Appendix A.1: Sample Letter Introducing Families

to the School’s Screening Procedures

Appendix A: Sample Family Letters (English)

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| *Please note that this letter is an example that may be adapted for your local community.* |

Dear Families,

I am writing to share information about one of the ways your child in grades K-3 will be assessed in reading this year. Our teachers have many ways to check your child’s reading development and growth, including an **early literacy universal screening assessment**. Early literacy universal screening assessments are brief tests that provide information about your child’s early reading skills. Screening makes it possible to see if a student is at risk of developing reading difficulties, including risk of dyslexia. Screening does not diagnose dyslexia or other disabilities, but it does help us understand which students may need additional support to be successful readers. We are required to assess students in grades K-3 at least twice per year consistent with [Massachusetts regulation 603 CMR 28.03(1)(f)](https://www.doe.mass.edu/news/news.aspx?id=26937#:~:text=On%20September%2020%2C%202022%2C%20the,through%20at%20least%20third%20grade.).

Our district uses a screening assessment called [name of the screener with link to webpage]. It is one of several screening assessments approved by the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education. Your child will be assessed two or three times during the school year, depending on grade level [adapt to school schedule, if needed]. It typically takes [X minutes] to complete this assessment, and the tentative schedule for this school year is shown below.

[SAMPLE SCHEDULE]

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Grade | Screening Assessment Dates (Subject to Change) |
| Kindergarten | 1. Week of November 13, 20XX 2. Week of March 11, 20XX |
| Grades 1, 2, 3 | 1. Week of October 9, 20XX 2. Week of February 5, 20XX 3. Week of May 6, 20XX |

Following the screening assessment, a team at our school will review all students’ results. Parents/Guardians will receive a family report that provides an overview of their child’s results. If your child scores “significantly below benchmarks,” we will contact you within 30 school days of testing, to discuss how we can support your child.

Please reach out if you would like additional information.

* For questions about the early literacy universal screening, contact Principal XXX
* For questions about your child’s testing results, contact your child’s teacher.

Screening is another step that helps students at our school become proficient readers, and we are grateful for the continued support and partnership with the [School Name] families.

Best,

Principal

Appendix A.2: Sample Letter for Student Screening Results

from a Computer Adaptative Test

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| *Please note that this letter is an example that may be adapted for your local community.* |

Dear Families,

I am writing to share an update about early literacy universal screening in grades K-3 at our school. We recently completed assessing our students and soon you will receive a Family Report that explains your child’s results. These actions are included in [Massachusetts regulation 603 CMR 28.03(1)(f),](https://www.doe.mass.edu/news/news.aspx?id=26937) which requires all public schools in the state to assess students’ reading skills in grades K-3 at least twice a year.

As a reminder, early literacy universal screening is used to determine a student’s risk for reading difficulty and to guide us in providing reading support. It is not a diagnosis or determination of a disability.

**Our School’s Early Literacy Universal Screening Assessment**

Our school’s early literacy universal screening assessment is [name of the screener with link to webpage], which is approved by the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education.  [Name of screener] is computer adaptive, so questions are adjusted (made easier or more difficult) based on student responses. For this reason, your child’s report may not include the same information as other children’s reports, even among those at the same grade level.

**Important Early Reading Skills**

Early literacy universal screening assessments are used to assess skills that may predict future reading difficulties. These skills include alphabetic knowledge, phonemic awareness, word reading, reading comprehension, and rapid automatized naming. Skills are assessed differently depending on the student’s grade level.

[Optional: Consider whether this information may be helpful to include.]

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Alphabetic Knowledge** | Students’ familiarity with the names and sounds of letters and letter patterns. |
| **Phonemic Awareness** | Students’ knowledge of individual sounds in language. |
| **Word/Passage Reading** | Students’ ability to read words accurately and fluently. |
| **Reading Comprehension** | Students’ ability to understand and make meaning of a text. |
| **Rapid Automatized Naming** | Students’ ability to rapidly name a limited set of repeatedly presented known objects or letters. |

**Family Communication**

If your child scores “significantly below benchmarks,” we will contact you within 30 school days of testing to discuss how we can support your child. We will offer an opportunity for a discussion of your child’s results which will include next steps.

Early literacy universal screening is an important tool to help promote your child’s success as a reader. We are grateful for your continued partnership, and please contact me with any questions about early literacy universal screening.

Best,

Principal

Appendix A.3: Sample Letter for Student Screening Results

from an Assessment that is not a Computer Adaptative Test

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| *Please note that this letter is an example*  *that may be adapted for your local community.* |

Dear Families,

I am writing to share an update about early literacy universal screening in grades K-3 at our school. We recently completed assessing our students and soon you will receive a Family Report that explains your child’s results. These actions are included in [Massachusetts regulation 603 CMR 28.03(1)(f),](https://www.doe.mass.edu/news/news.aspx?id=26937) which requires all public schools in the state to assess students’ reading skills in grades K-3 at least twice a year.

As a reminder, early literacy universal screening is used to determine a student’s risk for reading difficulty and to guide us in providing reading support. It is not a diagnosis or determination of a disability.

**Our School’s Early Literacy Universal Screening Assessment**

Our school’s early literacy universal screening assessment is [name of the screener with link to webpage], which is approved by the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education. [Name of screener] is given to each child by a teacher or staff member and takes about [X minutes] to complete.

**Important Early Reading Skills**

Early literacy universal screening assessments are used to assess skills that may predict future reading difficulties. These skills include alphabetic knowledge, phonemic awareness, word reading, reading comprehension and rapid automatized naming. Skills are assessed differently depending on the student’s grade level.

[Optional: Consider whether this information is helpful to include.]

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Alphabetic Knowledge** | Students’ familiarity with the names and sounds of letters and letter patterns. |
| **Phonemic Awareness** | Students’ knowledge of individual sounds in language. |
| **Word/Passage Reading** | Students’ ability to read words accurately and fluently. |
| **Reading Comprehension** | Students’ ability to understand and make meaning of a text. |
| **Rapid Automatized Naming** | Students’ ability to rapidly name a limited set of repeatedly presented known objects or letters. |

**Family Communication**

If your child scores “significantly below benchmarks,” we will contact you within 30 school days of testing, to discuss how we can support your child. We will offer an opportunity for a discussion of your child’s results which will include next steps.

Early literacy universal screening is an important tool to help promote each child’s success as a reader. We are grateful for your continued partnership, and please contact me with any questions about early literacy universal screening.

Best,

Principal

Appendix A.4: Sample Letter for Student Screening Results

that are Significantly Below Relevant Benchmarks

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| *Please note that this letter is an example that may be adapted for your local community.* |

Dear Families,

I am writing to share information about your child’s results on the early literacy universal screening assessment. As we have shared in prior letters, early literacy universal screening is used to help schools identify students who are at risk for reading difficulties, including risk of dyslexia, and is required consistent with [Massachusetts regulation 603 CMR 28.03(1)(f).](https://www.doe.mass.edu/news/news.aspx?id=26937) Your child was assessed on [date].

Our literacy team reviewed the results, and your child’s score on this assessment is significantly below relevant benchmarks for [grade X]. Our school is committed to providing students with the supports needed to become strong readers, so I am inviting you to a family-school discussion about your child’s reading progress. This is an opportunity to talk about ways our school can give your child the support they need in reading. As a reminder, early literacy universal screening is used to determine a student’s risk for reading difficulty – it is not a diagnosis or determination of a disability.

**What to Expect at the Family-School Discussion (Virtual or In-Person)**

*Who will be participating?*

Our discussion can be in-person or virtual and may include the following school staff:

*(School and/or district determine which school members should participate)*

* A member of our literacy/data team
* Your student’s teacher
* LIST OTHER MEMBERS HERE as appropriate (Guidance, Administrator, Child Study Team Member, ESL/Bilingual Specialist, etc.)

*What will we discuss?*

We will discuss the following topics:

1. **Information**: We will discuss your child’s results and see if more information is needed to understand your child’s reading progress. Early literacy universal screening assessments are brief, and our team might need to do additional assessments to learn more about specific reading skills that seem difficult for your child. These skills are listed in the chart below and are assessed differently depending on the grade level.

[Optional: Consider whether this information is helpful to include.] For multilingual learners, it’s important to look at how learning a new language impacts their results. We will discuss how language development impacts your child’s results.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Alphabetic Knowledge** | Students’ familiarity with the names and sounds of letters and letter patterns. |
| **Phonemic Awareness** | Students’ knowledge of individual sounds in language. |
| **Word/Passage Reading** | Students’ ability to read words accurately and fluently. |
| **Reading Comprehension** | Students’ ability to understand and make meaning of a text. |
| **Rapid Automatized Naming** | Students’ ability to rapidly name a limited set of repeatedly presented known objects or letters. |

1. **Student Support/Intervention:** We will discuss information from your child’s teacher, the universal screening assessment, other assessments, and information from you to help develop an intervention plan that addresses your child’s reading needs and gives your child the supports needed to be a strong reader.
2. **Monitor Progress:** We will make a plan to communicate your child’s reading progress and explain how we will determine the effectiveness of the support we provide.

Please be aware that an intervention is a general education response to meet your child’s reading needs– it is not a part of special education. If we suspect that a student has a disability based on the screening data, and/or other data, we will notify you in writing and ask for your consent to conduct a special education evaluation, and to explain more about this process. This early literacy assessment will not be used to delay or deny the evaluation of a student suspected of having a disability. If you suspect your child may have a disability, you may make a referral for an evaluation consistent with the Massachusetts special education regulations at [603 CMR 28.04 (Referral and Evaluation)](https://www.doe.mass.edu/rlo/sped/eligibility-guide/index.html#/).

Our families are our partners in achieving student success, and we are grateful for your continued support. Please contact me with any questions about these next steps to support your child in reading.

Best,

Principal