



August 6, 2020

Early Literacy Alternate Assessment

Purpose

This guidance is intended to update educators, Individualized Education Program (IEP) teams, and administrators of changes beginning in the fall of 2020 to the DLM Aligned K-6 Early Literacy Alternate Assessment (EL AA). The EL AA is the only approved alternate to the Early Literacy Implementation (ELI) for students with the most significant cognitive disabilities. The updated requirements replace prior guidance effective August 6, 2020.

Early Literacy Alternate Assessment Screening

For students in Grades K–6 that participate in the 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.

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.

Early Literacy Alternate Assessment Progress Monitoring

Based on the EL AA Screening data, IEP teams must choose a minimum of one scale for progress monitoring reporting.

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.

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.

COVID-19 Implications

During the 2020–2021 school year, EL AA screening data will still be required for the three windows. However, teachers are not required to use three different types of evidence (work sample, photo, anecdotal notes) to show that the skill was generalized. The evidence will still need to be from three different instructional activities or routines.

Questions

If you have questions, please contact Jennifer Denne at jennifer.denne@iowa.gov.