



# Comprehensive Early Literacy Policy

## Fundamental Principle: Dyslexia Screeners

### Frequently Asked Questions | 2024

#### What is dyslexia?

**Dyslexia** is a specific learning disability, neurobiological in origin. People with dyslexia usually have difficulties with word reading, spelling and decoding (using letter-sound knowledge to accurately read words) abilities.

#### What is a dyslexia screener?

A dyslexia screener is an assessment that measures literacy skills that are predictors of future reading success and helps identify students who may be at risk for or have characteristics of dyslexia.

#### What should dyslexia screeners assess?

A screener should assess the following literacy components and skills: phonological and phonemic awareness (sounds), sound symbol recognition (sound-letter correspondences), alphabet knowledge, decoding skills (reading), rapid naming skills including letter naming and letter sound fluency, encoding skills (spelling) and oral reading accuracy and fluency.

#### Does a dyslexia screener diagnose dyslexia?

No, dyslexia screeners flag students who display risk factors or characteristics of dyslexia. A formal diagnosis can only be given by a licensed professional trained in evaluating students for learning differences.

#### What should take place if a dyslexia screener flags a student as “at risk”?

The school district should notify the students’ parents or guardian of the results and provide resources for supporting the child at home. The school district should also provide information about the evidence-based interventions and accommodations offered at school for the student and options for an external formal evaluation.

#### Who should be screened for dyslexia?

All Kindergarten, 1st, and 2nd grade students should be screened for characteristics of dyslexia.

#### When should dyslexia screening take place?

Dyslexia screening should be done annually, in the Spring for Kindergarten students, and in the Fall for 1st and 2nd grade students.

#### Are dyslexia screeners and universal screeners the same?

No. A universal screener is given to K-3 students three times per year and is a brief, easy to administer assessment. The results help to identify students at risk for reading difficulty and inform reading instruction. Universal screeners do not typically assess all literacy skills which identify risk factors for dyslexia.

## Should students with a diagnosis for dyslexia participate in dyslexia screening?

Students who already have a formal dyslexia diagnosis from an external evaluator may be exempt from the dyslexia screener.

## Which states have a dyslexia screener policy?

There are 34 states that have adopted dyslexia screening as part of their early literacy efforts: Alabama, Alaska, Arizona, Arkansas, California, Connecticut, Delaware, Washington D.C., Florida, Georgia, Idaho, Indiana, Kansas, Louisiana, Maine, Minnesota, Mississippi, Missouri, Montana, Nevada, New Hampshire, New Mexico, North Carolina, North Dakota, Ohio, Oklahoma, Oregon, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, Washington, West Virginia, Wisconsin and Wyoming.



### Spotlight on Arizona

Arizona created [The Universal Literacy and Dyslexia Screener Guide](#) to support dyslexia screening and interventions for students in grades K–3. Arizona has an approved list of universal reading and dyslexia screeners for schools to choose from that measure phonological awareness, phonemic awareness, rapid naming skills (RAN), nonsense word fluency and correspondence between sounds and letters. Schools may choose one of the approved tools for screening all K–3 students three times per year.



### Spotlight on Missouri

Missouri requires all students in kindergarten through third grade to be administered dyslexia screenings twice in Kindergarten and three times per year in grades 1–3. The Missouri Department of Education has created a [list of dyslexia screeners](#) from which schools are permitted to choose the screener that best fits the needs of their student population. If a student is identified with a risk factor related to dyslexia, schools are required to notify parents or guardians, and identify evidence-based interventions that will be provided to improve foundational reading skills.

## Learn More

[Early Literacy Matters, ExcelinEd’s Early Literacy Policy Playbook, Identifying and Supporting Students with Characteristics of Dyslexia, & Unlocking Dyslexia Solutions: Bridging the Policy Gap for Success.](#)

For more information, check out ExcelinEd’s [Comprehensive Early Literacy Policy](#).

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