

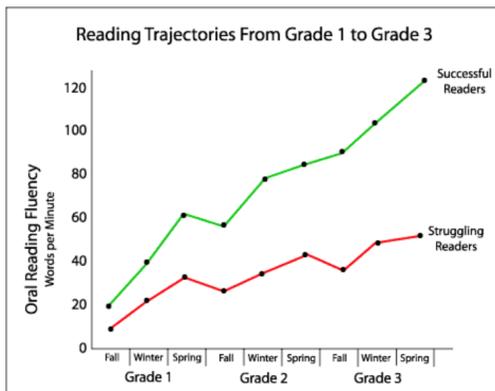
# An Early Warning System to Support Grade Level Reading

## Screening for At-Risk Readers, PK to 1



### The Problem: A “Wait to Fail” Reading Model

- Many students enter Kindergarten without necessary pre-literacy skills.
- Struggling readers who are **not** identified and provided effective instruction by the end of first grade, are less likely to attain grade level proficiency (figure 1)
- Fewer than 15% of Maryland students receive special education services, and for students with dyslexia, most of these students are identified after third grade. (figure 2).



**Fewer than one child in eight who is failing to read by the end of first grade ever catches up to grade level.**

From the Big Ideas In Beginning Reading Web Site, University of Oregon, <http://reading.uoregon.edu/>

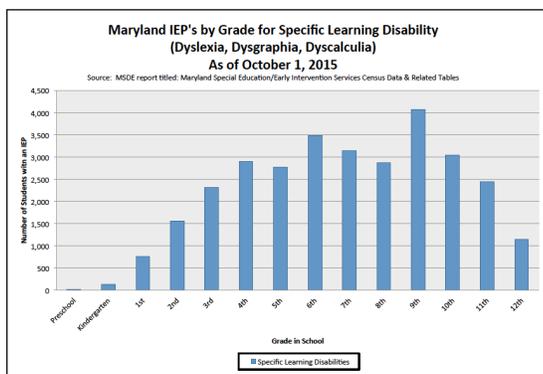


Figure 2: Students are often identified for special education between 3rd-10th grade after failing to achieve grade level

standards.

### The Solution: Early Screening & Intervention

Legislation to require screening in early elementary school promotes identification of students who are at-risk before negative outcomes of reading failure begin. The bill outlines direct, targeted reading and literacy interventions, as well as specific progress monitoring procedures to promote grade level reading success. Students will be screened in Pre-Kindergarten, Kindergarten and 1st grade for reading difficulties. Students in 2nd grade and beyond will be screened if/when indicators of reading difficulty emerge.

### The Knowledge: How to Identify Signs of Risk

Difficulties with early language skills - including talking, pre-reading and pre-writing skills - are “red flags” for future reading problems. These struggles can be identified during early elementary and even preschool years. Left unidentified and unaddressed, they can compound over time, contributing to academic, emotional and behavioral struggles in the classroom.

*Frijters, Lovett, Steinbach, Wolf, Sevcik, & Morris, 2011; Helland, 2016; Kamhi & Catts, 2012; Magnusson, & Naucler, 1990; Manis, F. R., Seidenberg, & Doi, 1999; Torgesen, 1998*

Relevant difficulties identified in scientific literature include:

- Difficulty perceiving sounds and sound sequences in words (phonological awareness and phonemic processing)
- Difficulty understanding and generating rhyming words
- Difficulty with “word finding”/retrieving words
- Difficulty remembering:
  - Letter names
  - Number names
  - Days of the week, months of the year, seasons
  - Math facts
  - Lists of information on a topic
- Difficulty articulating words

## The Reading Screening Process: Developmental Information Gathered by Grade

### Pre-Kindergarten Pre-Reading Screening Components

Specific components will be administered per instructions in the chosen screening instrument/s:

- Phonological Awareness and phonemic processing skills;
- Family history information regarding reading, writing, speaking and/or other learning concerns;
- A normed, rapid automatized naming assessment *may* be included.

### Kindergarten Reading Screening Components

Specific components will be administered at the beginning, middle, and/or end of year, or until benchmarks are met.

Kindergarten components include PK components and::

- Phonological Phonemic Awareness skills
- Identification of first, last, and medial sounds in words
- Knowledge of Letter/Sound Association, Letter Sound Knowledge, including upper/lower letter names, and letter printing
- Rapid Automatized Naming (RAN) that can include colors, shapes, numbers and/or letters;

### First Grade Reading Screening Components

Specific components will be administered at the beginning, middle, and/or end of year, or until benchmarks are met. First Grade Components include PK and K components and:

- Automatic and fluent single word recognition, including closed syllable nonsense and real words;
- Dictation letter-writing when given letter sound;
- Normed Oral Reading Fluency

*(Hasbrouck & Tindall, 2005; Hasbrouck & Tindall, 2006).*

### The Tools: Screening Instruments

Developmentally appropriate screening instruments and protocols are available for each grade level, and vary depending on expected skills and reading standards for the relevant grade/age range. Screening in each grade ensures students remain “on track” throughout the early years of reading instruction.

## What Happens Next: Targeted Intervention

Screening and informal diagnostic data will be used to target structured literacy intervention to each students’ area of specific need. Progress will be monitored using specific timelines and procedures to ensure that the intervention is working as designed to prevent a reading gap.

For students who do not meet grade level benchmarks within the progress monitoring time frame, the instruction must be altered to further address student needs: this can include duration, intensity, instruction and personnel. If at any time a disability is suspected, parents and teachers may request formal evaluations to determine if a learning disability is impacting a reading performance.

## The Difference: Early Identification, Intervention & Parent Engagement Can Change Lives

Early screening makes use of the established scientific knowledge about how the brain reads, and the fundamental skills identified as necessary for success in early reading instruction.

Early identification of struggling readers allows parents and teachers to be better informed about student needs, the student is better supported, and many of the long-term negative outcomes of early reading difficulties can be avoided (e.g., emotional distress, behavioral difficulty, broader academic struggle). Students identified with reading difficulties in kindergarten or 1st grade need less time in targeted interventions compared to students identified after grade 3. Early identification means public resources can be used more effectively and efficiently to support schools, students, families and communities.

## Additional Research & Citations

Gaab, Nadine. (2017). It’s a Myth That Young Children Cannot Be Screened for Dyslexia. The IDA Examiner. March 2017

Final Report of the Task Force to Study the Implementation of a Dyslexia Education Program in Maryland, December 2016

Research to Support Early Reading Screening, Compiled by Decoding Dyslexia Maryland

Table of Reading Screening Instruments, Nadine Gaab, Associate Professor of Pediatrics, Boston Children’s Hospital, Harvard Medical School