

Your Child's PALS Plus Scores: What Parents Should Know

PALS stands for **Phonological Awareness Literacy Screening**, a tool used in grades 1-8 classes to:

- Identify students who are struggling with learning to read,
- Find out what each student is ready to learn next, and
- Check on each student's reading progress during the school year.

Teachers administer the PALS Plus assessment at the beginning and end of the school year. Each time your child takes PALS Plus, s/he receives an overall score, called a Summed Score, as well as scores for individual reading tasks that make up the assessment. Some students may need extra help, called "intervention," to support their reading needs. The PALS Summed Score is used to identify students who would benefit from this additional instruction beyond what is provided in the regular classroom.

How do PALS scores provide information about your child's progress toward becoming a reader?

1. Look at your child's Summed Score on the PALS Student Summary Sheet. Now find the Summed Score benchmark (shown in parentheses). Is your child's Summed Score above or below the Summed Score benchmark?

Teachers provide extra reading help, or intervention, to students who do not meet the Summed Score benchmark.

Intervention should happen **in addition** to regular reading and language arts time in the classroom. The extra instruction will focus on helping each child strengthen specific reading skills. Intervention should continue until a student meets the Summed Score benchmark on the next PALS assessment.

2. Look at your child's scores for each specific task. If your child's score fell below the benchmark score in any task (such as Spelling or Letter Sounds), the teacher will instruct your child, individually and in small groups, to strengthen specific skills. What is your child's Instructional Oral Reading Level? Reading instruction should be targeted at this level for maximum reading growth. Spelling instruction should target spelling features for which your child scored 2 or 3 points (which indicates some knowledge of feature but not mastery).

3. If this Summary Sheet includes Mid-Year and/or Spring Scores, look at the progress your child has made. Compare spring and fall scores. On what skills has your child improved? Has s/he reached or exceeded benchmarks on individual tasks? Which tasks need strengthening?

Ask your child's teacher:

- What will s/he do **in the classroom** to improve my child's reading skills?
- If needed, what **additional help (intervention)** will my child receive in reading during the day?
- What **can I do at home** to continue to grow my child's reading skills?

Reading instruction should be based on your child's strengths and needs in reading. PALS gives teachers specific information about each student's level of knowledge and fluency in letter and letter sound recognition, oral reading, and spelling patterns so they can design the best instruction possible for each student.

Parents play a very important role in helping children develop as readers by reading with them, talking about new experiences, and encouraging them to write, spell, and learn. Talk to your child's teacher about how you can support their literacy development at home.

What's in a PALS Score?

Look at the Student Summary Sheet.

The first number in the score column is your **child's score** on that task.

The number in parentheses () shows the **benchmark score** for that task. If your child scores at or below the benchmark, it indicates they need more help with that skill.

The number in the MAX column shows the **total possible score** for that task.