



Dynamic Learning Maps Aligned K–6 Early Literacy Alternate Assessment Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

This guide provides information on Iowa’s Early Literacy Alternate Assessments. A question-and-answer format is used to summarize information. For additional information regarding Iowa’s Early Literacy Alternate Assessment, contact Jennifer Denne, Alternate Assessment Consultant, at jennifer.denne@iowa.gov or at 515-326-5332.

Policy and Guidance – Participation

Question	Answer
How do we determine if a student requires an Early Literacy Alternate Assessment?	<p>Students should be provided the opportunity to be administered the standard literacy assessment before determining the need for the State of Iowa’s Dynamic Learning Maps Aligned K–6 Early Literacy Alternate Assessment.</p> <p>To ensure students are not inappropriately placed in the Dynamic Learning Maps Aligned K–6 Early Literacy Alternate Assessment, IEP teams will use the Early Literacy Assessment Students with Significant Disabilities: Flowchart of Options as a starting point in the decision making for participation in the Early Literacy Assessments.</p> <p>Review the State of Iowa’s Participation Guidelines for Iowa’s Alternate Assessments will also support IEP team decision in appropriately placing the student in the correct Early Literacy Assessment.</p>
Where may I find the Early Literacy Assessment Students with Significant Cognitive Disabilities: Flowchart of Options?	<p>The Early Literacy Assessment Students with Significant Cognitive Disabilities: Flowchart of Options is posted on the Iowa Department of Education’s Alternate Assessment web page.</p>

Question	Answer
<p>In using the Early Literacy Alternate Assessment Students with Significant Cognitive Disabilities: Flowchart of Options, who can assist me in determining what alternate procedures with standard tests I should use with my student?</p>	<p>Appropriate accommodations for assessments are typically provided within the administration guidance documents for each individual assessment.</p> <p>Test administrators must ensure alternate procedures do not violate the accommodations permitted with a particular assessment. IEP support related personnel, such as SLP, OT, PT, and AT, can assist in ensuring the student can access, participate, and respond to the standard assessment questions.</p>
<p>Are the criteria for participation the same for the Early Literacy Alternate assessment as for the Dynamic Learning Maps (DLM) Alternate Assessment?</p>	<p>Yes, the criteria for participation applies to all Alternate assessments and should be marked as such on the IEP.</p> <p>Participation in any assessment designed around alternate achievement standards require students reflect the pervasive nature of a significant cognitive disability.</p>
<p>If the IEP determines the student requires a literacy alternate assessment, how do we document The Dynamic Learning Maps Aligned K–6 Early Literacy Alternate Assessment on the IEP as a non-AYP district-wide assessment?</p>	<p>The Dynamic Learning Maps Aligned K–6 Early Literacy Alternate Assessment will be used to meet the Early Literacy screening and progress monitoring requirements. This assessment has been state-approved for children with significant cognitive disabilities.</p>

Policy and Guidance – General Questions

Question	Answer
<p>Where do I find specific guidance on students with significant disabilities within the Iowa Department of Education Early Literacy Guidance?</p>	<p>Specific Student Populations – Appendix I will provide technical assistance regarding specific student populations, including special education students, students with disabilities, students who are blind/visually impaired and deaf/hard of hearing, English learners, non-public students, homeschool (dual-enrolled/HSAP) students, students with dyslexia, and students whose parents/guardians wish to refuse assessment and/or intervention.</p>

Question	Answer
<p>What are the changes to the Early Literacy Alternate Assessment Screening starting in the fall of 2020?</p>	<p>For students in grades K–6 that participate in the Early Literacy Alternate Assessment (EL AA), there will continue to be three screening windows for the school year. Starting in the fall of the 2020–2021 school year, teachers will be required to enter scores for scales 1–4 and scale 6 for the screening/reporting windows. Scale 5, Writing: Text Types and Purposes, will now be optional.</p> <p>The screening data will continue to be a structured portfolio containing three pieces of student evidence for each scale. The three distinct forms of evidence should indicate not that the student mastered a skill in a single way, but instead, the student demonstrated understanding in a variety of ways. The structured portfolio approach provides an accurate picture of students’ abilities to generalize and apply skills in multiple settings and routines.</p>
<p>What are the changes to the Early Literacy Alternate Assessment Progress Monitoring starting in the fall of 2020?</p>	<p>Based on the Early Literacy Alternate Assessment (EL AA) Screening data, IEP teams must choose a minimum of one scale for progress monitoring reporting.</p> <p>In addition, the frequency of progress monitoring is now required a minimum of once a month. This change has been made to reflect research on the extensive, repeated, and individualized instruction needed for students with significant cognitive disabilities to show growth and generalize skills. This will allow teachers to have the flexibility of when to monitor and record data that closely aligns with each student’s individualized instructional plan.</p> <p>Evidence used for progress monitoring and screening data should be collected from instructional activities or routines and should not be collected through an assessment event.</p>
<p>For scales 1, 2, & 3: What would a score of Level 1 look like and what would a score of Level 10 look like?</p>	<p>A student who scores a Level 1 would fill in a repeated line with or without assistive technology.</p> <p>Students who score a Level 10 must have 2 points related.</p>

Question	Answer
Scale 2: What is the difference between the first example for a score of 1 and the second and third examples for a score of 2?	The difference between the two is that of in Level 1, it is not intentional more of awareness and anticipating. In Level 2, the student is intentional in that he/she is attending-looking right at the ball or grabbing the egg.
Scale 2: What is the difference between the first example for a score of 1 and the second and third examples for a score of 2?	At Level 1, the student looked at the box because it was there and the teacher was moving it—the student wasn't connecting with the WORD—the student was just getting the thing. At Level 2, there is some connection between the word and the object. The student looked at the ball in conjunction with the teacher reading about the BALL not just because the teacher moved it or it was the cool thing that was present. In the egg example, the student reached for the egg when asked to find the egg not because it was the only thing present/shiny/new/moving.
Scale 4: What does a student have to do in order to score Level 10?	Students who score Level 10 apply letter sounds in words, sentences or broader context.
Scale 5: What is the difference between examples for scores in Levels 4 and 5?	<p>The difference between Levels 4 and 5 is that in Level 4, the student does not select the topic but rather reacts to the preferred topic based on his interest. The student did select a topic, but that isn't a requirement of Level 4. The focus on Level 4 is that the student can communicate information about a topic.</p> <p>In Level 5, the student intentionally selects the topic rather than react to a preferred interest and from there communicates information about the topic as demonstrated by the color or crayons used that reflect what is in the book. At Level 5, the key features are TOPIC selection and communicating ABOUT that topic. In the two examples, in the EL AA Manual, the student clearly selects a topic from a range of options and then clearly communicate ABOUT that topic. One uses his AAC system and the other uses speech to label those topics and THEN each of the students try to use the alphabet to write about it as well.</p>
Scale 5: In general, what must the student do in order to receive a score?	Students must select a topic, brainstorm ideas around the topic and write or dictate their ideas.

Question	Answer
<p>Scale 5: What does a student have to do in order to scale a Level 10?</p>	<p>Students who score Level 10 must have writing samples with multiple ideas. Level 10 requires that students communicate about SOMETHING using drawing, pictures, or tactual representations. Both of the examples in the EL AA Manual show that the student points to the selected topic of interest when the teacher asks, "What are you writing about?" The teacher has attributed meaning to the actual written product, but the student clearly shows that they are writing about the pictures they selected.</p>