

Supporting Learners with Complex Communication and Other Access Needs: From Screening to Instruction FAQ

1. How do we conduct the K-3 reading diagnostic assessment (universal screener) for students with low incidence disabilities and complex communications needs?

- Select an approved K-3 reading diagnostic assessment (universal screener) from the [state-approved list](#). Preferably, a universal screener that offers flexibility of 1:1 and paper-based administration.
- Follow the guidelines outlined in the [Third Grade Reading Guarantee Guidance](#).
- Support students during the assessment process by adding individualized supports as outlined in the [Administering Literacy Assessments for Students with Low Incidence Disabilities and Complex Communications Needs](#).
- For more information on universal screeners, check out the [Assessment and Intervention Sequence: Assessment](#) video.

2. What do we do if a student scores “0” or the results of the universal screener are not scoreable because the assessment does not have appropriate accommodations?

- Do not panic. A score of zero or a lack of response from the student is telling the team more information is needed. Consider how the student best accesses assessments, their most effective modes of engagement, and whether further support or a deeper understanding of their communication methods are necessary.
- If any part of the screener results in a score of zero or falls below benchmark levels, conducting diagnostic assessments is the next step. Diagnostic assessments provide detailed insights into student’s strengths and skill gaps, to inform instruction. The purpose is to identify the next skill(s) in the instructional sequence to target instruction and intervention.
- Identify which subtests or foundational skill areas require further diagnostic testing. Note: For students who do not have an established mode of communication, Table 3 in "[Administering Literacy Assessment for Students with Low Incidence Disabilities and Complex Communication Needs](#)" provides resources and recommendations for accommodations and scaffolds to utilize.
- Collect additional diagnostic data through informal assessments that are directly aligned with each identified area of need.

3. How do we use assessment data to develop a Reading Improvement and Monitoring Plan (RIMP)/provide instruction for students with low incidence disabilities and complex communication needs?

- Instruction for students with complex communication needs would begin with establishing strategies for students to provide expressive and or receptive language utilizing strategies found in [Administering Literacy Assessments for Students with Low Incidence Disabilities and Complex Communications Needs](#). This instruction would align with the Explicit Intervention in Communication/Language RIMP program code.
- Assessment data should provide a detailed map of students' current skills and skill gaps and be used to identify targeted intervention needs for individual students.
- Match the needs identified in the diagnostic assessment with an intervention that targets the specific skill gaps while also considering the learner's profile to ensure the appropriate access to the intervention and that the level of support is responsive to the student's needs.
- When developing the RIMP, ensure that the identified skill gaps or areas of deficiency are clearly aligned with the appropriate RIMP intervention codes to guide effective support and progress monitoring.

4. How do we progress monitor students with low incidence disabilities and complex communication needs?

- For all students, including students with complex communication needs, progress monitoring answers the question: Is progress being made by the student and the system? The [Intervention Intensity Checklist](#) offers variables to consider when a student is not making progress and instruction needs to be intensified.
- Progress monitoring should include the use of baseline screening and diagnostic data, along with benchmark data, in the same targeted skill areas throughout the school year (beginning, middle, and end of year).
- Several of Ohio's approved K-3 reading diagnostic assessments (universal screeners) include progress monitoring for each of the individual measures. Use informal diagnostic assessments regularly to track student progress and identify patterns of growth or stagnation.
- If a student does not demonstrate growth, review and adjust access supports to ensure that all necessary supports are in place during instruction and assessment. This ensures students can engage, participate, and communicate during all learning situations.
- For more information on progress monitoring, check out the [Assessment and Intervention Sequence: Progress Monitoring video](#).