

# **D I B E L S**

## **Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills**

DIBELS are a series of short tests given to children in kindergarten through fifth grade to screen and monitor their progress in learning the necessary skills to become successful readers.

All DIBELS measures are timed with most taking only one minute. The reason for the timing is to find out if a child is able to answer the questions or read the words automatically. Having these skills at the automatic level allows children to focus on understanding the meaning of what they are reading.

Kindergarten through fifth-grade students in **Cache County School District** are assessed with DIBELS in fall, winter and spring. Results are shared with parents at each SEP conference. Please contact your child's teacher with questions about DIBELS or any other aspect of your child's reading program.

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This brochure is adapted from a brochure developed by Dr. Joseph Torgesen, Director of the *Florida Center for Reading Research*.

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Dynamic  
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*a parent's guide*



# DIBELS

## **Letter Naming**

Kindergarten and first grade students are given a page with letters and asked to name each one. This test measures the number of upper and lower case letters a child accurately reads in one minute.

## **Initial Sounds**

By the middle of kindergarten, children should be able to say or recognize the beginning sounds in words automatically. To measure this with DIBELS, students are given a series of words and asked to identify the beginning sound of each word. It takes one minute to give this test.

## **Phoneme\* Segmentation**

This is a measure of children's awareness of the many sounds that make up words we speak. It is given to kindergarten and first grade students and is a skill that should be mastered by the end of kindergarten. The child is told a word like "cat" and asked to say all of the sounds in the word. There are three sounds in "cat." It takes only one minute to give this test.

\* *Phonemes* are the individual sounds in spoken words.

## **Nonsense Words**

The ability to blend together the sounds represented by letters to read words is an important skill in learning to read. This skill helps children in kindergarten, first and second grade to use their knowledge of letters and sounds to read unfamiliar words, like "tob" or "miv". During testing, the child is asked to read the whole word or identify the individual sounds in the word. It takes one minute to give this test.

## **Oral Reading**

This is a measure of how fluently and accurately children can read passages written at their grade level. This is given from the middle of first through the end of fifth grade. Children who read accurately and fluently are better able to understand what they read.

Children are given three passages and asked to read each one aloud for one minute.



## **If your child is just beginning to learn to read**

At home you can help your child by...

- *Practicing the sounds of language.* Teach your child rhymes, short poems and songs. Play simple word games. *How many words can you make up that sound like "bat"?*
- *Helping your child take spoken words apart and put them together.* Help your child separate the sounds in words, listen for beginning and ending sounds, and put separate sounds together.
- *Practicing the alphabet by pointing out letters wherever you see them and by reading alphabet books.*
- *Reading to your child every day.*

## **If your child is just beginning to read**

At home you can help your child by...

- *Pointing the letter-sound relationships your child is learning on labels, boxes, newspapers, magazines and signs.*
- *Listening to your child read words and books from school.* Be patient and listen as your child practices.
- *Reading to your child every day.*

## **If your child is reading**

At home you can help your child by...

- *Rereading familiar books.* Children need practice in reading comfortably and with expression using books they know.
- *Building reading accuracy.* As your child is reading aloud, point out words he/she missed and help him/her read words correctly.
- *Building reading comprehension.* Talk with your child about what he/she is reading. Ask about new words. Talk about what happened in a story. Ask about the characters, places and events that took place.
- *Reading to your child every day.*

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National Institute of Child Health and Human Development  
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