



# Guidelines for Implementing Screening and Supplemental Reading Instruction for English Learners (ELs)

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In response to Ready to Read Act, *Students With Reading Difficulties –Screenings and Interventions* (Section 4-136 of the Education Article of the Annotated Code of Maryland), the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) EL/Title III Office and a work group comprised of local education agency (LEA) representatives created the following guidelines to support LEAs in their decision- making process for identifying ELs in need of reading support.

### OVERVIEW OF SECTION 4-136 OF THE EDUCATION ARTICLE

The statute requires a valid and reliable screening measurement procedure that is used to identify or predict whether a student may be at risk for poor learning outcomes. Screening can be conducted by a classroom teacher, school psychologist, special education teacher, speech language pathologist, reading interventionist, reading specialist, or any other educator trained in screening instruments and protocols. LEAs shall provide a description of the screening and supplemental instruction process as well as screening results to parents if there is an indication of risk. LEAs will report data to MSDE on July 1, 2021, for the 2020-2021 school year.

The statute requires that students to be screened:

- Are in kindergarten;
- Are in first grade and were not screened by the school in kindergarten or demonstrated difficulty mastering grade level reading in kindergarten; or
- Have entered or transferred to public elementary school, unless a determination is made by the LEA that students have already been screened and do not demonstrate difficulty mastering grade- level reading.

### SUMMARY OF EL WORK GROUP RECOMMENDATIONS

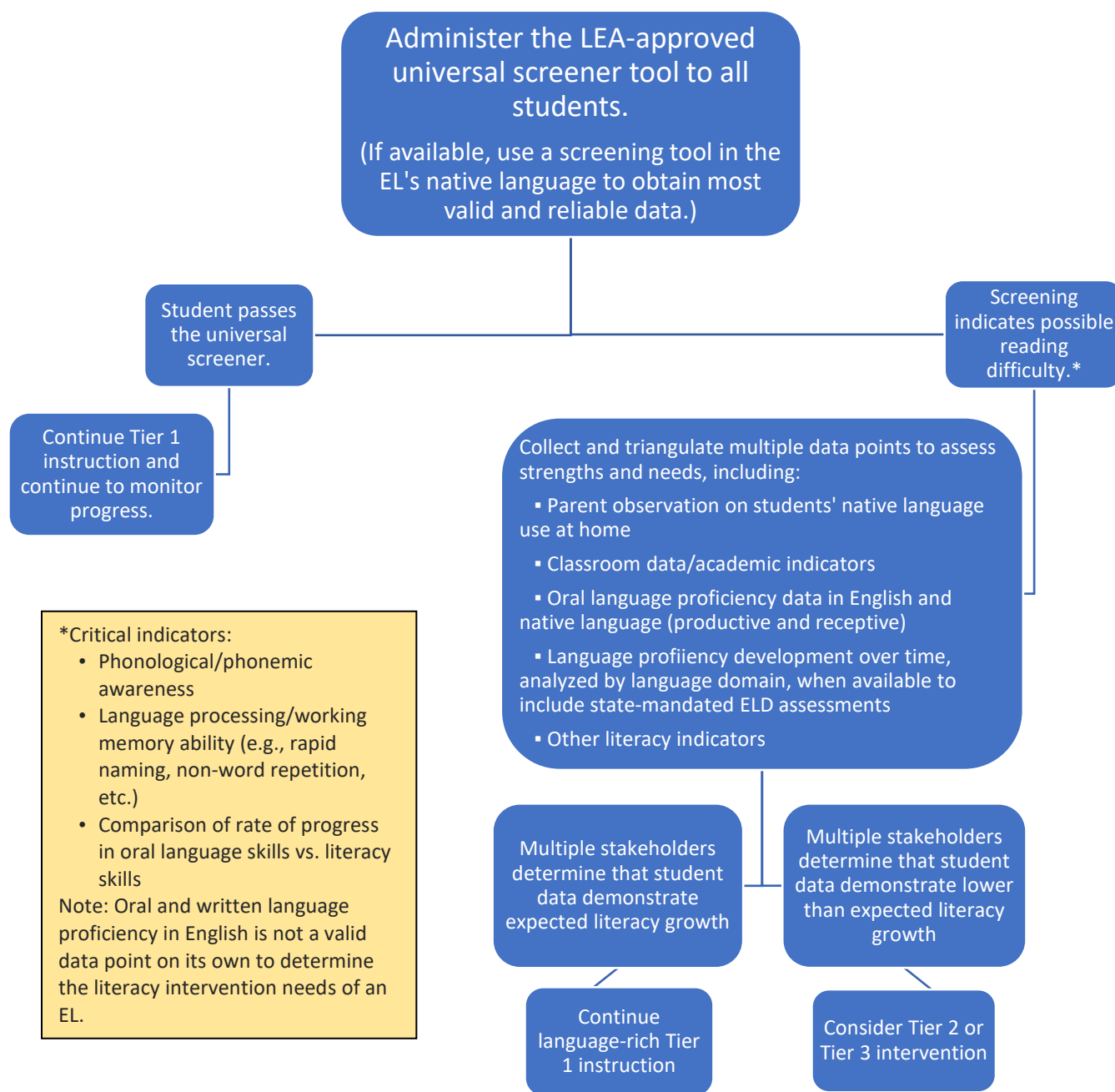
The work group makes the following recommendations based on the consensus study report, [Promoting the Educational Success of Children and Youth Learning English](#):

- LEAs use the same reading screening tool for ELs and their English-proficient peers. The screening tool is not a state assessment for accountability purposes. Therefore, there is no exemption for ELs. It is a tool that will be used to collect baseline data and monitor progress over time to make instructional decisions for all ELs which may include placement in an intervention.
- Parents or guardians of ELs may need additional accessible information about the screening and placement process.

ELs make the greatest gains in literacy when provided with a program involving small group reading instruction that is taught in context (not isolation) and that includes an explicit focus on oral language development in addition to explicit instruction in phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension. When making decisions about reading instruction for ELs, consider the following:

- Length of time in U.S. schools
- Length of time in English language development (ELD) programs
- English language proficiency growth over time
- Classroom performance
- Interrupted or limited formal education

### READING SCREENING FOR EL FLOW CHART



Additional resources for LEAs can be found on MSDE’s [Supporting Students with Reading Difficulties](#) webpage.

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## DESCRIPTIONS OF LANGUAGE RICH TIER 1 INSTRUCTION AND TIER 2 OR TIER 3 INTERVENTION

**Please note:** LEAs may use an interim English language proficiency assessment such as *WIDA MODEL* to monitor ELs' English language development progress. Regularly progress monitor English language proficiency and literacy of ELs to make instructional adjustments.

### Language Rich Tier 1 Instruction:

- ELs are in the beginning stages of English language development.
- Language rich Tier 1 reading instruction for ELs should include:
  - Daily small group instruction when feasible
  - Include an explicit focus on oral language development in addition to phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension
  - Classroom teachers should receive on-going training on effective practices for working with ELs.

### Tier 2 or Tier 3 Intervention:

- ELs are in the intermediate to advanced stages of English language development, but literacy progress is not at the desired rate.
- Program selected should be backed by research studies with ELs in the sample group.
- When planning for interventions, schools should examine whether an EL has access to high-quality, culturally relevant classroom reading instruction that includes explicit instruction in phonological awareness, decoding, and other grade-level appropriate components of reading.