

Dibels Family Resource Guide

What is Dibels? DIBELS® (Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills) is a set of procedures and measures for assessing the acquisition of literacy skills. They are designed to be short (one minute) fluency measures that can be used to regularly detect risk and monitor the development of early literacy and early reading skills in kindergarten through eighth grade.

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.

What skills are measured? Dibels assessments measure beginning reading skills that include: phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency and comprehension. Students complete tests in these areas depending on their grade level and/or time of year.

How will the results be used? 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. Parents will receive a Dibels report for their child following the assessment.