

## **Oregon Department of Education**

### **Universal Screening for Risk Factors of Dyslexia Guidance on Parent Notification**

SB 1003 requires that districts universally screen for risk factors of dyslexia in kindergarten (and in first grade for any student who first enrolls in a public school in this state for first grade) using a screening test identified by the Department. While the current legislation does not include an explicit requirement for districts to notify parents of the results of the screening for risk factors of dyslexia, it is best practice for school staff to be in close communication with parents regarding student performance and progress.

Schools can best serve students by involving parents as active partners in the educational process. Parents are essential to children's success in school. Outside of the instructional environment, family engagement is one of the most important factors impacting student success. The benefits of family engagement in education are even more acute for vulnerable populations including, but not limited to, low income and ethnically diverse families that are disenfranchised by education systems (Henderson, Mapp, Johnson, & Davies, 2007). Parents can act as excellent partners with the school to provide extra reading support at home. They also can share important information that may affect the child's learning that can help inform the development of more individualized interventions.

Every parent/family member is different, with varying levels of knowledge and comfort with schools. It is important, therefore, that a district's approach to parent communication be differentiated accordingly. The guidance provided in this document provides an overall structure for organizing the communication and collaboration with parents. The language and method of notification should be adapted as needed to ensure clear communication and opportunities for robust partnership between schools and families.

The recommended structure for notifying parents/guardians of the screening and instructional support process outlined below is aligned with a multi-tiered system of support (MTSS) framework. The Oregon Department of Education has been working cross-office to develop a coherent MTSS framework, the Oregon Integrated Supports (ORIS) framework, which will be rolled out to districts beginning in the fall of 2018. The ORIS Framework is a comprehensive, all-encompassing framework that aligns systems for the purpose of creating more equitable opportunities for all students. Within this MTSS framework, universal screening for risk factors of dyslexia is the first step in a longer process that includes instructional support, progress monitoring, additional assessment to guide more intensive instructional support, and possible comprehensive evaluation for a specific learning disability in the area of reading for those students who continue to experience reading difficulties. Communication with parents throughout the process is critical. This structure of parent notification is also consistent with guidelines from the Department provided to districts in Oregon implementing a Response to Intervention (RtI) model.

**Guiding Principles:**

1. Provide information to parents early and seek input often.
2. Consent is not required for screening and progress monitoring which all students participate in as part of the general education program. It is best practice to share this data with parents.
3. Parents should be made aware of any interventions that occur beyond the core reading curriculum.
4. Parents should be invited to participate in the planning of any individual interventions.
5. Parental consent for an evaluation is required if a special education referral is made.

Source: OrRTI Technical Assistance to School Districts, Oregon Department of Education, December 2007

**When and How Should Parents Be Notified?**

It is best practice for schools to share screening results for all students. Every parent should receive their child’s assessment results 3 times over the course of the kindergarten year following each universal screening period (fall, winter and spring). The table below outlines the recommended steps for parent notification, including additional steps for communicating with parents of students who show risk factors of reading difficulties, depending on the level of instructional support that is needed.

When	Type of Notification
Prior to initial universal screening in K	A <a href="#">brochure</a> describing the universal screening and instructional support process will be made available to all parents.
Student identified as showing risk factors based on universal screening	Directly provide brochure to parent and include a <a href="#">notification of risk letter</a> . Letter will include initial screening results for their child and a description of the additional instructional support that will be provided within the core reading program or a Tier 2 intervention group.*
Student does not respond to instructional support provided within the core reading program/Tier 2 intervention group	Provide parents with a notification of change in intervention letter ( <a href="#">sample 1</a> , <a href="#">sample 2</a> ) that includes results from progress monitoring and describes the additional informal diagnostic information that will be collected to help intensify the intervention. Attach a written <a href="#">screeener/checklist for family history</a> of reading difficulties or contact the parents following sending the letter to verbally complete the family history screening.

When	Type of Notification
Student does not respond to the intensified instructional support provided in the Tier 3 intervention group	Provide parents with an <a href="#">invitation</a> to participate in the planning for more individualized instructional support.
Intensive, more individualized Tier 3 literacy intervention is developed	Provide parents with a copy of the minutes/notes from the individualized problem solving meeting that includes a summary of the information collected and shared at the meeting, a description of the intervention adaptations and plan moving forward.

\* It is recommended that districts share results of the screening with all parents, regardless of their child’s outcome.

**What Should the Notification Include?**

This guidance includes a sample brochure along with templates for letters to facilitate district communication with parents and guardians throughout the screening and instructional support process. It is not required that districts use the provided templates. Districts may choose to develop their own templates or modify existing notifications to communicate with parents and guardians regarding the dyslexia screening. For those districts that choose to use their own communications, the following general recommendations may assist with developing the content:

- Stress the school’s commitment to identifying and addressing the needs of each student to maximize his/her success.
- Note the power of early intervention in preventing reading difficulties.
- Share that all kindergarten students in the school will complete the screening. The information from the screening measures will help inform instructional support that will be provided for all students and particularly for those who may show some signs of risk for reading difficulties.
- Include strength-based language (e.g., “supporting students toward healthy reading outcomes, ensuring students are on track for healthy reading outcomes,” etc.).
- Describe the measures that were administered (e.g., 1-minute individually administered measures of phonological awareness, letter-sound correspondences, rapid naming) using parent friendly language. Explain that scores on the measures can help the school determine if a child shows risk factors for reading difficulties, including dyslexia.

- Ensure that parents understand that this is not a comprehensive assessment, but just a screener. The purpose is to help schools identify those students who may show some risk factors for reading difficulties so that early intervention can be provided. A child's progress will be monitored to determine the level of support that is needed.
- Provide the child's scores, highlighting strengths and areas of need. Indicate risk status and explain next steps. This includes a general description of the instructional support/intervention that will be provided (e.g., the child will be placed in a small group reading intervention that targets the specific areas of need based on the screening data for X minutes a day, X days per week).
- Districts may wish to give a brief overview on dyslexia (e.g., what it is, the prevalence, it exists on a continuum with most students appropriately supported through general education services, etc.).
- If the district provides information on dyslexia, stress that the results of the screener are not designed or intended to give definitive evidence that a child has dyslexia.
- Parents should be informed that they will be updated on the progress of their child and any plans for changes to instructional support.
- Include contact information for the individual at the school who can address any questions or concerns. This may be the classroom teacher or a specialist if tiered support is provided. Districts may also want to include the name and contact information for the teacher who has completed the dyslexia training.
- Include information about how to gain clarification or ask questions if a family speaks a language other than English.
- Consider including links to parent resources that provide more information on dyslexia and ideas for providing extra reading support at home.

Source: Modified from GL Assessment: Dyslexia Screener Parent Letters and Guidance (<https://www.gl-assessment.co.uk/support/dyslexia-support>)

### **How Can Notification Be Differentiated?**

- Share data through visual displays/graphs. Consider including infographics. (See sources for infographics listed below.)
- Share the information verbally for those parents who may not have strong reading skills.

- Personal contact is desired by many parents and becomes more important as a student requires additional instructional support. Many families of children who show risk factors for reading difficulties have had negative school experiences themselves and may need a personal connection to feel confident that the school will support their child. Developing relationships and personal connections are key to fully informing our most vulnerable parents and families.
- Offer in-person support through a variety of languages depending on what languages are spoken within the district/community.
- Develop culturally responsive practices for forging partnerships with families that are culturally and/or linguistically diverse.
- Recruit parent leaders or other individuals from the community (e.g., leaders from churches, non-profits and other organizations) who represent different cultural groups served by the school to act as a liaison for sharing information about screening and instructional support to other parents.
- Consider making a video available that describes the universal screening process and how to interpret the results. Post the video on the school or district website.

#### **Resources that Provide More Information on Dyslexia:**

ODE – Dyslexia Page: [https://www.oregon.gov/ode/students-and-family/SpecialEducation/RegPrograms\\_BestPractice/Pages/Dyslexia.aspx](https://www.oregon.gov/ode/students-and-family/SpecialEducation/RegPrograms_BestPractice/Pages/Dyslexia.aspx)

Understood: <https://www.understood.org/en>

International Dyslexia Association (IDA): <https://dyslexiaida.org/>

#### **Links to Resources Designed for Parents to Support Reading at Home:**

National Center for Families Learning: <http://familieslearning.org/>

National Center on Improving Literacy (NCIL): <https://improvingliteracy.org/>

Reading Rockets: <http://www.readingrockets.org/audience/parents>

## **Links to Infographics Designed for Parents:**

National Center on Intensive Intervention (NCII):

<https://intensiveintervention.org/resource/intensive-intervention-infographics-parents-and-families>

Intensive Intervention: An Overview for Parents and Families  
Intensive Intervention: Questions Parents and Families Can Ask  
How Can You Support Intensive Intervention? Tips for Families

National Center on Improving Literacy (NCIL):

Supporting Your Child's Literacy Development at Home:

<https://improvingliteracy.org/brief/supporting-your-childs-literacy-development-home>

International Dyslexia Association (IDA): <https://dyslexiaida.org/infographics/>

Is Dyslexia a Gift?  
Beware of Educational Promises Too Good to Be True!  
What is Structured Literacy?  
Most Reading Difficulties Can be Resolved or Diminished  
How Widespread is Dyslexia?