

**Assessment of Literacy**  
**for Students with Significant Disabilities**

1. Students with significant disabilities are assessed using **standardized test materials** when conducting literacy assessments (initial assessment / probes / follow-up assessments).
  
2. If it is necessary to use **alternate procedures for standard tests**, testers carefully document on the cover page of the literacy folder modifications (e.g., eye gaze, use of AAC device).
  
3. If standard tests and materials are not successful, testers use **alternate tests and materials**, as recommended by the Department of Education, Students with Significant Disabilities (website link).
  
4. Recommendations from literacy assessments are **based on data** collected during formal or informal assessments or observations (documented in Literacy Folder).
  
5. The literacy assessment provides the IEP team with clearly **documented recommendations** that guide decisions about literacy goals, materials, and intervention procedures (collected in the Literacy Folder).
  
6. For students who are unable to write using a pencil, an assessment is made to **determine an alternate method for writing** (alternative pencil, glossary).

**Quality Indicators for Including Literacy  
in the IEP for Students with Significant Disabilities**

1. The state and local education agencies have **guidelines for including literacy** in the IEP for ALL students, including students with significant disabilities.
2. IEP goals reflect components necessary to **support reading development**, as described by the National Reading Panel: [www.nationalreadingpanel.org](http://www.nationalreadingpanel.org) and Every Day Chart <http://sda.doe.louisiana.gov/Site%20Pages/LiteracyView.aspx>
3. IEP goals reflect components necessary to **support written expression**.

**Quality Indicators for Literacy Instruction  
for Students with Significant Disabilities**

1. Literacy instruction proceeds according to a **collaboratively developed plan**.
  
2. Literacy instruction is **integrated** into the curriculum across content area, environments, and daily activities of the student.
  
3. Literacy instruction includes, as needed, **components** described in the National Reading Panel Report: [www.nationalreadingpanel.org](http://www.nationalreadingpanel.org)
  - a. Phonemic awareness
  - b. Phonics
  - c. Vocabulary
  - d. Comprehension
  - e. Fluency
  
4. Literacy instruction takes into account the **performance levels** of all students (i.e., grade level, symbolic level, alternative pencil if needed).
  
5. All students engage in **written expression**, for a range of purposes and by a variety of methods and technologies, such as computers and the use of an alternative pencil (see glossary).
  
6. Literacy instruction for students with disabilities is **intensive**.

**Quality Indicators for Evaluation of the Effectiveness of Literacy Instruction for Students with Significant Disabilities**

1. Team members share **clearly defined responsibilities** to ensure that data are collected, evaluated, and interpreted by capable and credible team members.
2. Both **formal and informal literacy measures** are collected. This includes measures such as pre-post testing, observation scales, portfolio assessment, and measures recommended by the Department of Education, Significant Disabilities <http://sda.doe.louisiana.gov/Site%20Pages/LiteracyView.aspx>
3. Evaluation of effectiveness includes the **quantitative and qualitative measurement of changes** in student's literacy performance, achievement, and enjoyment.
4. Effectiveness is measured **beyond skills training**, in real reading, writing, and story listening activities.
5. Data are collected (in Literacy Folder) to provide teams with a means for **analyzing student achievement and identifying supports and barriers** that influence literacy growth to determine what changes, if any, are needed.
6. Systematic evaluation of literacy instruction should result in **changes** in both **instructional strategies and performance expectations**.
7. Evaluation of effectiveness is a dynamic, responsive, **ongoing process** that is reviewed periodically.

**Quality Indicators for Administrative Support of Literacy Services for Students with Significant Disabilities**

1. The LEA's literacy plan has **written procedural guidelines** that ensure equitable access to literacy assessment and instruction for all students. See: Flowchart of Assessment for Students with Significant Disabilities (link).
2. The education agency **broadly disseminates** clearly defined procedures for literacy assessment and instruction for students with significant disabilities and connects with general education through Extended Standards.
3. The education agency employs **personnel with competencies** needed to support quality literacy assessment and instruction for students with significant disabilities.
4. The education agency provides access to **on-going learning opportunities about literacy assessment and instruction for students with significant disabilities** for staff, family, and students.
5. The education agency uses a **systematic process to evaluate** all components of the agency-wide literacy program for students with significant disabilities.

**Quality Indicators for Professional Development and Training in Literacy Services for Students with Significant Disabilities**

1. Comprehensive professional development and training in the area of literacy for students with significant disabilities **accomplishing their IEP goals and objectives in the general curriculum.**
2. The education agency has a professional development and training **plan that identifies audiences, purposes, activities, expected results, evaluation measures and funding** for literacy assessment and intervention for students with significant disabilities.
3. The content of comprehensive literacy professional development and training **addresses all aspects of literacy assessment and instruction**, including reading as defined by the National Reading Panel as well as written expression.
4. Professional development and training in the areas of literacy assessment and intervention are **aligned with other local, state, and national professional initiatives.**
5. Professional development and training for literacy services include **ongoing learning opportunities that utilize local, regional, and national resources.**
6. Professional development and training in literacy services for students with significant disabilities follow **research-based models for adult learning** that include multiple formats and are delivered at multiple skill levels.
7. The effectiveness of professional development and training for literacy services in **evaluated by measuring changes in practice that result in improved student performance and outcomes.**

**Quality Indicators for Access to Literacy Resources  
for Students with Significant Disabilities**

1. State Department of Education provides **resource listing** for assessment tools, accessible books, websites, and other materials that support the literacy needs of students with significant disabilities.
2. The education agency offers **sample materials for literacy assessment** that can be checked out by schools and classrooms.
3. The education agency offers **sample materials for literacy intervention** that can be checked out by schools and classrooms.
4. The education agency **disseminates information** to schools, teachers, and families about materials available to support literacy assessment and intervention for students with disabilities.

**Glossary:**

**alternative pencil:** this refers to identifying writing tools that allow students with significant disabilities to write at the highest level possible. Sample 'alternative pencils' described by Dr. Hanser for the Center for Literacy & Disability Studies include: Braille alphabet flip chart; Braille IntelliKeys overlay; Color-coded eye gaze frame; Print alphabet flip chart; Scanning alphabet setups in IntelliTalk II, and Tactualized IntelliKeys overlay. <http://www.med.unc.edu/ahs/clds/resources.html>

**standardized assessments:** refers to literacy assessments such as DIBELS, which are normed for students without disabilities, and provide standard test scores to track progress across time

**literacy folder:** refers to a folder documenting assessment and intervention for an individual student.