Early Reading Screening: Kindergarten to Grade 4

The Early Reading Screening: Kindergarten to Grade 4 assessment chart outlines the role of early reading screeners in supporting early reading instruction within the broader context of the assessment-instruction-intervention cycle, the communication of student learning, and reporting in Manitoba classrooms.

	FORMATIVE ASSESSMENT			SUMMATIVE ASSESSMENT
	Early Reading Screening	**Classroom-Based Assessment**	**Progress Monitoring Assessment**	**Outcome Assessments**
Description and purpose of the assessment	Early reading screening tools are brief, standardized assessments of foundational early reading skills, universally administered and scored for students in Kindergarten through Grade 4 for three consecutive years in each school division/district. These screeners are conducted early in the fall and repeated in the spring. Early reading screening must include an evidence-based tool implemented in Kindergarten to Grade 4 classrooms. Its purpose is to • identify Early Years students who may be at risk for future reading difficulties and determine individual early reading skill strengths and identified areas for growth • help determine who requires additional responsive instruction • provide reliable data on early reading skill development • inform instructional priorities Early reading screeners evaluate key predictors of reading success, including • letter knowledge • phonemic awareness • decoding • fluency • vocabulary • comprehension	Classroom-based assessment investigates specific reading skill difficulties in greater depth, providing detailed insights that guide instructional planning, differentiation, and responsive teaching. Classroom-based assessment serves as a critical link between screening and instruction and provides an opportunity for triangulation of data to accurately reflect the student as a reader. Its purpose is to • investigate further and identify areas of difficulty to deliver appropriate educational programming • pinpoint specific reading skill needs/gaps to guide explicit and responsive instruction and interventions • inform lesson design focused on foundational early reading skills • embed assessment into daily practice by closely observing students who have been identified as at risk and by making real-time instructional adjustments based on student progress	Progress monitoring is a brief, ongoing assessment process that builds on early reading screening data to track reading growth and guide instructional decisions over time. Progress monitoring informs responsive teaching. Its purpose is to • identify whether students are responding to reading instruction or intervention • confirm the effectiveness of interventions • aid in preventing previously identified risks from becoming persistent difficulties in reading • serve as a follow-up to initial early reading screening • contribute evidence toward reporting by informing assessment of student achievement in relation to curricular learning outcomes at reporting periods	Outcome assessments are a set of evaluation methods used at the end of the teaching and learning cycle or reporting period to measure students' reading progress and achievement in relation to grade-level curricular learning outcomes. Outcome assessment measures proficiency in foundational early reading skills and overall reading achievement. Their purpose is to • report achievement against established reading curricular learning outcomes • inform future instructional planning • evaluate the effectiveness of **Tier 1** instruction and **Tier 2** targeted supports and interventions • evaluate **overall** reading proficiency—not just growth—and provide a clear picture of whether a student has met grade-level curricular learning outcomes
Frequency	**Twice a Year:** Kindergarten to Grade 4 students are screened twice per year for three consecutive years (as required by legislation, effective July 1, 2026). • **Early Fall** • **Spring** – prior to March 31	**Ongoing:** Classroom-based assessment is continuous and responsive, based on student growth and progress in relation to instructional goals, curricular learning outcomes, and foundational reading skill development.	**Intermittent:** Progress monitoring is used as a responsive assessment measure of instructional and intervention efficacy in relation to student growth and progress. *NOTE: The frequency of monitoring increases based on the complexity of reading difficulties and the student's rate of progress.*	**End of Cycle:** Outcome assessments are conducted at the end of the responsive teaching and learning or reading intervention cycle, after instruction has been completed and students have had opportunities to learn and practise.
Which learners are included in the assessment?	Early reading screening is intended for all Kindergarten to Grade 4 students. *NOTE: A student who has an individual education plan is not required to receive an early reading screening if it is not reasonable under the plan to expect the student to meet or approximate the applicable benchmark related to reading (41[1.0.2]).* Students at Early Years EAL Stage 1 of language development require an EAL student-specific plan and are exempt from screening. Parents/caregivers must be informed to ensure shared understanding of the programming in place for their child.	Classroom-based assessment is intended for all students, but particularly students who do not yet demonstrate reading skill progress with **Tier 1** classroom instruction, including small-group support, and who require further assessment.	Progress monitoring is intended for all students, but particularly Kindergarten to Grade 4 students who were identified at risk through the implementation of the early reading screener.	Outcome assessments are intended for all Kindergarten to Grade 4 students.

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Reflective questions to guide decision-making	Does the tool meet the following criteria? • evidence-based • efficient to administer • valid/reliable • predictive Does the tool include standardized directions for use and scoring? Does the tool focus on the following foundational early reading skills? • letter knowledge • phonemic awareness • decoding • fluency • vocabulary • comprehension	What additional insights do classroom-based assessment results provide about the early reading skills identified through the screening data? How do classroom-based assessment results, when considered alongside screening data, accurately reflect the student's current early reading skills? Which foundational early reading skills appear secure, and which show partial development and/or difficulty? Are the identified risks or difficulties aligned with developmentally typical expectations? Which identified skills require more direct, systematic, and explicit instruction to support progress? How can **Tier 1** instruction be adjusted to respond to the identified student needs? Do the aggregate results of classroom-based assessments indicate a need for targeted **Tier 2** interventions?	How has the current progress-monitoring data been used to inform student progress and instructional needs? Are students progressing at a typical rate, and is the identified skill gap closing? Have the principles of universal design and differentiation of instructional strategies informed reading instruction and interventions? Based on student progress year over year, has the in-school team been consulted to discuss the learner's profile and consider next steps? *NOTE: If all available supports have been implemented and the student is not making the expected year-over-year progress in reading, the student-specific planning process will continue and include the school support team to consider* **Tier 3** *specialized assessment.*	How well did students meet the learning outcomes by the end of the teaching and learning cycle? What does summative evidence reveal about instructional effectiveness and student progress? Which students are meeting curricular learning outcomes, and which ones require additional targeted support? What patterns or trends emerge that inform whole-class instruction, small-group instruction, and/or student-specific instruction? How will planning and strategies be adjusted based on these results?
What is a relatable analogy?	**Early reading screeners** are like routine health checkups. A doctor proactively checks indicators, such as blood pressure or cholesterol, to identify a potential health concern. Similarly, an early reading screener screens for the foundational early literacy reading skills to ensure every student is on track with reading skill development.	**Classroom-based assessments** are like follow-up visits to the doctor after a routine health checkup that identified a potential concern. A doctor might order blood tests or stress tests to gather more detailed information and create a personalized, responsive plan. Similarly, following initial literacy interventions, educators use additional assessments to investigate further, identify specific areas of difficulty, and refine instruction based on deeper insights achieved through the triangulation of data.	**Progress monitoring** is like regular follow-up appointments after a health concern is identified; it is a process intended to monitor improvement, adjust medications, or recommend new strategies if progress is not as expected. Similarly, progress monitoring provides ongoing, detailed information regarding a student's reading trajectory, informing timely instructional adjustments to ensure students stay on track.	**Summative/outcome assessment** is like the comprehensive checkup at the end of a treatment plan that provides a big-picture view of progress and long-term health. Similarly, summative assessments provide educators with a clear snapshot of how well a student has met the reading outcomes by the end of the instructional cycle, confirming the overall effectiveness of instruction and interventions in relation to student progress.

Specialized Assessment

Specialized diagnostic assessments (**Tier 3**) are intensive evaluations and part of the student-specific planning process; they are conducted by certified school clinicians or qualified practitioners and require parent/caregiver consent. These assessments provide an in-depth analysis of cognitive and linguistic skills—such as memory, processing speed, attention, language, and reasoning—to accurately diagnose learning or reading disabilities. When classroom supports are insufficient and a student is not progressing, year over year, as expected, specialized assessments inform the development of targeted and intensive interventions, ensuring instruction is tailored to meet individual student needs. For more information and guidance on specialized assessments, refer to *Standards for Appropriate Educational Programming in Manitoba* (2022).

Tier 1 involves classroom-based assessment and evidence-based, systematic, and explicit responsive instruction for all students, incorporating principles of universal design and differentiated instruction.

Tier 2 adds targeted support on top of Tier 1 and is not intended as a replacement. Students continue to engage in Tier 1 instruction with Tier 2 interventions in small groups.

Tier 3 is the most intensive level of support. Tier 3 provides a higher level of intensity and frequency and is documented in a student-specific plan. At this level, students continue to receive Tier 1 instruction and may continue to benefit from Tier 2 strategies, which are documented in a student-specific plan.