

# Phonological Awareness Literacy Screening (PALS) Parent Information About PALS Plus

## What is the Phonological Awareness Literacy Screening for Grades 1-8 (PALS Plus)?

Developed by researchers at the University of Virginia, Phonological Awareness Literacy Screening for Grades 1-8 (PALS Plus) is a research-based reading assessment for classroom teachers to use with students in these grades. The primary purpose of PALS Plus is to identify students who perform below expectations in several important literacy fundamentals, and thus who are likely to experience reading difficulties. PALS Plus encourages teachers to prevent problems before they occur. The screening data guides teachers as they plan appropriate instruction for both grade-level readers and struggling readers.

## Why is my student being assessed with PALS Plus?

PALS Plus will identify early and accurately students who are experiencing difficulties in acquiring fundamental reading skills, to ensure these students get extra instruction [when they are young]. PALS Plus also gives teachers specific information to guide their instruction according to each student's literacy needs.

## What does PALS Plus assess?

- Spelling
- Word knowledge
- Letter Sounds
- Oral Reading in Context
- Alphabet knowledge (for students who have more basic literacy skills)
- Phonemic Awareness (for students who have more basic literacy skills)

## When will my student be given PALS Plus?

PALS Plus is typically administered three times a year: in the fall, in mid-year, and in the spring. Classroom teachers administer all but one of the PALS Plus tasks individually.

## What types of scores does PALS Plus provide?

Students' scores on specific tasks are added together to create a Summed Score. This Summed Score is compared against minimum expectations for fall and for spring. If a student's Summed Score is below the benchmark, the student proceeds to additional tasks of PALS Plus (alphabet knowledge and phonemic awareness tasks), and it is recommended that the student receive extra instruction tailored to his/her needs. Individual task scores and task benchmarks also are provided.

## How are the PALS Plus results used?

PALS Plus allows teachers and school-level reading specialists to identify students who are at risk of reading difficulties, because they lag behind grade-level expectations in literacy fundamentals. PALS Plus provides teachers with profiles of learners' needs and strengths, including specific information regarding each student's reading level and spelling stage. Teachers consult these profiles in planning instruction and as they progress through the curriculum. Thus, PALS Plus results are used to guide teachers in planning literacy instruction that is matched to students' reading level and spelling stage, and targeted at each student's reading needs.

## How can I prepare my student for PALS?

There is no need to prepare your student specifically for PALS. We encourage parents to read to their children and spend time sharing books. These interactions help students continue to develop important literacy skills.