



Cedar Elementary DIBELS 8 Parent Guide

What is DIBELS 8?

- DIBELS are measures that help teachers and schools determine how students are performing on important reading skills. DIBELS stands for Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills. These measures are designed for students in grades K-5.

What skills are measured by DIBELS and why are they important?

- The critical skills necessary for successful beginning reading include: phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension. The DIBELS measures assess students on four of these five critical skills, which are often referred to as the “Big Ideas” of reading. The table on page 3 describes each big idea of reading and lists the corresponding DIBELS measure.

Which tests will be given to my son or daughter?

- Students will complete the tests depending on their grades and the time of year. The table on page 2 shows the timeline for assessing your student on the big ideas of reading across grade levels.

How often are students assessed?

- All students in a school building are given the DIBELS test three times each year; usually this occurs in the fall, winter, and spring. This school-wide testing is called benchmark assessment. School personnel may also regularly check on the progress of students who receive extra reading help to make sure their reading skills are improving. These regular checks are called progress monitoring. Students who are progress monitored may complete one or two of the individual DIBELS tests as often as once a week or as little as once every 6 weeks depending on school resources and the needs of the student.

How much time does it take?

- Each of the DIBELS tests only takes about one minute to complete. DIBELS tests are “indicators” of the student’s overall reading status, and are not intended to be in-depth or comprehensive measures of reading. Just like using a thermometer to take your child’s temperature, which provides a quick indicator of your child’s general health, these quick DIBELS tests provide teachers with information about your child’s reading health and how well he or she is progressing on a particular early reading skill. Benchmark

assessments generally take 2 to 6 minutes to give, depending on the grade of the student and time of year. Teachers only need about 1 to 2 minutes to monitor students at each testing time. DIBELS measures allow teachers to get valuable information about students' reading skills without using large amounts of instructional time.

How will the results be used?

- A student's score on the DIBELS measures give the school information about whether or not a student is on track for grade-level reading success. A school can quickly identify students who do not meet the goals on each DIBELS measure and provide extra help. For example, if a student is reading words accurately, but slowly, the teacher can provide extra practice re-reading stories and passages to improve their reading rate or fluency. The teacher can use the progress monitoring scores to make sure students receive extra help to improve other reading skills during the school year. Teachers can review scores on DIBELS measures for all the students in a class to make decisions about how to prepare their day-to-day reading lessons. School and district staff can also study the test scores across classrooms and grade levels to make decisions about how to best use resources to make sure that every child in the school, including your child, is on track to become an accurate and fluent reader.

What if I see some of my child's scores fall into the intensive or red range?

- The reason the assessment is given is to provide us insight into your child's acquisition of reading skills based on the developmental continuum. Every child progresses through the continuum at their own pace. The fall and winter benchmarks are measuring your child's abilities based on grade level standards that they have NOT been taught yet. By the spring benchmark, you will see a more realistic perspective on where a student is as it relates to grade-level standards. Teachers use these measures to develop personalized literacy goals and plan targeted instruction to meet your child's needs.

What is an MTSS block and how does it relate to DIBELS 8?

- The data from these assessments help guide our teachers in designing instructional plans that target the individual needs of each student. Once we determine the best approach for targeted instruction and resources, we provide that instruction in small groups in addition to our daily literacy block. These "MTSS" (Multi-tiered System of Support) groups meet up to three times a week for thirty minutes.
- Your child may come home and report that they are working with a different teacher during this MTSS block of time. All of the kindergarten, grade one, special education teachers and reading specialists are working collaboratively on this initiative. In addition, instructional groupings are designed to be flexible and your child's group may change over time. This might also result in the shift of the teacher working with your child during this time. This is done to ensure that the instruction is differentiated and tailored to your child's literacy skills as they continue to grow and evolve over time.

The DIBELS measures include six individual tests that focus on the big ideas and critical skills of beginning reading.

Big Ideas	What is it? Why is it important?	DIBELS Measures	Grades Assessed					
			K	1	2	3	4-6	7-8
Phonemic Awareness	Phonemic awareness refers to your child's ability to hear and manipulate sounds in spoken words only. This skill is a powerful predictor of future reading success. It is a skill that is typically assessed early in a child's schooling (i.e., kindergarten), but it is also used with older children who are experiencing difficulty reading.	Phoneme Segmentation Fluency (PSF)	√					
		Phoneme Segmentation Fluency (PSF)	√	√				
Phonics	Phonics refers to the ability to learn the individual sounds in spoken language and map those sounds to specific written letters in the English language. Students who have strong phonics skills are able to connect individual sounds with letters and use those sounds to read words.	Nonsense Word Fluency (NWF)	√	√	√	√		
		Word Reading Fluency (WRF)	√	√	√	√		
Reading Fluency	Reading fluency refers to your child's ability to read text accurately and automatically so that students can understand what they are reading.	Oral Reading Fluency (ORF)		√	√	√	√	√
		Word Reading Fluency (WRF)	√	√	√	√		
Vocabulary	Vocabulary refers to your child's knowledge of the meanings of individual words being read. Vocabulary knowledge is important to a student's ability to read and comprehend what is read.							

Test of Related Early Literacy Skills

	Letter Naming Fluency assesses a student's ability to say the "names" of upper and lowercase letters in the English alphabet. This skill is a strong predictor of future reading success in young children.	Letter Naming Fluency (LNF)	√	√					
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Please explore the University of Oregon's DIBELS Data System website at <http://dibels.uoregon.edu> to learn more about the importance of early literacy instruction and assessments