

Universal Screening for Literacy

Universal screening is a critical first step in identifying students who are at risk for experiencing reading difficulties and who might need more time in instruction or different instruction altogether. Screening is conducted to identify students who may be at risk for poor learning outcomes. Universal screening assessments are typically brief and conducted with all students from a grade level. They are followed by additional testing or short-term progress monitoring to corroborate students' risk status. Universal screening can be used for all academic subjects and for social and behavior assessment.

**Promising
Practices:
Inclusion
Equity
Opportunity**

WHO NEEDS IT?

Screening can be used for both academics and behavior. All primary grade students should be screened for potential reading problems at the beginning of the year and again in the middle of the year.

WHO SUPPORTS THIS WORK?

- Iris Center
<http://iris.peabody.vanderbilt.edu>
- National Center on Intensive Interventions
<http://www.intensiveintervention.org/>

WHO HAS IT?

- [Michigan](#)
- [Connecticut](#)
- [Illinois](#)
- [Wisconsin](#)

WHAT IS IT?

- In the context of a multi-tiered system of support (MTSS) model (See Volume 1), universal screening is the first step in identifying students who are at risk for learning difficulties or behavior challenges (RTI Network, nd; PBIS Center National PBIS Leadership Forum. October 27, 2011).
- Universal screening measures consist of brief assessments focused on target skills (e.g., phonological awareness) that are highly predictive of future outcomes (Gersten et al., 2012; Jenkins, 2003; Jenkins & Johnson, 2011).
- Screening should take place at the beginning of each school year in kindergarten through grade 2, with a second screening mid-year, and use measures that are efficient, reliable, and valid (Gersten et al., 2008).

HOW DO WE KNOW IT WORKS?

- Two Institute of Education Sciences (IES) Practice Guides (Reading and Mathematics) provide levels of evidence for recommendations related to screening (2009).
- Classroom behavior, emotional functioning, and academic achievement are strongly tied together, so screening for these needs can lead to better student outcomes (Albers, Glover, & Kratochwill, 2007; DiPerna et al, 2014).

HOW DO WE IMPLEMENT IT?

See the links below for resources and tools that may assist with the implementation of an MTSS:

- ◆ [Assisting Students Struggling with Reading: Response to Intervention \(RtI\) and Multi-Tier Intervention in the Primary Grades](#)
- ◆ [Reading Assessment Database](#)
- ◆ [Screening Tools Chart](#)
- ◆ [Essential Components of RTI: Screening](#)
- ◆ [RTI: Progress Monitoring](#)

The U.S. Department of Education issues this *Promising Practices* series as part of the My Brother's Keeper (MBK) initiative to provide educators, administrators, and pre-service teachers with practical information about approaches shown to improve early literacy and behavior outcomes for all students, including students with disabilities, English learners, and young men and boys of color. This series addresses MBK Taskforce Recommendation 6.2: Enhance and expand efforts to develop and promote best practices for teachers to address instructional and classroom issues such as early literacy screening.

LINKS TO RESOURCES AND TOOLS

Assisting Students Struggling with Reading: Response to Intervention (RtI) and Multi-Tier Intervention in the Primary Grades — http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/pdf/practice_guides/rti_reading_pg_021809.pdf

Essential Components of RTI: Screening — <http://www.rti4success.org/video/essential-components-rti-screening-0>

RTI: Progress Monitoring (The IRIS Center Case Study Unit) — http://iris.peabody.vanderbilt.edu/case_studies/ICS-011.pdf

Reading Assessment Database — <http://www.sedl.org/reading/rad/database.html>

Screening Tools Chart — <http://www.rti4success.org/resources/tools-charts/screening-tools-chart>

RTI for English Language Learners: Appropriately Using Screening and Progress Monitoring Tools to Improve Instructional Outcomes — <http://www.rti4success.org/sites/default/files/rtiforells.pdf>

RTI Implementer Series Module 1: Screening — <http://www.rti4success.org/resource/rti-implementer-series-module-1-screening>