

# Using the California K–2 Literacy Screeners to Inform Instruction

This resource is for English Medium Classrooms using English as the primary language of instruction for all or most academic subjects, especially in regions where it is not the students' native language.

## An Invitation

The California K–2 screeners are not an endpoint, but a starting point. They provide educators with a snapshot of students' early literacy development, highlighting both strengths to celebrate and gaps that require immediate attention. When this data is paired with evidence-based instruction, thoughtful progress monitoring, and collaborative problem-solving, it becomes a powerful lever for accelerating literacy growth.

Within a Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS), the screener data informs decision-making at every level:

- Tier 1 Universal Supports: Strengthening core instruction to ensure that all students are explicitly taught and given opportunities to practice foundational literacy skills.
- Tier 2 Supplemental Supports: Using flexible groups and targeted small-group supports to provide additional practice for students who need it.
- Tier 3 Intensified Supports: Providing more customized supports for students who continue to struggle despite strong Tier 1 and Tier 2 instruction.

Progress monitoring is essential. By revisiting screener data alongside other assessments in your [assessment system](#), teachers can determine whether instruction is having the desired impact and make timely adjustments. This ongoing cycle of teaching, assessing, and refining instruction reflects the continuous improvement mindset that is vital to student success.

Finally, responding to the data is not the work of one educator alone. Building a collective system of support—where classroom teachers, interventionists, specialists, and administrators align around a shared vision for literacy—ensures consistency and coherence for students across grade levels. With strong collaboration, intentional use of data, and commitment to evidence-based practices, we can create classrooms where every child builds the foundation they need to become a proficient and lifelong reader. For more information on utilizing the Multi-tiered System of Support (MTSS) Framework, please [click here](#).

## About this Document

California's K–2 Reading Difficulties Risk Screeners ([Education Code Section 53008](#)) provides educators with a powerful opportunity to better understand and support the skills that are essential for every child's reading success. These screeners—administered one or more times throughout the year—offer a clear and consistent way to identify students' strengths, pinpoint areas of need, and guide timely, targeted instruction. By design, the screeners are designed to align with the [California ELA/ELD Framework](#) and evidence-based reading practices, focusing on the components most critical for early literacy:

- Phonological and Phonemic Awareness
- Knowledge of Letter Names and Sounds
- Rapid Automatic Naming
- Decoding
- Fluency
- Vocabulary
- Oral Language Comprehension

### Purpose of This Document

This resource is designed to help educators move from data to action. For each screener subtest area, you will find:

- Definitions that clarify what each skill entails and why it matters for reading development.

- Connections to standards that show how screener data align with grade-level expectations.
- Guiding questions to prompt reflection about patterns in student performance and instructional next steps.
- Evidence-based practices drawn from the California Department of Education's Content Blocks, designed to strengthen Tier 1 instruction and inform targeted small-group support.
- Resources for deeper learning that extend professional knowledge and provide a few examples of effective practice.

**\*In the grade-level specific documents below, Items in bold are specific recommendations for multilingual learners. For additional information regarding integrated ELD instructional strategies and supports, [click here](#).**

## Why This Matters

In reviewing screener results, it is important to remember that the goal is not simply to identify students who are struggling, but to ensure every child receives the right level of instruction, support, and practice at the right time. Data from these screeners allows teachers to:

- Adjust Tier 1 instruction to reinforce skills that all students are developing.
- Form flexible groups to provide additional, targeted practice where needed with the classroom teacher and/or additional resources or specialists.
- Monitor progress over time to determine the impact of instruction and refine supports.
- Consider the unique needs of multilingual learners, students with reading difficulties, students with disabilities, and other populations who may require differentiated approaches.

By connecting assessment information to classroom strategies, teachers can respond quickly and effectively—ensuring that the earliest years of schooling establish a solid foundation for fluent, confident, and joyful reading.

## How to Use This Tool

This document is designed as a flexible tool to be utilized after reviewing your screener data. (For more information on processes for reviewing your screener data, [click here](#)). Please focus only on the sections that are most relevant to your role and context. Different audiences—administrators, coaches, grade-level teams, and classroom teachers—may use the information in different ways. Select and apply the parts that best support your work, rather than trying to use the entire document at once.

**Administrators** - Use during staff meetings or professional learning days to build capacity and knowledge of ELA/ELD standards and effective practices.

**Literacy Coaches** - Facilitate conversations with teachers during planning, making connections between screener data, ELA/ELD standards, instruction, and instructional materials.

**Grade Level Teams** - Guide discussions of instructional practices and approaches, assessment results, ELA/ELD standards, and responses connected to district-adopted instructional materials.

**Classroom Teachers** - Plan Tier 1 instruction, including integrated and designated ELD, prioritize core instructional components, and incorporate targeted instructional moves based on screener data.

| Grade Level  | Link to Resources                                       |
|--------------|---------------------------------------------------------|
| Kindergarten | <a href="#">Kindergarten-Responding to the Screener</a> |
| First Grade  | <a href="#">1st Grade--Responding to Screener Data</a>  |
| Second Grade | <a href="#">2nd Grade--Responding to Screener Data</a>  |

## K-2 Free Online Professional Learning Modules

To support educators in strengthening evidence-based literacy and language practices, a variety of free, high-quality professional learning opportunities are available for grades K–2. These resources are designed to deepen teacher knowledge, build instructional capacity, and ultimately improve outcomes for all students. The collection includes K–2 Free Online Professional Learning Modules, [California Collaborative for Learning Acceleration \(CCLA\) Literacy and Language Development Modules](#), [UC/CSU Systemwide Collaborative Modules](#), and [Project Arise](#).