

PROGRESS MONITORING IN KINDERGARTEN IS IMPORTANT

N. H., Lee, K., Liu, X., Boucher, A., Al Otaiba, S., & Simmons, L. (2023). The relations of kindergarten early literacy skill trajectories on common progress monitoring measures to subsequent word reading skills for students at risk for reading difficulties. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 115(8), 1045–1069.

WHAT DID THEY DO?

A longitudinal study was conducted involving 426 kindergartners from diverse backgrounds and linguistic abilities. The primary objective was to monitor the reading progress of students identified as at risk for reading difficulties. Identifying at-risk students was initially determined through a reading rating form assessment that examined assessed alphabet knowledge, phonological awareness, oral language, and overall reading skills and was followed by a standardized reading test. Followed by the administration of the letter identification and phonological awareness subtests from the Woodcock Reading Mastery Test, third edition. The study aimed to determine which of the following progress monitoring measures best reflects progress toward successful reading outcomes in at-risk kindergartners: letter name and sound fluency, phoneme segmentation, word and pseudoword reading, and a computer adaptive test (CAT). Students were monitored once every 2 weeks.

WHAT DID THEY FIND?

Researchers found that monitoring letter-sound fluency in the fall and word reading fluency (WRF) in the spring serves as strongest indicators for identifying kindergartners who may require additional support to prevent reading difficulties. By tracking letter-sound fluency in the fall and WRF in the spring, educators and interventionists can effectively determine who may need additional support to prevent reading difficulties. It also backs the need for early and targeted intervention for students who are at risk. Progress monitoring using these specific measures helps educators better tailor support and interventions to meet the needs of students, which would ultimately improve overall reading success.

WHAT COULD THIS MEAN?

Progress monitoring at least once every 2 weeks using letter-sound fluency in the fall, and then transitioning to word reading fluency in the spring, can help identify kindergartners who may require additional support. Progress monitoring should be a quick check-in to assess how students are progressing with the literacy skills being taught. Collaborating with a reading specialist can be highly beneficial in identifying and implementing appropriate progress monitoring tools available within your school building. By assessing students' reading abilities and tracking their progress over time, educators gain valuable insights into areas of strength and weakness. This enables them to make informed decisions and adjust interventions more effectively to meet the specific needs of each student. Early intervention and progress monitoring are indispensable components of an effective approach in supporting students at risk of reading difficulties and ensuring that every child receives the necessary support to reach their full potential as readers and learners.

