-count, mean and standard deviation) and the lower and upper bound based on the 95% confidence interval.

Overall, moderate to strong correlations were observed, indicating that alternate forms within a task type are consistent, even with several weeks between administrations. Mean scores for the second task, typically administered about 12 weeks later, were generally higher, indicating improved student performance over time. As expected, delayed alternate form correlations were lower than concurrent alternate form correlations. This difference likely reflects variability in students' skill development and the impact of instruction between administrations, particularly for tasks involving the alphabetic principle.

Table 4.3. Alternate Form Reliability: Delayed Administration

<i>i-Ready Literacy Task</i>	<b>Grade</b>	<b>Mean Task 1</b>	<b>SD Task 1</b>	<b>Mean Task 2</b>	<b>SD Task 2</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>r</b>	<b>Lower Bound</b>	<b>Upper Bound</b>
<b>RAN Objects</b>	K	38	10.8	43	11.2	21,391	.57	.57	.58
<b>RAN Objects</b>	1	48	11.8	51	12.0	1,054	.61	.57	.64
<b>RAN Letters</b>	1	55	18.4	62	18.9	17,193	.71	.70	.72
<b>RAN Letters</b>	2	69	18.3	75	19.1	4,710	.68	.66	.69
<b>RAN Letters</b>	3	80	17.2	85	16.0	3,929	.73	.72	.75
<b>Letter Naming Fluency: Mixed Case</b>	K	34	16.5	44	17.6	64,688	.77	.77	.78
<b>Word Recognition Fluency</b>	1	25	18.2	36	17.9	5,952	.83	.82	.83
<b>Pseudoword Decoding—Fluency</b>	K	5	6.1	9	7.7	12,865	.73	.72	.74
<b>Pseudoword Decoding—Fluency</b>	1	14	9.8	18	11.7	25,650	.85	.85	.86
<b>Pseudoword Decoding—Fluency</b>	2	18	11.8	21	12.6	10,071	.88	.88	.89
<b>Pseudoword Decoding—Fluency</b>	3	24	13.1	27	13.2	5,796	.87	.86	.88
<b>Passage Reading Fluency</b>	1	38	36.5	59	39.9	117,824	.89	.89	.89
<b>Passage Reading Fluency</b>	2	71	41.9	84	44.6	134,584	.94	.94	.94
<b>Passage Reading Fluency</b>	3	88	42.6	95	44.1	125,531	.93	.93	.93

Note: SD = standard deviation, N = sample size, r = Pearson correlation.

## 4.4. Early Literacy Screener

For the Early Literacy composite score, reliability reflects how well a combined score made from multiple components consistently represents students' underlying literacy skills. Under classical test theory, each observed score is viewed as a combination of a student's true score and measurement error. Composite score reliability quantifies the proportion of the observed score variance that is attributable to true differences among students.

As described in section 3.2.1, the composite score for the Early Literacy Screener is a weighted composite of the z-transformed component scores from the i-Ready Inform reading test and the literacy task applicable for the grade level and season as indicated in Table 1.1. Stratified Coefficient Alpha (Feldt & Brennan, 1989; He, 2009) is recognized and accepted as an appropriate estimate of the reliability of a composite score and is applicable to a composite of any number of components. The general equation is

$$r_c = 1 - \frac{s_1^2(1 - r_1) + s_2^2(1 - r_2)}{s_c^2}$$

where  $s_1^2$  and  $s_2^2$  are the variances of the Inform and fluency z-scores,  $r_1$  and  $r_2$  are the reliability estimates for each component, and  $s_c^2$  is the variance of the composite z-score. This formula is an indirect approach since statistics from more than one sample source are used. This is necessary given the measurement characteristics of the i-Ready Inform Reading score and the Literacy Task score. The reliability estimate of the Inform Reading score is based on marginal reliability. The reliability estimates for the Fluency components were obtained from prior studies of concurrent alternate forms reliability for Spring and are provided in Table 4.2. Spring was selected for all seasons because it offers the most stable score distributions and the largest sample sizes, reducing sampling noise and ensuring consistent reliability inputs across fall, winter, and spring. Concurrent reliability estimates are also not available for all tasks in all testing windows, making spring the most reliable source of component-level information. Bootstrap resampling was used to estimate confidence intervals for the composite reliability estimates. For each combination of grade level, task type, and testing season, student-level data were resampled with replacement 500 times. Composite reliability was recalculated within each bootstrap sample using the stratified alpha formula, producing a distribution of bootstrap estimates. The variability of this distribution was summarized using the bootstrap mean and standard deviation, and 95% confidence intervals were constructed using a normal-approximation approach based on these values.

The composite score reliability was estimated using operational data from the 2024–25 school year. Some student records were excluded from the analysis to ensure data quality and appropriate alignment of component scores. First, any record with a missing composite score value was removed. A missing composite score typically occurs when a student does not complete either *i-Ready Inform* for Reading or the fluency task. Second, records with a fluency task score that exceeded the maximum allowable value were omitted to prevent the inclusion of clearly invalid scores. Finally, records were excluded if more than 14 days had elapsed between the administration of *i-Ready Inform* for Reading and the fluency task. The composite score reliability estimates were provided for each grade and testing window combination.

Section 3.2.1 reports that the Word Recognition Fluency (WRF) scores for Grade 1 fall were not converted to z-scores and combined with the *i-Ready Inform* z-scores to form the composite score. Due to differences in the shape of the distributions, the Word Recognition Fluency scores were transformed through an equipercentile linking to the *i-Ready Inform* scale and then combined with the *i-Ready Inform* for Reading score on the original scale to form the composite score. The reliability coefficient for the WRF measure was originally computed on the raw score scale; however, to support estimation of composite score reliability under the transformed scaling, data from the original concurrent reliability study were revisited. The equipercentile transformation was applied to both WRF scores for each student, and the correlation between the transformed scores was computed as the estimate of alternate-forms reliability. This correlation (0.956) was highly consistent with the original raw-score correlation (0.972), indicating that the relationship between *i-Ready Inform* and fluency components was largely preserved. Based on this evidence, the stratified coefficient alpha formula was applied using the transformed WRF scores to estimate composite score reliability for Grade 1 Fall.

Table 4.3 presents the stratified coefficient alpha, along with descriptive statistics (n-count, mean and standard deviation) and the lower and upper bound based of the 95% confidence interval. For all grades and seasons, mean and standard deviation values for *i-Ready Inform*, fluency task, and composite scores are reported on the standardized (z-score) scale, with the exception of Grade 1 fall. In Grade 1 fall, the *i-Ready Inform* mean and standard deviation are reported on the raw scale, and the fluency task and composite score means, and standard deviations are reported on the linked *i-Ready Inform* scale (see Table 4.5).

Table 4.4. Composite Score Reliability for Literacy Screener

Grade	Testing Window	Inform Mean	Inform SD	LT Mean	LT SD	ELC Mean	ELC SD	ELC N	ELC $r_c$	ELC Lower Bound	ELC Upper Bound
<b>K</b>	Fall	-.01	1	-.12	1.04	-.13	1.81	62,856	.97	0.97	0.97
<b>K</b>	Winter	.07	.97	.06	1.01	.13	1.75	63,791	.97	0.97	0.97
<b>K</b>	Spring	.08	.94	.06	1.04	.15	1.77	73,299	.97	0.97	0.97
<b>1</b>	Winter	.07	.94	.08	1.02	.14	1.86	65,231	.98	0.98	0.98
<b>1</b>	Spring	.1	.94	.05	.99	.15	1.83	86,376	.98	0.98	0.98
<b>2</b>	Fall	.05	.94	-.01	.98	.04	1.84	81,608	.98	0.98	0.98
<b>2</b>	Winter	.06	.93	.04	.96	.1	1.81	74,590	.98	0.98	0.98
<b>2</b>	Spring	.08	.94	.02	.95	.1	1.8	90,347	.98	0.98	0.98
<b>3</b>	Fall	.09	.94	.04	.96	.13	1.81	83,824	.98	0.98	0.98
<b>3</b>	Winter	.07	.93	.04	.94	.11	1.77	72,491	.98	0.98	0.98
<b>3</b>	Spring	.09	.95	.09	.94	.18	1.78	86,189	.98	0.98	0.98

Note: Inform = i-Ready Inform for Reading, LT = Literacy Task for Fluency, ELC = Early Literacy Screener Composite Score

Table 4.5. Composite Score Reliability for Literacy Screener

<b>Grade</b>	<b>Testing Window</b>	<b>Inform Mean</b>	<b>Inform SD</b>	<b>LT Mean</b>	<b>LT SD</b>	<b>ELC Mean</b>	<b>ELC SD</b>	<b>ELC N</b>	<b>ELC <math>r_c</math></b>	<b>ELC Lower Bound</b>	<b>ELC Upper Bound</b>
<b>1</b>	Fall	395.63	43.18	394.9	46.05	790.53	83.61	50,931	.98	0.98	0.98

Note: Inform = i-Ready Inform for Reading, LT = Literacy Task for Fluency, ELC = Early Literacy Screener Composite Score

Overall, results indicate strong performance of the composite score, with reliability coefficients consistently above 0.95 across grades and testing windows. These findings support the internal consistency of the combined Diagnostic and fluency measures and reinforce the stability of the Early Literacy Screener composite. The bootstrap confidence intervals indicate very high precision in the composite reliability estimates. Across all grades and testing windows, the lower and upper bounds are nearly identical to the point estimates, reflecting minimal sampling variability given the large sample sizes. These results further support the stability and robustness of the Early Literacy Screener composite score.

# Chapter 5. Screener Reports

## 5.1. Chapter Summary

Chapter 5 describes the export and report available for the Early Literacy Screener and Dyslexia Risk Screener. The export and the report both communicate screener results to educators:

- **Early Literacy and Dyslexia Risk Screener Export**—accessible to school and district administrators
- **Student Literacy Profile Report**—available to teachers and administrators

Districts with the screener feature enabled in their *i-Ready* account can access both reports.

## 5.2. Early Literacy and Dyslexia Risk Screener Export

The Early Literacy Screener and Dyslexia Risk Screener data export (Figure 5.1) provides placement levels for individual students. This export is available as a .csv file to school- and district-level administrators. Unlike *Inform* reports, class- and school-level aggregate reports and grouping reports are not available for the screener. Detailed information about the export file is available at [https://cdn.bfldr.com/LS6J0F7/at/k63hpbcnkw2cwbj9s97gn7f/i-ready-faq-literacy-screening\\_export-dictionary.pdf](https://cdn.bfldr.com/LS6J0F7/at/k63hpbcnkw2cwbj9s97gn7f/i-ready-faq-literacy-screening_export-dictionary.pdf).

**Early Literacy and Dyslexia Risk Screening**

Last Name	First Name	Student Grade	Foundational Literacy Benchmark Result	Dyslexia Risk Factor Screening Result	Diagnostic: Overall Placement	Literacy Task (Fluency Measure): Placement	Literacy Task (Automaticity Measure): Placement	Literacy Task (Decoding Measure): Placement
Student 1	Sample 1	3	On Benchmark	No Observed Risk	Early 3	Above (i.e., 76th–99th Percentile)	N/A	N/A
Student 2	Sample 2	1	Approaching Benchmark	At Risk	Grade K	On	Below	Below
Student 3	Sample 3	K	Below Benchmark	Some Risk	Emerging K	Below	On	N/A
Student 4	Sample 4	2	Approaching Benchmark	Some Risk	Grade 1	Above (i.e., 50th–75th Percentile)	Below	On

**Figure 5.1. Early Literacy and Dyslexia Risk Screener Administrator Data Export Report.** The administrator data export presents the results of the Early Literacy and Dyslexia Risk Screener in an easy-to-see location next to the student's name and grade level.

## 5.3. Student Literacy Profile Report

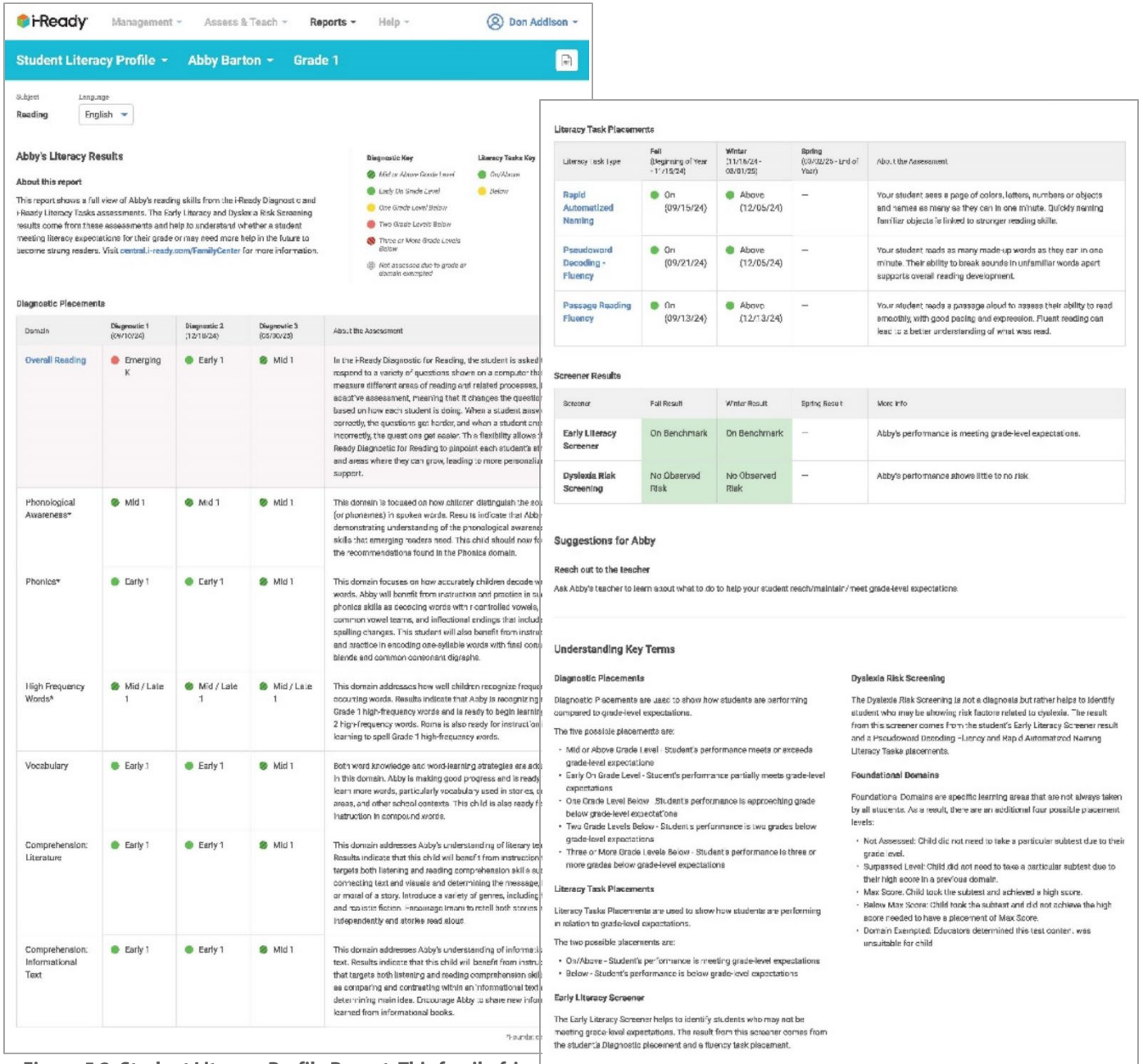
The Student Literacy Profile Report (Figure 5.2) includes results from the Early Literacy Screener and Dyslexia Risk Screener, *i-Ready Inform* for Reading placement level (overall and by domain), and Literacy Task placements for each testing window. Accessible to classroom teachers and administrators, this report provides a comprehensive view of a student's literacy performance across fall, winter, and spring administrations. Users without the screener feature enabled for their account can still access the Student Literacy Profile Report, but it will not include the screener results section. Users with the screener feature

enabled can choose whether to display screener results. This option provides flexibility for districts that prefer not to share results based on local policies and context. This approach supports local decision-making and helps maintain privacy where required.

This report helps educators:

- view a high-level summary of foundational literacy and screening scores alongside *Inform* results by testing window
- compare performance across all administered literacy assessments in one report
- access detailed *Inform* results and Literacy Tasks reports to support instructional planning through growth insights, Can Dos, and Next Steps

Designed to be family-friendly, this report can be printed and shared with families, though it is not available through the digital family interface.



**Figure 5.2. Student Literacy Profile Report. This family-friendly report includes *total* overall and domain placement results, Literacy Tasks placements, and the Early Literacy Screener and Dyslexia Risk Screener results in one view.**

# Chapter 6. Validity

## 6.1. Chapter Summary

This chapter presents a validity argument for Early Literacy Screener and Dyslexia Risk Screener, grounded in the framework from the *Standards for Educational and Psychological Testing* (AERA et al., 2014). Validity is defined as the degree to which evidence and theory support the intended interpretations and uses of test scores. As outlined in Chapter 1, validation is the process of developing and substantiating a validity argument (Kane, 2006, 2013). Validation focuses on gathering evidence to support the intended uses and interpretations of scores. The chapter synthesizes evidence across chapters, along with new findings introduced here to support the validity of the intended interpretations and uses of the screeners. Five sources of validity evidence are summarized: test content, response process, internal structure, relationships with other variables, and consequences of testing.

## 6.2. Five Sources of Evidence

The *Standards for Educational and Psychological Testing* (AERA et al., 2014) identify five categories for organizing validity evidence to develop a strong validity argument. This chapter is organized around these categories, which are briefly described below.

**Evidence Based on Test Content.** This category includes evidence that the assessment measures the breadth of the intended construct through its content. Examples of supporting evidence include test specifications, item writing protocols, content organization schemata, alignment studies, and standardized administration procedures.

**Evidence Based on Response Process.** This evidence supports the inferential link between the assessment activity (i.e., letter, object, word) and the construct being measured. The strength of this inference varies depending on the nature of the assessment activity and the construct. During the assessment activity, the observable student behaviors elicited by the task should directly reflect the targeted cognitive skills. Common sources of evidence include cognitive laboratory studies and response time analyses.

**Evidence Based on Internal Structure.** This category demonstrates that the assessment's statistical properties align with the construct being measured and are of sufficient quality to support the interpretations and uses of the scores. Key indicators of evidence include reliability analyses.

**Evidence Based on Relationships with Other Variables.** The evidence in this category can be divided into two categories: convergent/divergent relationships with other measures and test–criterion relationships (AERA et al., 2014). Convergent and divergent relationships show that the instrument correlates strongly with other instruments measuring similar constructs, and that the instrument does not correlate strongly with instruments measuring dissimilar constructs, respectively. Test–criterion relationships show a predictive relationship between the instrument and an external criterion. Concurrent and predictive analyses to external criterion are examples of evidence in this category.

**Evidence Based on Consequences of Testing.** This category addresses both the intended and unintended consequences of the Early Literacy Screener and Dyslexia Risk Screener, evaluating whether those consequences are justifiable and align with validity claims. The *i-Ready Inform* for Reading and *i-Ready Literacy Tasks* are key components of the Theory of Action (see Chapter 1) for Early Literacy Screener and Dyslexia Risk Screener, and their outcomes drive reporting and guidance on the use of instructional resources to address skill development. Evidence in this category may depend on how faithfully other components of the Theory of Action are implemented. Classification accuracy analyses are examples of evidence in this category.

### 6.2.1. Locating the Evidence

To evaluate the validity evidence within this manual, we examine how each chapter provides evidence supporting the validity claims. Table 6.1 and Table identify the sources of evidence presented by chapter and claim. Table 6.1 focuses on score interpretation, while Table addresses intended uses of scores. The remaining sections of this chapter provide a brief narrative of the evidence, organized by type.

Table 6.1. Sources of Validity Evidence by Chapter and Claim for Interpretation of Scores

Chapter	Title	Measure foundational literacy skills to determine if students are meeting grade-level expectations in reading.	Measure literacy skills that are key, research-based indicators of reading difficulties (Early Literacy Screener) and reading disabilities, including dyslexia (Dyslexia Risk Screener).	Identify specific reading skills that would likely benefit from targeted instruction	Report reliable, criterion-referenced informed placement levels to identify students who may be struggling to meet grade-level expectations for early literacy skills (Early Literacy Screener) or who may be at risk for developing reading difficulties, including dyslexia (Dyslexia Risk Screener).	Support program evaluation to determine if general reading instruction is meeting students’ learning needs.	Support meeting state or district requirements for universal literacy screening and dyslexia.
1	Introduction	T	T				
2	Screener Development	T	T				
3	Screener Models	T, R	T, C		T, C		I
4	Reliability				I		
5	Screener Reports	C	C	C	C	C	C
6	Validity	R	E	E	E, R	E, C	E, C

Table 6.2. Sources of Validity Evidence by Chapter and Claim for Intended Uses of the Scores

Chapter	Title	Identify students who may benefit from differentiated instruction in reading, especially those who are not meeting grade-level expectations and need additional instructional support or focused interventions.	Identify students who may be at risk for developing reading difficulties, including dyslexia.	Support the identification of students who may be at risk for reading disabilities, including dyslexia.	Support program evaluation of the efficacy of Tier 1 literacy instruction in meeting students' needs.	Provide brief, focused assessments to address state and district requirements for universal literacy screening.
1	Introduction and Foundations					T
2	Screener Development					T, C
3	Screener Models	E, C	E, C	C		T
4	Reliability					I
5	Screener Reports	C	C	C	C	C
6	Validity	E, C	E, C	E, C	C	C

Note: T = Test Content; I = Internal Structure; R = Response Process; E = Relationships with External Variables; C = Consequences

In addition to this manual, the *i-Ready Inform* for Reading and the *i-Ready Literacy Tasks* have separate technical manuals. Chapters 10 and 12 of the *i-Ready Assessments and Growth Monitoring Technical Manual* (2025), available upon request, provide detailed discussion of the validity evidence for *i-Ready Inform* for Reading. Chapter 9 of the *i-Ready Literacy Tasks Technical Manual* (2026), available upon request, provides detailed discussion of validity evidence for the Literacy Tasks included in the Early Literacy Screener and Dyslexia Risk Screener. These technical manuals are referenced, as appropriate, as the five types of evidence are discussed.

### 6.3. Evidence Based on Test Content

Evidence related to test content concerns the relationship between the assessment's content and the construct it is intended to measure. Test content refers to the subject matter, wording, and the format of items, as well as their administration and scoring. Test specifications describe the assessment content in detail and provide evidence to support the intended interpretation of the scores. The Early Literacy Screener and Dyslexia Risk Screener are comprised of the *i-Ready Inform* for Reading and selected *i-Ready* Literacy Tasks.

### 6.3.1. *i-Ready Inform* for Reading

Curriculum Associates adopted a research-based approach to define test constructs, beginning with the development of construct maps and later incorporating Placement Levels. Evidence related to test content focuses on the relationship between assessment content and the construct(s) it is designed to measure. A detailed explanation of the *i-Ready Inform* development process is available in Chapter 2 of the *i-Ready Assessments and Growth Monitoring Technical Manual* (2025). A summary is provided here.

For *i-Ready Inform*, construct maps outline the specific skills—referred to internally as indicators—within each reading domain. Indicators identify those skills that students should master at each grade level. The construct maps illustrate how a construct develops along a continuum of difficulty and were informed by input from an advisory board, subject matter experts (SMEs), college and career readiness (CCR) standards, well-established practices of professional groups, and experienced researchers.

Each construct map underwent multiple rounds of review by subject matter experts, assessment designers, and pedagogical and instructional experts to ensure instructional relevance. Construct maps were developed for each domain: phonics, phonological awareness, high-frequency words, vocabulary, reading comprehension for literature, and reading comprehension for informational text. These construct maps guided item development.

The *i-Ready Assessments and Growth Monitoring Technical Manual* (2025) also describes the content classification taxonomies used to categorize items by the skills they measure. Each domain includes indicators and summary claims. Indicators are broad skill statements, and summary claims describe the knowledge and skills students are expected to acquire for grade-level proficiency. Summary claims are divided into three on-grade placement levels (Early, Mid, and Late), which map to the score scale through the standard setting process. Placement level descriptors (PLD) qualitatively describe what students know and can do at each placement level. Range PLDs further define skill progression within and across grade levels and across competency levels. Range PLDs are comprised of anchor claims, which are the most granular statements that specify expectations of the summary claim knowledge and skills students demonstrate at each of the three on-grade placement levels. Each *i-Ready Inform* item is mapped to a single anchor claim, which aligns to a single summary claim and placement level combination. This horizontal and vertical differentiation supports the vertical scale and enables instructional recommendations based on test results.

### 6.3.2. *i-Ready Literacy Tasks*

The Early Literacy Screener and Dyslexia Risk Screener are comprised of selected *i-Ready Literacy Tasks* to supplement the performance information obtained from *i-Ready Inform* for Reading. These tasks were chosen based on research demonstrating strong correlations with reading difficulties and dyslexia risk characteristics. Chapter 2 defines each task and its associated construct. For every construct identified by the International Dyslexia Association (IDA) as important for universal screening in grades K-2, this chapter summarizes relevant research linking how each construct contributes to the identification of reading difficulties. It also outlines Curriculum Associates' rationale for including these or other foundational reading skills in the Early Literacy Screener and Dyslexia Risk Screener.

For each *i-Ready Literacy Task* in the screener, the chapter provides detailed information about the task’s content, administration procedures, and scoring methods. This ensures transparency in how each task contributes to identifying students at risk and supports educators in interpreting results for instructional planning. Additional details are available in *i-Ready Literacy Task Technical Manual* (2026).

## 6.4. Evidence Based on Response Process

Evidence related to response processes focuses on the cognitive processes students use while completing the tasks. This evidence may include theoretical and empirical analyses that help evaluate the alignment between the construct and the cognitive processes elicited by the task—particularly in cases where a substantial inferential link is required.

### 6.4.1. *i-Ready Inform* for Reading

Chapter 12 of the *i-Ready Assessments and Growth Monitoring Technical Manual* (2025) provides a detailed overview of research supporting response process validity for the *i-Ready Inform*. Cognitive complexity and difficulty are addressed through an item development process aligned to Webb’s Depth of Knowledge (DOK) framework (1997, 1999). Cognitive complexity also informs the *i-Ready Inform* item selection algorithm, which ensures that each student encounters a range of items covering the spectrum of cognitive demand appropriate to their skill level.

To further investigate response processes, Curriculum Associates conducted cognitive interviews to better understand how students interpret and respond to specific *i-Ready Inform* items. These interviews provided insight into the alignment between item design and the cognitive demands intended by the construct. Additionally, individual item response times and patterns are monitored to detect deviations from average response times. Students whose response times are consistently shorter than average may be flagged for “rushing,” which can compromise score validity by indicating that the intended cognitive processes were not engaged.

### 6.4.2. *i-Ready Literacy Tasks*

Chapter 9 of the [i-Ready Literacy Task Technical Report](#) (2026) provides a detailed overview of research supporting response process validity for the *i-Ready Literacy Tasks* included in the screeners. A central feature of the *i-Ready Literacy Tasks* is the measurement of fluency—the ability to perform reading-related processes accurately and efficiently. Timed fluency tasks capture not only correctness but also automaticity and speed. This design ensures that tasks elicit the rapid, automatic retrieval and integration of information characteristic of skilled reading. By requiring responses within a limited time frame, the tasks provide direct evidence that observed response processes align with the intended constructs. Test administration observation studies conducted in 2020 and user experience research conducted from 2023 through 2024 support the response process for paper and digital administrations.

## 6.5. Evidence Based on Internal Structure

The internal structure of an assessment refers to the interrelationships among the items, stimuli, and components of the test or screener. A consistent internal structure supports the notion that test items or task stimuli measure the same construct or related constructs. Reliability coefficients provide evidence to support internal structure.

### 6.5.1. *i-Ready Inform* for Reading

Chapter 6 of the *i-Ready Assessments and Growth Monitoring Technical Manual* (2025) presents a detailed discussion of research on the internal structure of *i-Ready Inform*. Marginal reliability estimates, calculated for the overall assessment, provide insight into score precision. These scores are computed for the assessment overall. Marginal reliability estimates are also reported for select student groups. Together with evidence of content alignment, reliability analyses support the internal consistency of the assessment and its effectiveness in measuring the intended constructs.

Chapter 6 of the *i-Ready Assessments and Growth Monitoring Technical Manual* (2025) reports that overall marginal reliability estimates exceed .90 for the full population and most student groups. Additionally, test-retest reliability estimates based on delayed administrations exceed .80 across all grades, except Grade K, where reliability exceeds .70. These findings demonstrate the stability of scores across administrations and reinforce the structural integrity of the assessment.

### 6.5.2. *i-Ready Literacy Tasks*

Reliability results for the Literacy Tasks are included in Chapter 4, with additional detail in [i-Ready Literacy Tasks Technical Report](#) (2026). Concurrent alternate form correlations exceed .70 for all Literacy Tasks, with most exceeding .80 or .90. Delayed alternate form correlations ranged from .57 to .94, with RAN tasks reporting lower correlations from .57 to .73 and LNF, WRF, PWD-F, and PRF reporting correlations exceeding .73. These estimates are based on convenience samples that reflect operational use of Literacy Tasks. Both concurrent and delayed alternate form reliability coefficients indicate stability of scores within and across administrations.

### 6.5.3. Early Literacy Screener

Reliability results for the Early Literacy Screener composite score are presented in Chapter 4. Stratified Coefficient Alpha analyses indicate stability of scores within and across administrations, with coefficients ranging from .97 to .98. Both the component and the screener reliability coefficients indicate the stability of scores and support the use of the Early Literacy Screener scores across administrations.

## 6.6. Evidence Based on Relationships with Other Measures

This section summarizes the validity evidence for the Early Literacy Screener and Dyslexia Risk Screener based on relationships with other variables. Analyses focus on the component assessments and each screener

overall. *Concurrent* validity evidence (alignment with similar external measures administered at the same time supports the intended use of the screeners by demonstrating how well they align with established assessments.

### 6.6.1. *i-Ready Inform* for Reading

Chapters 10 and 12 of the *i-Ready Assessments and Growth Monitoring Technical Manual (2025)* provide a detailed discussion of validity evidence for the *i-Ready Inform* based on its relationship with other measures. This evidence is grounded in the empirical relationships between the *i-Ready Inform* scores and scores from other instruments that measure similar constructs, such as academic outcomes or state summative tests. Findings show that *i-Ready Inform* scores are highly correlated with state summative test scores across the country, with correlation coefficients typically exceeding .70. The data sources for these analyses consisted of volunteer schools currently administering *i-Ready Inform* that provided summative scores to Curriculum Associates.

Additional evidence based on relationships with other variables comes from the linking studies that Curriculum Associates has conducted in collaboration with MetaMetrics. In Grades K–8, students took a standalone Lexile form from MetaMetrics in addition to completing the Inform. Correlations between *i-Ready Inform* for Reading scores and Lexile measures ranged from .88 to .89.

Further evidence of relationships with other measures comes from concurrent validity analyses comparing the *i-Ready Inform* for Reading overall score with other widely used assessments of early literacy. Specifically, concurrent validity analyses were calculated for the *i-Ready Inform* for Reading overall score, a component of the Early Literacy Screener, and Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills, 8<sup>th</sup> Edition (DIBELS 8) composite score. *i-Ready Inform* measures a broad set of foundational literacy skills requiring different response process methods and a different measurement model compared to the more targeted approach used by DIBELS 8 assessments. Table 6.3 shows the mean and standard deviation (SD) for the *i-Ready Inform* for Reading overall score and the DIBELS 8 composite score, sample size (N), Pearson correlation (r), and lower and upper bounds reflecting the 95% confidence interval. The results indicate moderate to strong associations between the measures with correlations ranging from .58 to .84. The moderate relationship reflects the similarities in the underlying construct being measured coupled with the differences in the assessments.

Table 6.3. Concurrent Validity: *i-Ready Inform* for Reading and DIBELS 8 Composite

Grade	Testing Window	Mean <i>i-Ready</i>	SD <i>i-Ready</i>	Mean DIBELS 8	SD DIBELS 8	N	r	Lower Bound	Upper Bound
K	Fall	346	26.5	303	45.3	231	0.58	0.49	0.66
K	Winter	378	34.1	381	46.2	137	0.69	0.59	0.77
K	Spring	407	38.3	437	48.9	146	0.72	0.63	0.79
1	Fall	401	37.4	341	27.4	263	0.77	0.72	0.82
1	Winter	446	36.8	413	38.2	221	0.70	0.63	0.76
1	Spring	472	38.7	478	45.0	230	0.73	0.66	0.79

2	Fall	462	47.2	346	31.3	276	0.77	0.72	0.81
2	Winter	483	43.9	396	33.9	104	0.84	0.77	0.89
2	Spring	500	45.1	450	35.1	106	0.80	0.72	0.86
3	Fall	494	50.0	343	36.8	254	0.75	0.69	0.80
3	Winter	536	48.1	416	40.4	241	0.67	0.59	0.73
3	Spring	549	51.3	466	41.1	248	0.61	0.53	0.68

### 6.6.2. *i-Ready Literacy Tasks*

For concurrent validity evidence for Literacy Tasks, we compared selected Literacy Tasks to corresponding DIBELS 8 or RAN/RAS measures. This study focused on the Literacy Tasks included in the Early Literacy Screener and Dyslexia Risk Screener for each grade and testing window. During a special validity study in 2023, students in grades K-3 completed the Literacy Tasks and external assessments during the same testing session. Sufficient data were not available for all tasks across all grade levels and testing windows.

The primary source of external concurrent validity evidence, the other measure, is Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills, 8<sup>th</sup> Edition (DIBELS 8) compared to the Early Literacy Screener and Dyslexia Risk Screener. DIBELS 8 was selected as the external measure because it is widely used in U.S. elementary schools as a universal literacy screener. DIBELS 8 purports to assess component skills involved in reading; more specifically, “DIBELS 8 subtests were developed and researched as indicators of risk and progress in overall reading, as well as risk for dyslexia and other reading difficulties.” (University of Oregon, 2023). Several DIBELS 8 subtests—such as Letter Naming Fluency, Nonsense Word Fluency, Word Reading Fluency, and Oral Reading Fluency—are comparable to the *i-Ready Literacy Tasks* included in the Early Literacy Screener and Dyslexia Risk Screener. DIBELS 8 subtest scores are classified into one of four categories defining the degree of risk likely for a student. In order of decreasing performance, blue denotes negligible risk; green denotes minimal risk; yellow denotes some risk; and red denotes at risk.

A secondary source of evidence of external concurrent validity is Rapid Automatized Naming and Rapid Alternating Stimulus (RAN/RAS) tests (Wolf & Denckla, 2005). The raw scores for RAN/RAS are scored differently from the *i-Ready Literacy Tasks* for RAN. For RAN, from RAN/RAS the raw score measure is the total number of seconds required for a student to read the entire form. Scores are reported as normative data based on age levels defined in years and months. The raw score ranges from 0 seconds to 215 seconds based on the test. Seconds are then converted to standard scores and percentiles (Wolf & Denckla, 2005).

Table 6.4 presents Pearson correlation coefficients for the paired tasks. Sample sizes range from 105 to 283. Results show moderate to strong correlations, ranging from .60 to .96. RAN tasks generally yielded lower correlations than other tasks, likely due to differences in sample design: RAN/RAS scores are based on student age in years and months, while *i-Ready Literacy Tasks* for RAN group students by grade level, resulting in wider age ranges within each group. In contrast, correlations between Literacy Tasks and DIBELS tasks were higher, reflecting greater alignment in test design, sampling, and scoring.

Table 6.4. Correlations between *i-Ready Literacy Tasks* and DIBELS 8 or RAN/RAS

<i>i-Ready Literacy Task</i>	<b>External Literacy Task</b>	<b>Grade</b>	<b>Testing Window</b>	<b><i>N</i></b>	<b><i>r</i></b>	<b>Upper Bound</b>	<b>Lower Bound</b>
<b>Rapid Automated Naming – Objects</b>	RAN/RAS Objects	K	Winter	162	.68	.59	.76
<b>Rapid Automated Naming – Objects</b>	RAN/RAS Objects	K	Spring	158	.64	.53	.72
<b>Rapid Automated Naming – Objects</b>	RAN/RAS Objects	1	Fall	270	.63	.56	.70
<b>Rapid Automated Naming – Letters</b>	RAN/RAS Letters	1	Winter	232	.75	.69	.80
<b>Rapid Automated Naming – Letters</b>	RAN/RAS Letters	1	Spring	230	.6	.51	.68
<b>Rapid Automated Naming – Letters</b>	RAN/RAS Letters	2	Fall	274	.75	.69	.80
<b>Rapid Automated Naming – Letters</b>	RAN/RAS Letters	2	Winter	105	.64	.52	.74
<b>Rapid Automated Naming – Letters</b>	RAN/RAS Letters	2	Spring	107	.67	.55	.76
<b>Rapid Automated Naming – Letters</b>	RAN/RAS Letters	3	Fall	223	.75	.68	.80
<b>Rapid Automated Naming – Letters</b>	RAN/RAS Letters	3	Winter	252	.62	.54	.69
<b>Letter Naming Fluency: Mixed Case</b>	DIBELS 8 Letter Naming Fluency	K	Fall	232	.92	.90	.94

<b>Letter Naming Fluency: Mixed Case</b>	DIBELS 8 Letter Naming Fluency	K	Winter	165	.87	.83	.91
<b>Letter Naming Fluency: Mixed Case</b>	DIBELS 8 Letter Naming Fluency	K	Spring	161	.83	.77	.87
<b>Word Recognition Fluency</b>	DIBELS 8 Word Recognition Fluency	1	Fall	265	.88	.85	.91
<b>Pseudoword Decoding—Fluency</b>	DIBELS 8 Nonsense Word Fluency: Words Read Correct	1	Fall	265	.86	.83	.89
<b>Pseudoword Decoding—Fluency</b>	DIBELS 8 Nonsense Word Fluency: Words Read Correct	2	Fall	283	.86	.83	.89
<b>Pseudoword Decoding—Fluency</b>	DIBELS 8 Nonsense Word Fluency: Words Read Correct	3	Fall	263	.85	.81	.88
<b>Passage Reading Fluency</b>	DIBELS 8 Oral Reading Fluency	1	Winter	226	.95	.94	.96
<b>Passage Reading Fluency</b>	DIBELS 8 Oral Reading Fluency	1	Spring	230	.94	.92	.95
<b>Passage Reading Fluency</b>	DIBELS 8 Oral Reading Fluency	2	Fall	277	.96	.95	.97
<b>Passage Reading Fluency</b>	DIBELS 8 Oral Reading Fluency	2	Winter	105	.94	.91	.96
<b>Passage Reading Fluency</b>	DIBELS 8 Oral Reading Fluency	2	Spring	107	.94	.92	.96
<b>Passage Reading Fluency</b>	DIBELS 8 Oral Reading Fluency	3	Fall	258	.92	.90	.94
<b>Passage Reading Fluency</b>	DIBELS 8 Oral Reading Fluency	3	Winter	253	.9	.88	.92
<b>Passage Reading Fluency</b>	DIBELS 8 Oral Reading Fluency	3	Spring	254	.91	.89	.93

Overall, concurrent validity analyses demonstrate that *i-Ready Literacy Tasks* yield scores that are moderately to strongly aligned with established external measures of foundational literacy skills. Tasks that closely matched constructs of their external counterparts in test design, sampling, and scoring consistently yielded strong correlations, while those with slight differences yielded more moderately sized correlations.

### 6.6.3. Early Literacy Screener

For concurrent validity evidence, the Early Literacy Screener composite score is compared to the DIBELS 8 composite score. Pearson correlation coefficients, shown in Table 6.5, provide evidence for concurrent validity for the Early Literacy Screener composite score for each grade and testing window. The relatively high correlations indicate a strong relationship between the Early Literacy Screener Composite and the DIBELS 8 Composite at each grade, providing evidence for concurrent validity with a measure of the same or similar constructs.

Table 6.5. Early Literacy Screener Composite Correlation with DIBELS 8 Composite

Grade	Testing Window	N	Correlation	Upper Bound	Lower Bound
K	Fall	231	.85	0.82	0.89
K	Winter	137	.87	0.83	0.91
K	Spring	146	.84	0.79	0.88
1	Fall	263	.88	0.88	0.92
1	Winter	221	.89	0.86	0.92
1	Spring	230	.89	0.85	0.91
2	Fall	276	.89	0.86	0.91
2	Winter	104	.90	0.86	0.93
2	Spring	106	.90	0.86	0.93
3	Fall	254	.87	0.83	0.90
3	Winter	241	.82	0.78	0.86
3	Spring	248	.81	0.77	0.85

Divergent validity, also called discriminant validity, refers to the extent to which a measure is distinct from other measures that assess different constructs. In other words, the measure should not correlate too highly with measures from which it should differ. To evaluate this, we correlated the Early Literacy Screener composite score with the *i-Ready Inform* for Mathematics overall scale score. Establishing discriminant validity for literacy measures is commonly done by correlating them with mathematics measures, where correlations are expected to be mid-range to moderately high, rather than high.

Table 6.6 presents Pearson correlation coefficients between the Early Literacy Screener composite score and *i-Ready Inform* for Mathematics overall and domain scale scores.

Table 6.6. Early Literacy Screener Composite Correlations with *i-Ready Inform* for Mathematics Overall and by Domain

Grade	Season	N	Math Overall	Number & Operations	Algebra	Geometry	Measurement & Data
K	Fall	229	.61	.52	.48	.47	.47
K	Winter	148	.78	.68	.68	.63	.61
K	Spring	149	.74	.66	.66	.56	.58
1	Fall	262	.62	.58	.55	.44	.39
1	Winter	225	.58	.47	.51	.51	.42
1	Spring	230	.80	.61	.60	.54	.62
2	Fall	277	.63	.52	.52	.61	.52
2	Winter	104	.67	.53	.63	.56	.58
2	Spring	107	.68	.59	.66	.52	.60
3	Fall	260	.69	.55	.66	.60	.65
3	Winter	176	.69	.60	.62	.60	.62
3	Spring	182	.75	.67	.74	.66	.63

As expected, correlations with *i-Ready Inform* for Mathematics overall scale score and domain scores are lower than those with the DIBELS 8 Composite. Correlations with each domain are lower than those with the overall score for each grade and testing window. These findings provide evidence that the constructs measured by the Early Literacy Screener align more with another literacy screener than with a mathematics assessment.

As a reminder, the Early Literacy Screener composite score combines the *i-Ready Inform* for Reading overall scale score and number of correct responses for the Literacy Task fluency measure. For Grades K–2, both *i-Ready Inform* for Reading and *i-Ready Inform* for Mathematics have auto-read questions and on-demand audio support for answer choices. As a result, shared cognitive processes—such as language processing, working memory, and general cognitive skills—likely contribute shared variance to correlations with *i-Ready Inform* for Mathematics scores. Establishing discriminant validity for the Early Literacy Screener is challenging because few alternative academic assessments are available for Grades K–2, and the interplay between early literacy skills and general cognitive skills often manifest as shared variance across measures at these grade levels.

## 6.7. Evidence Based on Consequences of Testing

Evidence based on test consequences refers to the evaluation of how the use and interpretation of assessment results impact students, instructional practices, and educational outcomes. In psychometric and literacy assessment research, this type of evidence is essential for validating not only the technical quality of a test but also its real-world effects—such as whether students are appropriately identified for intervention, whether resources are allocated effectively, and whether the assessment supports equitable educational opportunities (Lane, 2014; AERA et al., 2014). For the screeners, the importance of evidence based on test

consequences lies in ensuring that screening tools and diagnostic assessments lead to positive changes for students, such as timely and targeted support for those at risk of reading difficulties.

Accurately classifying students based on their risk of reading difficulties provides evidence of test consequences by demonstrating how well an assessment distinguishes between students who need intervention and those who do not. High classification accuracy supports the validity of the test's intended use, indicating that decisions based on the assessment are likely to benefit students and improve literacy outcomes (Lane, 2014; Messick, 1995; NCII, 2021).

Evidence based on screener consequences is essential for validating the Early Literacy Screener and the Dyslexia Risk Screener because it links technical performance to meaningful educational impact (Lane, 2014; AERA et al., 2014). The following sections provide validity evidence based on screener consequences through classification accuracy with external measures for screening.

### 6.7.1. Classification Accuracy

Classification accuracy is a central concept in educational measurement, representing the proportion of correct classifications—both true positives (students correctly identified as at risk) and true negatives (students correctly identified as not at risk)—out of all possible cases (Crocker & Algina, 2006).

Sensitivity, also known as the true positive rate, is the probability that a test correctly identifies students who genuinely require intervention, ensuring that those in need are not missed (Crocker & Algina, 2006; Kane, 2013). Specificity, or the true negative rate, reflects the probability that a test correctly identifies students who do not require intervention, thereby minimizing unnecessary allocation of resources (Kane, 2013).

Accuracy is the overall proportion of correct classifications, combining both sensitivity and specificity to provide a holistic measure of a screener's effectiveness (Crocker & Algina, 2006). The area under the curve (AUC), derived from receiver operating characteristic (ROC) analysis, summarizes a test's ability to discriminate between at-risk and not-at-risk students across all possible threshold values; an AUC value closer to 1.0 indicates excellent discrimination (Kane, 2013).

In educational screening contexts, sensitivity values of approximately .70 or higher and specificity values of approximately .80 or higher are commonly cited as indicating adequate to strong classification performance, reflecting recommendations in the literacy screening literature (e.g., Jenkins, Hudson, & Johnson, 2007). This is endorsed by our Literacy Advisory Committee, which recommends prioritizing specificity over sensitivity to reduce the possibility of students at risk being identified as not at risk and therefore not receiving needed support. In addition, AUC values above .80 are generally interpreted as indicating good discrimination between at-risk and not-at-risk students, consistent with established ROC interpretation guidelines (e.g., Swets, 1988; Hosmer et al., 2013). These metrics are essential for evaluating educational screening tools and ensuring that interventions are accurately targeted to support student progress. The magnitudes of these statistics are impacted by the correlation between the two composites. Low correlations (below .30) may lead to misclassifications and poor classification accuracy. Moderate correlations (.40–.60) may improve classification accuracy but may still misclassify students, especially near cut scores. High correlations imply

strong alignment between constructs and are more likely to result in strong classification accuracy. Therefore, interpretation of these results should be based within the context of the strength of the relationship between tests.

Consistent with established recommendations for evaluating universal screeners within an RTI/MTSS framework, dichotomous classifications from the two screeners were cross-tabulated to form a 2×2 contingency table consisting of true positives, false positives, true negatives, and false negatives (Jenkins, Hudson, & Johnson, 2007). In this framework, true positives (TP) represent students identified as at risk by both the screeners, false positives (FP) represent students identified as at risk by an *i-Ready* screener but not classified as at risk on DIBELS 8, true negatives (TN) represent students identified as low to no risk by both screeners, and false negatives (FN) represent students identified as low to no risk by an *i-Ready* screener but classified as at risk on DIBELS 8. Jenkins et al. (2007) emphasize that this contingency-table approach is central to determining whether a screener adequately identifies students at risk while maintaining a manageable rate of false positives for instructional decision-making.

Using the values from the contingency table, sensitivity was calculated as the proportion of students classified as at risk on DIBELS 8 who were correctly identified as at risk by an *i-Ready* screener ( $TP / [TP + FN]$ ). Specificity was calculated as the proportion of students classified as low to no risk on DIBELS 8 who were correctly identified as not at risk by an *i-Ready* screener ( $TN / [TN + FP]$ ). Overall accuracy was calculated as the proportion of all students whose *i-Ready* screener classification matched their DIBELS 8 classification ( $(TP + TN) / N$ ), providing a summary index of agreement across both risk groups.

In addition to these threshold-based indices, overall discriminative performance was summarized using a receiver operating characteristic (ROC) curve and the area under the curve (AUC). The ROC curve plots sensitivity against (1 – specificity across all possible screener thresholds, illustrating the trade-off between identifying students at risk and limiting false positives. The AUC represents the probability that a randomly selected student classified as at risk on DIBELS 8 will obtain a higher risk score on an *i-Ready* screener than a randomly selected student classified as not at risk. Reporting sensitivity, specificity, and AUC together aligns with guidance in the early literacy screening literature, which emphasizes that no single metric can fully describe screening performance. Instead, evaluation should consider both classification rates at fixed cuts and overall discriminative ability (Jenkins et al., 2007).

## 6.7.2. Early Literacy Screener Classification Accuracy

To evaluate the classification accuracy of the Early Literacy Screener composite score in identifying students at risk for reading difficulties, we used the DIBELS 8 Composite as the criterion measure. DIBELS 8 is widely used to screen for risk factors associated with reading deficiencies, including dyslexia. In general, Early Literacy Screener placement levels should align as follows: *Below* with Red, *Approaching* with Yellow, and *On* with Blue/Green. The definition and interpretation of students with reading deficiencies may vary across states, districts, and schools. Therefore, classification accuracy analyses are provided for each cut score designating the Early Literacy Screener placement level. The screeners are dichotomized into two groups (at risk and not at risk) for each analysis:

- Below Benchmark/Approaching Benchmark
  - For DIBELS 8, students in the Red level were categorized as at risk for reading deficiencies, while those in Yellow, Green or Blue were categorized as low to no risk.
  - For Early Literacy Screener, students in Below Benchmark were categorized as at risk, while students in the Approaching Benchmark or On Benchmark were categorized as not at risk.
- Approaching Benchmark/On Benchmark
  - For DIBELS 8, students in the Red or Yellow level were categorized as at risk for reading deficiencies, while those in Green or Blue were categorized as low to no risk.
  - For Early Literacy Screener, students in Below Benchmark or Approaching Benchmark were categorized as at risk, while students in the On Benchmark were categorized as low to no risk.

Table 6.8 presents sample size (n), sensitivity, specificity, overall classification accuracy, and AUC values for the Early Literacy Screener Below/Approaching Benchmark cut compared to the DIBELS 8 Red/Yellow cut for grades K–3 for each testing windows. Samples with fewer than twenty students in the at risk category are not reported due to difficulty in meaningfully evaluating sensitivity (Jenkins, et al., 2007). The results support the use of Early Literacy Screener to consistently classify students with potential reading difficulties and students approaching or on grade level for reading based on all specificity, accuracy, and AUC values exceeding .80 for all analyses. With priority placed on specificity, sensitivity did not exceed the threshold of .70 for some lower grade levels (.53-.66). As noted above, this approach minimizes missed at risk students.

Table 6.7. Early Literacy Screener Composite Classification Accuracy Compared to DIBELS 8 Composite: *i-Ready* Below / Approaching Benchmark vs. DIBELS Red / Yellow Cut

Grade	Season	Early Literacy Screener Classification Cut	N	Sensitivity	Specificity	Accuracy	AUC
K	Fall	Below / Approaching Benchmark	231	0.62	0.93	0.82	0.91
K	Winter	Below / Approaching Benchmark	137	0.62	0.95	0.87	0.90
K	Spring	Below / Approaching Benchmark	146	0.53	0.96	0.84	0.91
1	Fall	Below / Approaching Benchmark	263	0.60	0.94	0.87	0.92
1	Winter	Below / Approaching Benchmark	*				
1	Spring	Below / Approaching Benchmark	230	0.65	0.96	0.93	0.95
2	Fall	Below / Approaching Benchmark	276	0.66	0.98	0.92	0.96
2	Winter	Below / Approaching Benchmark	104	0.72	0.99	0.91	0.97
2	Spring	Below / Approaching Benchmark	106	0.83	0.98	0.94	0.97
3	Fall	Below / Approaching Benchmark	254	0.72	0.97	0.90	0.96
3	Winter	Below / Approaching Benchmark	241	0.74	0.97	0.93	0.95
3	Spring	Below / Approaching Benchmark	248	0.74	0.96	0.93	0.96

\* Less than 20 at-risk students in sample

Table 6.8 presents sample size (n), sensitivity, specificity, overall classification accuracy, and AUC values for the Early Literacy Screener Approaching/On Benchmark cut compared to the DIBELS 8 Yellow/Green cut for grades K–3 for each testing windows. Samples with fewer than twenty students in the at risk category are not reported due to difficulty in meaningfully evaluating sensitivity (Jenkins, et al., 2007). The results support the use of Early Literacy Screener to consistently classify students with potential reading difficulties and students on grade level for reading based on most of the sensitivity, specificity, accuracy, and AUC values exceeding the threshold across analyses. For Grade K and fall Grade 1 where specificity is below .80, the priority was to select the specificity value closest to the threshold.

Table 6.8. Early Literacy Screener Composite Classification Accuracy Compared to DIBELS 8 Composite: *i-Ready* Approaching / On Benchmark vs. DIBELS Yellow / Green Cut

Grade	Season	Early Literacy Screener Classification Cut	N	Sensitivity	Specificity	Accuracy	AUC
K	Fall	Approaching / On Benchmark	231	.81	.79	.81	.91
K	Winter	Approaching / On Benchmark	137	.86	.75	.80	.91
K	Spring	Approaching / On Benchmark	146	.86	.77	.80	.90
1	Fall	Approaching / On Benchmark	263	.91	.79	.84	.91
1	Winter	Approaching / On Benchmark	221	.84	.88	.87	.95
1	Spring	Approaching / On Benchmark	230	.90	.87	.88	.96
2	Fall	Approaching / On Benchmark	276	.86	.92	.90	.97
2	Winter	Approaching / On Benchmark	104	.84	.91	.88	.96
2	Spring	Approaching / On Benchmark	106	.92	.82	.89	.96
3	Fall	Approaching / On Benchmark	254	.88	.87	.87	.95
3	Winter	Approaching / On Benchmark	241	.77	.91	.87	.93
3	Spring	Approaching / On Benchmark	248	.85	.86	.86	.92

These findings demonstrate that the Early Literacy Screener has strong classification accuracy when using DIBELS 8 Red/Yellow or Yellow/Green performance levels as the comparison, confirming consistency in identifying students most at risk while minimizing misclassification of students not at risk.

### 6.7.3. Dyslexia Risk Screener Classification Accuracy

Similarly, the Dyslexia Risk Screener placement levels—At Risk, Some Risk, No Observed Risk—align well with DIBELS performance levels of Red, Yellow, and Green/Blue, respectively. In general, students classified as At Risk on the Dyslexia Risk Screener should correspond to DIBELS Red; students at Some Risk should correspond to Yellow; and those with No Observed Risk should correspond to Green or Blue. The placement levels for the Dyslexia Risk Screener are dichotomized in two ways. The definition and interpretation of students at risk for dyslexia may vary across states, districts, and schools. Therefore, classification accuracy analyses are provided for each cut score designating the Dyslexia Risk Screener placement level. The screeners are dichotomized into two groups (at risk and not at risk) for each analysis:

- At Risk/Some Risk

- For DIBELS 8, students in the Red level were categorized as at risk for reading deficiencies, while those in Yellow, Green or Blue were categorized as low to no risk.
- For Dyslexia Risk Screener, students in At Risk placement level were categorized as at risk, while students in the Some Risk or No Observed Risk placement levels were categorized as not at risk.
- Some Risk/No Observed Risk
  - For DIBELS 8, students in the Red or Yellow level were categorized as at risk for reading deficiencies, while those in Green or Blue were categorized as low to no risk.
  - For Dyslexia Risk Screener, students in At Risk or Some Risk placement levels were categorized as at risk, while students in the No Observed Risk placement level were categorized as low to no risk.

Table 6.9 presents sample size (n), sensitivity, specificity, classification accuracy, and area under the curve (AUC) data for the Dyslexia Risk Screener when comparing the cut score between adjacent risk placement levels and the DIBELS 8 cut between red/yellow and yellow/green performance levels. Samples with fewer than twenty students in the at risk category are not reported due to difficulty in meaningfully evaluating sensitivity (Jenkins, et al., 2007). The results support the use of Dyslexia Risk Screener to consistently classify students with reading deficiencies who may be at risk for dyslexia and students with no observed risk level for reading based on all specificity, accuracy, and AUC exceeding .80 for all analyses and all but one sensitivity analysis exceeding .70.

Table 6.9. Dyslexia Risk Screener Classification Accuracy Compared to DIBELS 8 Composite: i-Ready At Risk / Some Risk Cut vs. DIBELS Red / Yellow Cut

Grade	Season	Dyslexia Risk Screener Classification Cut	N	Sensitivity	Specificity	Accuracy	AUC
<b>K</b>	Fall	At Risk / Some Risk	*	*	*	*	*
<b>K</b>	Winter	At Risk / Some Risk	136	0.70	0.96	0.90	0.90
<b>K</b>	Spring	At Risk / Some Risk	144	0.69	0.97	0.90	0.91
<b>1</b>	Fall	At Risk / Some Risk	*	*	*	*	*
<b>1</b>	Winter	At Risk / Some Risk	221	0.83	0.97	0.95	0.95
<b>1</b>	Spring	At Risk / Some Risk	230	0.91	0.96	0.96	0.95
<b>2</b>	Fall	At Risk / Some Risk	*	*	*	*	*
<b>2</b>	Winter	At Risk / Some Risk	104	0.90	0.97	0.95	0.97
<b>2</b>	Spring	At Risk / Some Risk	106	0.71	0.96	0.91	0.97
<b>3</b>	Fall	At Risk / Some Risk	253	0.85	0.96	0.93	0.96
<b>3</b>	Winter	At Risk / Some Risk	241	0.81	0.97	0.94	0.95
<b>3</b>	Spring	At Risk / Some Risk	247	0.85	0.94	0.93	0.96

\* Less than 20 at-risk students in sample

Table 6.10 presents sample size (n), sensitivity, specificity, classification accuracy, and area under the curve (AUC) data for the Dyslexia Risk Screener when comparing the cut score between adjacent risk placement levels and the DIBELS 8 cut between yellow/green performance levels. Samples with fewer than twenty students in the at risk category are not reported due to difficulty in meaningfully evaluating sensitivity (Jenkins et al., 2007). The results support the use of Dyslexia Risk Screener to consistently classify students with reading deficiencies who may be trending toward at risk for dyslexia and students with no observed risk level for reading based on all sensitivity, accuracy, and AUC exceeding .80 for all analyses and all but one specificity analysis exceeding .70.

Table 6.10. Dyslexia Risk Screener Classification Accuracy Compared to DIBELS 8 Composite: *i-Ready* Some Risk / No Observed Risk Cut vs. DIBELS Yellow / Green Cut

Grade	Season	Dyslexia Risk Screener Classification Cut	N	Sensitivity	Specificity	Accuracy	AUC
<b>K</b>	Fall	Some Risk / No Observed Risk	230	0.62	0.92	0.75	0.91
<b>K</b>	Winter	Some Risk / No Observed Risk	136	0.87	0.75	0.80	0.91
<b>K</b>	Spring	Some Risk / No Observed Risk	144	0.88	0.77	0.81	0.90
<b>1</b>	Fall	Some Risk / No Observed Risk	259	0.92	0.79	0.84	0.91
<b>1</b>	Winter	Some Risk / No Observed Risk	221	0.87	0.87	0.87	0.95
<b>1</b>	Spring	Some Risk / No Observed Risk	230	0.92	0.85	0.87	0.96
<b>2</b>	Fall	Some Risk / No Observed Risk	275	0.87	0.92	0.90	0.97
<b>2</b>	Winter	Some Risk / No Observed Risk	104	0.84	0.89	0.87	0.96
<b>2</b>	Spring	Some Risk / No Observed Risk	106	0.95	0.82	0.87	0.96
<b>3</b>	Fall	Some Risk / No Observed Risk	253	0.92	0.86	0.89	0.95
<b>3</b>	Winter	Some Risk / No Observed Risk	241	0.84	0.88	0.87	0.93
<b>3</b>	Spring	Some Risk / No Observed Risk	247	0.93	0.84	0.86	0.92

These findings demonstrate that the Dyslexia Risk Screener has strong classification accuracy when using DIBELS 8 Red and Yellow performance levels as the comparisons, indicating that the screener is consistent with DIBELS 8 in identifying students most at risk of having reading difficulties and not misidentifying students not at risk.

## 6.8. Commitment to Ongoing Research

Curriculum Associates continually collects evidence to support validity claims based on test content, response process, internal structure, relationships with other assessments, and test consequences. In addition to conducting planned reliability and validity studies, we analyze naturally occurring data from students to examine how the tasks function in classroom settings, especially when tasks are updated or revised, as new evidence to support the validity argument is warranted.

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# Appendix A: Dyslexia Risk Screener Risk Classification Profiles

Table A1. Dyslexia Risk Screener Overall Risk Classification: Kindergarten

Window	Dyslexia Screener Risk Classification	Literacy Screener	RAN Objects	PWDF
Fall	No Observed Risk	On	On	n/a
Fall	No Observed Risk	On	Below	n/a
Fall	No Observed Risk	Approaching	On	n/a
Fall	Some Risk	Approaching	Below	n/a
Fall	Some Risk	Below	On	n/a
Fall	Some Risk	Below	Below	n/a
Winter	No Observed Risk	On	On	Above
Winter	No Observed Risk	On	On	Below
Winter	No Observed Risk	On	Below	Above
Winter	Some Risk	On	Below	Below
Winter	Some Risk	Approaching	On	Above
Winter	Some Risk	Approaching	On	Below
Winter	Some Risk	Approaching	Below	Above
Winter	At Risk	Approaching	Below	Below
Winter	Some Risk	Below	On	Above
Winter	At Risk	Below	On	Below
Winter	Some Risk	Below	Below	Above
Winter	At Risk	Below	Below	Below
Spring	No Observed Risk	On	On	Above
Spring	No Observed Risk	On	On	Below
Spring	No Observed Risk	On	Below	Above
Spring	Some Risk	On	Below	Below
Spring	Some Risk	Approaching	On	Above
Spring	Some Risk	Approaching	On	Below
Spring	Some Risk	Approaching	Below	Above
Spring	At Risk	Approaching	Below	Below
Spring	Some Risk	Below	On	Above
Spring	At Risk	Below	On	Below
Spring	Some Risk	Below	Below	Above
Spring	At Risk	Below	Below	Below

Table A2. Dyslexia Risk Screener Overall Risk Classification: Grade 1

<b>Window</b>	<b>Dyslexia Screener Risk Classification</b>	<b>Literacy Screener</b>	<b>RAN Letters</b>	<b>PWDF</b>
<b>Fall</b>	No Observed Risk	On	On	Above
<b>Fall</b>	No Observed Risk	On	On	Below
<b>Fall</b>	No Observed Risk	On	Below	Above
<b>Fall</b>	Some Risk	On	Below	Below
<b>Fall</b>	Some Risk	Approaching	On	Above
<b>Fall</b>	Some Risk	Approaching	On	Below
<b>Fall</b>	Some Risk	Approaching	Below	Above
<b>Fall</b>	At Risk	Approaching	Below	Below
<b>Fall</b>	Some Risk	Below	On	Above
<b>Fall</b>	At Risk	Below	On	Below
<b>Fall</b>	Some Risk	Below	Below	Above
<b>Fall</b>	At Risk	Below	Below	Below
<b>Winter</b>	No Observed Risk	On	On	Above
<b>Winter</b>	No Observed Risk	On	On	Below
<b>Winter</b>	No Observed Risk	On	Below	Above
<b>Winter</b>	Some Risk	On	Below	Below
<b>Winter</b>	Some Risk	Approaching	On	Above
<b>Winter</b>	Some Risk	Approaching	On	Below
<b>Winter</b>	Some Risk	Approaching	Below	Above
<b>Winter</b>	At Risk	Approaching	Below	Below
<b>Winter</b>	Some Risk	Below	On	Above
<b>Winter</b>	At Risk	Below	On	Below
<b>Winter</b>	Some Risk	Below	Below	Above
<b>Winter</b>	At Risk	Below	Below	Below
<b>Spring</b>	No Observed Risk	On	On	Above
<b>Spring</b>	No Observed Risk	On	On	Below
<b>Spring</b>	No Observed Risk	On	Below	Above
<b>Spring</b>	Some Risk	On	Below	Below
<b>Spring</b>	Some Risk	Approaching	On	Above
<b>Spring</b>	Some Risk	Approaching	On	Below
<b>Spring</b>	Some Risk	Approaching	Below	Above
<b>Spring</b>	At Risk	Approaching	Below	Below
<b>Spring</b>	Some Risk	Below	On	Above
<b>Spring</b>	At Risk	Below	On	Below
<b>Spring</b>	Some Risk	Below	Below	Above
<b>Spring</b>	At Risk	Below	Below	Below

Table A3. Dyslexia Risk Screener Overall Risk Classification: Grade 2

<b>Window</b>	<b>Dyslexia Screener Risk Classification</b>	<b>Literacy Screener</b>	<b>RAN Letters</b>	<b>PWDF</b>
<b>Fall</b>	No Observed Risk	On	On	Above
<b>Fall</b>	No Observed Risk	On	On	Below
<b>Fall</b>	No Observed Risk	On	Below	Above
<b>Fall</b>	Some Risk	On	Below	Below
<b>Fall</b>	Some Risk	Approaching	On	Above
<b>Fall</b>	Some Risk	Approaching	On	Below
<b>Fall</b>	Some Risk	Approaching	Below	Above
<b>Fall</b>	At Risk	Approaching	Below	Below
<b>Fall</b>	Some Risk	Below	On	Above
<b>Fall</b>	At Risk	Below	On	Below
<b>Fall</b>	Some Risk	Below	Below	Above
<b>Fall</b>	At Risk	Below	Below	Below
<b>Winter</b>	No Observed Risk	On	On	Above
<b>Winter</b>	No Observed Risk	On	On	Below
<b>Winter</b>	No Observed Risk	On	Below	Above
<b>Winter</b>	Some Risk	On	Below	Below
<b>Winter</b>	Some Risk	Approaching	On	Above
<b>Winter</b>	Some Risk	Approaching	On	Below
<b>Winter</b>	Some Risk	Approaching	Below	Above
<b>Winter</b>	At Risk	Approaching	Below	Below
<b>Winter</b>	Some Risk	Below	On	Above
<b>Winter</b>	At Risk	Below	On	Below
<b>Winter</b>	Some Risk	Below	Below	Above
<b>Winter</b>	At Risk	Below	Below	Below
<b>Spring</b>	No Observed Risk	On	On	Above
<b>Spring</b>	No Observed Risk	On	On	Below
<b>Spring</b>	No Observed Risk	On	Below	Above
<b>Spring</b>	Some Risk	On	Below	Below
<b>Spring</b>	Some Risk	Approaching	On	Above
<b>Spring</b>	Some Risk	Approaching	On	Below
<b>Spring</b>	Some Risk	Approaching	Below	Above
<b>Spring</b>	At Risk	Approaching	Below	Below
<b>Spring</b>	Some Risk	Below	On	Above
<b>Spring</b>	At Risk	Below	On	Below
<b>Spring</b>	Some Risk	Below	Below	Above
<b>Spring</b>	At Risk	Below	Below	Below

Table A4. Dyslexia Risk Screener Overall Risk Classification: Grade 3

<b>Window</b>	<b>Dyslexia Screener Risk Classification</b>	<b>Literacy Screener</b>	<b>RAN Letters</b>	<b>PWDF</b>
<b>Fall</b>	No Observed Risk	On	On	Above
<b>Fall</b>	No Observed Risk	On	On	Below
<b>Fall</b>	No Observed Risk	On	Below	Above
<b>Fall</b>	Some Risk	On	Below	Below
<b>Fall</b>	Some Risk	Approaching	On	Above
<b>Fall</b>	Some Risk	Approaching	On	Below
<b>Fall</b>	Some Risk	Approaching	Below	Above
<b>Fall</b>	At Risk	Approaching	Below	Below
<b>Fall</b>	Some Risk	Below	On	Above
<b>Fall</b>	At Risk	Below	On	Below
<b>Fall</b>	Some Risk	Below	Below	Above
<b>Fall</b>	At Risk	Below	Below	Below
<b>Winter</b>	No Observed Risk	On	On	Above
<b>Winter</b>	No Observed Risk	On	On	Below
<b>Winter</b>	No Observed Risk	On	Below	Above
<b>Winter</b>	Some Risk	On	Below	Below
<b>Winter</b>	Some Risk	Approaching	On	Above
<b>Winter</b>	Some Risk	Approaching	On	Below
<b>Winter</b>	Some Risk	Approaching	Below	Above
<b>Winter</b>	At Risk	Approaching	Below	Below
<b>Winter</b>	Some Risk	Below	On	Above
<b>Winter</b>	At Risk	Below	On	Below
<b>Winter</b>	Some Risk	Below	Below	Above
<b>Winter</b>	At Risk	Below	Below	Below
<b>Spring</b>	No Observed Risk	On	On	Above
<b>Spring</b>	No Observed Risk	On	On	Below
<b>Spring</b>	No Observed Risk	On	Below	Above
<b>Spring</b>	Some Risk	On	Below	Below
<b>Spring</b>	Some Risk	Approaching	On	Above
<b>Spring</b>	Some Risk	Approaching	On	Below
<b>Spring</b>	Some Risk	Approaching	Below	Above
<b>Spring</b>	At Risk	Approaching	Below	Below
<b>Spring</b>	Some Risk	Below	On	Above
<b>Spring</b>	At Risk	Below	On	Below
<b>Spring</b>	Some Risk	Below	Below	Above
<b>Spring</b>	At Risk	Below	Below	Below

# Appendix B: Redesign of Literacy Tasks for Pseudoword Decoding

The Literacy Tasks for Pseudoword Decoding now in use became operational in fall 2024. Prior to the 2024-2025 academic year, the originally designed Pseudoword Decoding Fluency (PWDF) tasks were grade-level specific, aligned to expectations for acquiring certain decoding skills at each grade level. These PWDF forms for Grades K and 1 used primarily single-syllable stimuli reflecting grade-appropriate spelling patterns but also included a few multi-syllabic stimuli at the end of each form that reflect syllable patterns in grade-appropriate words. Grades 2 and 3 forms were more complex and included pseudowords reflecting multiple syllable types and morphemes.

The redesigned Pseudoword Decoding suite has two types of tasks: basic Pseudoword Decoding–Fluency (PWD–F) and advanced Pseudoword Decoding–Multisyllabic (PWD–M). The PWD–F forms are for Grades K–3 and are not grade specific. PWD–M forms are for use at Grades 2 and 3, as the first words on the forms align to mid-grade 1 skills.

The Literacy Tasks for Pseudoword Decoding were redesigned to address concerns with the original PWDF tasks. First, fluent decoding is not typical when proficient readers decode novel multisyllabic words. However, fluent decoding of novel single-syllable words is expected for proficient readers. Additionally, expectations for decoding skills by the end of kindergarten versus the beginning of Grade 1 are not always clear or consistent across instructional programs. Often, students who can decode only Consonant-Vowel-Consonant (CVC) words in early fall of Grade 1 quickly make sufficient skill gains to meet grade-level expectations by winter or spring.

By redesigning pseudoword decoding tasks to cover a broad range of skills on a single form, the revised PWD–F forms align better with expectations for steadily increasing fluency, regardless of the grade level at which each skill is typically taught. The advanced, untimed PWD–M forms assess a range of more complex sound-spelling patterns and focus on decoding accuracy rather than fluency. PWD–M tasks are suitable for Grade 2+ readers and can help pinpoint challenges these students may have in word attack skills with multisyllabic words.

# Appendix C: Early Literacy Screener Placement Level Cut Scores

The following table reports the Early Literacy Screener placement level z-score ranges associated with each placement level by grade and testing window. The z-scores are the statistical value used to combine the two components. This score is not reported to educators, parents, or students. It is generated internally to calculate the composite score. Table C1 shows the grade, testing window, the placement levels defined by the cut, and the composite z-score cut value, except for Grade 1 fall. Table C2 shows the grade, testing window, the placement levels defined by the cut, and the composite score for the cut for Grade 1 fall based on the equipercentile linking. In Table C1 the Composite Z-score Cut Score is designating the z-score value that defines the cut between Below Benchmark and Approaching Benchmark (Below/Approaching) and the cut between Approaching Benchmark and On Benchmark (Approaching/On).

Table C1. Early Literacy Screener Composite Cut Scores

Grade	Testing Window	Early Literacy Screener Placement Cuts	Composite Z-score Cut Score
<b>K</b>	Fall	Below/Approaching	-0.44
<b>K</b>	Fall	Approaching/On	0.13
<b>K</b>	Winter	Below/Approaching	-0.43
<b>K</b>	Winter	Approaching/On	0.3
<b>K</b>	Spring	Below/Approaching	-0.4
<b>K</b>	Spring	Approaching/On	0.2
<b>1</b>	Winter	Below/Approaching	-0.46
<b>1</b>	Winter	Approaching/On	0.08
<b>1</b>	Spring	Below/Approaching	-0.5
<b>1</b>	Spring	Approaching/On	0.14
<b>2</b>	Fall	Below/Approaching	-0.68
<b>2</b>	Fall	Approaching/On	-0.01
<b>2</b>	Winter	Below/Approaching	-0.41
<b>2</b>	Winter	Approaching/On	0.21
<b>2</b>	Spring	Below/Approaching	-0.31
<b>2</b>	Spring	Approaching/On	0.15
<b>3</b>	Fall	Below/Approaching	-0.45
<b>3</b>	Fall	Approaching/On	0.16
<b>3</b>	Winter	Below/Approaching	-0.12
<b>3</b>	Winter	Approaching/On	0.32
<b>3</b>	Spring	Below/Approaching	-0.23
<b>3</b>	Spring	Approaching/On	0.34

Table C2. Early Literacy Screener Composite Cut Score Grade 1 Fall

<b>Grade</b>	<b>Testing Window</b>	<b>Early Literacy Screener Placement Cuts</b>	<b>Composite Score Cut Score</b>
<b>1</b>	Fall	Below/Approaching	370
<b>1</b>	Fall	Approaching/On	397