

# Your Child's PALS-K Score

## What Parents Should Know

**PALS** stands for **Phonological Awareness Literacy Screening**, a tool used in Kindergarten classes to:

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

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

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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. 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.** Did s/he meet the benchmark for Rhyme? Beginning Sound? Recognizing letters? If your child's score fell below the benchmark score in any task, the teacher will instruct your child, individually and in small groups, to strengthen this skill. Even if your child met the overall Summed Score benchmark, s/he may need extra help with individual skills.

**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 in recognizing letters, sounds, and words so they can design the best instruction possible for each student to grow in reading and spelling.

Parents play a very important role in helping children becoming readers by reading to them, talking about new experiences, and encouraging them to write, spell, and learn. Visit <https://pals.virginia.edu/parents-monthly-activity.html> for ideas to support 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.