

COWICHAN VALLEY SCHOOL DISTRICT

EARLY LEARNING INVENTORY
KINDERGARTEN

LITERACY ASSESSMENT

September 2026

COWICHAN VALLEY
School District

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Early Learning Inventory (ELI) Kindergarten

The Cowichan Valley Early Learning Inventory (ELI) Reading Assessment has been designed as a common formative assessment and universal screener for our district. This assessment is done with and for our learners. The design honours that our learners often progress at different rates. Our kindergarten assessment aligns with the Ministry of Education and Child Care mandated screeners.

The information gained from this tool will serve as a universal screener for our district's tiered instruction model. The data will inform individual, small group, and class instruction. It will also help identify patterns of instructional needs in a class, school, or across the district, as we work to ensure students master these critical components.

Each fall, classroom teachers and school teams will work together to identify each student's strengths and needs with early literacy skills. The ELI provides mid-year and end-of year opportunities to monitor students' progress and can be used for communication of student learning. Teachers are invited to administer the assessments in small parts.

Each grade level screener is an inventory of skills and does not represent the full, complex set of skills necessary for independent reading. Our district's Literacy Framework provides more in-depth information, instructional resources, and intervention strategies.

Key Information:

- Oral Language can be administered on-line (iPad, laptop, etc.). Scoring is automated.
- Letter and Sound Recognition assessment only requires a total for each section to be entered.
- Teachers use paper administration and enter raw scores.
- Sub-tests can be administered prior to timelines if appropriate for learners.
- All students are expected to complete each subtest, unless a student is unable to engage due to a documented barrier. If they are unable to complete, enter "0" for the item. This is not punitive, simply the learner's truth at this time.
- A blank entry will indicate that the student has been absent, and the teacher has not yet administered the assessment. Please administer and enter score as soon as possible.

Early Learning Inventory (ELI) Kindergarten

Fall (by the end of October)

- Oral Language
- First Sound Fluency (FSF)
- Letter Naming Fluency (LNF)

Winter (by the middle of February)

- First Sound Fluency (FSF)
- Letter Naming Fluency (LNF)
- Phoneme Segmentation Fluency (PSF)
- Reassess Oral Language for mastery

Spring (by the end of May)

- Letter Naming Fluency (LNF)
- Phoneme Segmentation Fluency (PSF)
- Letter Sound Recognition
- Reassess Oral Language for mastery

Optional: Nonsense Word Fluency (NWF)

Learning Inventories Quick Start Guide: Kindergarten

Oral Language: Fall

- Paper recording: make one copy of page 5 for each student and record responses
- Enter values in the assessment portal (District Website – Staff – SSDAS)
- Electronic recording of scores: login to the Assessment Portal using an iPad or computer and complete the subtest (scoring is automatic)

First Sound Fluency (FSF): Fall, Winter

- See scoring booklet – oral only
- One minute timer is required
- Assessor circles the corresponding sounds or group of sounds, the student says.
- See pages 50-57 in the Acadience manual for additional information

Letter Naming Fluency (LNF): Fall, Winter, Spring

- See scoring booklet
- Make one copy of Student Letter Naming Page
- One minute timer is required
- Total score is based on the number of correct 1- and 2-point responses the student says in one minute
- See pages 59-64 in the Acadience manual for additional information

Phoneme Segmentation Fluency (PSF): Winter, Spring

- See scoring booklet – oral only
- One minute timer is required
- Score is number of correct sound segments (different, correct parts of the words) the student says in 1 minute
- See pages 66-74 in the Acadience manual for additional information

Letter Sounds: Spring

- Paper recording: make one copy of page 7 as a visual
- Access the slide decks using the QR code on this page or on Cowichan Learns
- Make one copy of page 8 for each student and record responses

Enter values in the assessment portal:

- **District Website – Staff – SSDAS**

Data Dashboard Procedures – Click here for manual

Oral Language

This measure helps us understand each child's early oral language and listening skills—foundational abilities that support all later learning, including reading, writing, and social communication. The *Following Directions* tasks show how well students can listen, process spoken language, and follow multi-step instructions, which are essential for classroom routines. The *Sentence Repetition* activity gives us a window into a child's expressive language, grammar development, vocabulary, and working memory by allowing us to hear how they naturally produce sentences when the model is removed. The *Questionnaire* helps teachers reflect on how children use language in real classroom situations—interacting with peers, expressing needs, using age-appropriate grammar, being understood, and choosing accurate vocabulary. Together, these three components help identify early speech or language concerns. Teachers should revisit these skills throughout the year to monitor growth and share any concerns with the School-Based Team.

First Sound Fluency

First Sound Fluency (FSF) is an important early literacy assessment as it provides a quick, reliable snapshot of a child's developing phonemic awareness; the ability to hear and identify the first sound in spoken words. Awareness of the sounds that make words is essential for blending and decoding, and the first sound of a word is typically the easiest for young learners to hear and isolate. Because the ability to identify initial phonemes is strongly linked to later reading success (Yopp, 1988), FSF is used at the beginning and middle of kindergarten. When administering FSF, teachers clearly articulate each word and ask students to say the first sound they hear. Results help teachers identify students who may require additional focus and allow them to monitor progress over time, ensuring all learners develop strong phonological foundations for reading.

Letter Naming Fluency

Letter Naming Fluency (LNF) is a quick assessment that measures how fluently a student can name letters of the alphabet when presented in random order. LNF is a strong predictor of later reading achievement because it reflects a child's familiarity with print and automaticity in letter recognition. This measure is important because it serves as an early risk indicator for reading difficulties, helping educators identify students who may need additional instruction. LNF is typically administered at the beginning of kindergarten through the start of first grade, and the next steps after identifying low performance should focus on building phonemic awareness and the alphabetic principle—skills that directly impact reading outcomes— rather than spending extensive time on letter names alone. Instruction should prioritize letter- sound knowledge and blending skills to prepare students for decoding and fluent reading.

Phoneme Segmentation Fluency

Phoneme Segmentation Fluency (PSF) measures a student's ability to break spoken words into their individual sounds (phonemes), a critical component of phonemic awareness. This skill is essential because phonemic awareness is strongly linked to successful reading acquisition. Students who can segment words into sounds are better prepared to decode and spell words. PSF is administered from the middle of kindergarten through the beginning of first grade. It involves asking students to say all the sounds in a word within one minute.

Low performance on PSF signals a need for targeted instruction in phonemic awareness, such as activities that involve listening for, identifying, and manipulating sounds in words. Next steps should include explicit, systematic instruction using strategies like sound-by-sound segmentation, Elkonin boxes, and blending practice to strengthen the foundation for phonics and fluent reading.

Letter and Sound Recognition

Letter name and letter sound recognition refers to a student's ability to identify letters of the alphabet and state the sounds they represent. Unlike timed fluency measures, this type of assessment focuses on accuracy and completeness, helping teachers know exactly what a student has mastered by the end of the year. This knowledge is critical because understanding letter-sound relationships is the foundation of the alphabetic principle, which enables decoding and spelling. When students can confidently recognize letters and their sounds, they are prepared to blend sounds into words and progress toward fluent reading. Assessing this skill ensures teachers can target gaps early, provide explicit instruction where needed, and build a strong base for phonics and word recognition, which are key predictors of future reading success.

Steps for accessing *Acadience* Screening Materials Online:

1. Go to Acadience Website: https://acadiencelearning.org/acadience-reading/k-grade6/
2. Hover on Our Assessments at the top and then click on Acadience Reading
3. Scroll down the page to Ready to Get Started? And click on Resource Hub
4. Click PDF download – enter email and click agree
5. Choose the Assessments tab
6. Select Acadience Reading K-6 and click until you see Grade 1 Benchmark Forms below and scroll to your grade. (Clicking will either show Benchmark & Progress Monitoring Forms or the next click will show diagnostics which are also free)
7. Found your grade? Click the download arrow and the file will include all Scoring Materials and Student Materials.

Early Learning Inventory (ELI) Kindergarten

Fall: Oral Language

1. *Following Directions*

- ☐ Touch your feet
- ☐ Clap your hands, then touch your head

2. *Sentence Repetition*

"We are going to play a copycat game – you say what I say."

Make a note about any patterns in student responses that were not captured by the marking procedures.

- ☐ **"**This soap is bubbly."

  _____

- ☐ **"**He was eating hotdogs for lunch."

  _____

3. *Questionnaire – Can they?*

- ☐ Socially interact with adults and peers?
  - Uses words to get needs met
  - Uses language in play
- ☐ Have appropriate grammar?
  - Correct pronouns, correct place, past tenses, be – verb (is, was, are)
  - Words in the correct order
- ☐ Be ***understood*** 90% of the time?
  - Speech errors may still be present ('lello, wabbit, otay etc.)
- ☐ Use appropriate vocabulary for subject and situations?
  - At least one describing word, correct prepositions, at least 4 words in a variety of sentences

**Do these results identify speech and language concerns, or other areas of need not noted here? If so, please share them with the School-Based Team. Reassess regularly throughout the school year to monitor progress and confirm mastery.*

Spring

Kindergarten Early Learning Inventory : Letters & Sounds

i	s	m	t	p
a	c	d	h	r
f	k	g	n	e
w	b	l	v	j
o	z	u	y	q
		x		

Spring

Kindergarten Early Learning Inventory : Letter Sounds Recording Sheet

This is the teacher recording page. Use QR Code to access student flash cards or use letter tiles, magnets, flash cards or other tools your class is familiar with. Ask the student to identify the letter and what sound it makes. Numerical total for sounds is all that is entered into Dashboard.

Student Name: _____

Letter & Sound Recognition

i	s	m	t	p
a	c	d	h	r
f	k	g	n	e
w	b	l	v	j
o	z	u	y	q
		x		

Date:	Sounds: /26	*Only letter sounds entered into dashboard, names for teacher information.

	Letter Sounds	Letter Names
i		
s		
m		
t		
p		
a		
c		
d		
h		
r		
f		
k		
g		
n		
e		
w		
b		
l		
v		
j		
o		
z		
u		
y		
q		
x		

Learning Inventory Cut Points

Kindergarten - English									
Assessment	**Fall**			**Winter**			**Spring**		
	Red	Yellow	Green	Red	Yellow	Green	Red	Yellow	Green
Oral Language – Following Directions	0	1	2						
Oral Language – Sentence Repetition	0	1	2						
Oral Language – Can they?	0-1	2	3-4						
First Sound Fluency	0-5	6-9	10+	0-20	21-29	30+			
Letter Naming Fluency	0-15	16-24	25+	0-30	31-36	37+	0-34	35-41	42+
Phoneme Segmentation Fluency				0-10	11-19	20+	0-25	26-39	40+
Letter Sound Recognition							0-15	16-20	21-26

***Green – student exhibits mastery of the skill assessed.**

***Yellow – supplemental instruction needed to ensure mastery of the skill assessed.**

***Red – direct instruction and/or intervention needed to move learner forward in the specific skill(s).**