

## A Parent’s Guide to the Illinois Snapshot of Early Literacy (ISEL)

The Illinois Snapshot of Early Literacy is a reading performance inventory for early literacy skills. It provides a snapshot of students’ literacy strengths and competencies and assists the classroom teacher in developing lessons that meet each child’s needs.

The ISEL is based on scientific reading research and sound classroom practice. It reflects the National Standards for Reading and the Illinois Learning Standards and is linked to the overall goals of the Illinois Reading Initiative.

This assessment is administered two times per year, fall and winter. The percentile scores that you see on your child’s ISEL coversheet indicate your child’s performance in relation to a “normed” population of students from across the state of Illinois. The 50<sup>th</sup> percentile score indicates that a child is making adequate literacy progress. A performance at the 30<sup>th</sup> percentile or lower indicates that a student may be at risk for making adequate literacy progress.

There are ten ISEL snapshots. An administration schedule is listed below. The variety of subtests included in the ISEL provides an opportunity to obtain an overview of the child’s literacy competencies in a relatively short amount of time.

<b>ISEL Snapshots</b>	<b>Kndgtn.</b>	<b>1<sup>st</sup> Grade</b>	<b>2<sup>nd</sup> Grade</b>
Alphabet Recognition			
Story Listening			
Phonemic Awareness			
One-to-One Matching			
Letter Sounds	Winter only		
Developmental Spelling			
Word Recognition			
Passage Reading (Accuracy & Comprehension)			
Vocabulary			
Fluency/Extended Response		Optional	

### **Alphabet Recognition**

This snapshot assesses the child's ability to notice the concept that letters have unique features and specific names.

*Why is this important?* With an inventory of known letters, the child is familiar with certain aspects of the visual details of print associated with emergent reading and writing.

*How can I help my child?* Provide opportunities for your child to identify, match, and or sort upper and lower case magnetic letters. Play games such as Lotto, Concentration and Go Fish with letter flash cards. Read a variety of simple alphabet books. Search for and circle specific letters on a printed page.

### **Story Listening**

This snapshot assesses the child's ability to listen to a story read aloud as well as to respond to questions about the story.

*Why is this important?* Listening to stories is especially important because children develop a sense of story and increase their vocabulary knowledge.

*How can I help my child?* Help your child identify story elements such as characters, setting, and plot while reading. Ask questions about the story before, during, and after reading aloud to your child.

### **Phonemic Awareness**

This snapshot assesses the child's ability to hear initial consonant sounds and to identify words that begin with the same consonant sound.

*Why is this important?* Research acknowledges that phonemic awareness is one of the best predictors of reading success among kindergarten children and for reading performance among first and second grade children.

*How can I help my child?* Play rhyming games with your child. Pronounce words slowly to highlight individual sounds. Read poems, rhymes, songs and chants together. Match and sort pictures and words according to their beginning sounds.

### **One-to-One Match**

This snapshot assesses a child's concept of words as measured by how accurately the child repeats a sentence (after hearing it) while concurrently pointing to each of the words as he repeats that sentence.

*Why is this important?* Acquiring a concept of word often is considered a prerequisite for developing an initial sight word vocabulary.

*How can I help my child?* Point to the words as you read to your child. Help your child identify the differences between the spaces in a sentence, the letters in a sentence and the words in a sentence.

## **Letter Sounds**

This snapshot is intended to determine the number of letter sounds that the child can orally reproduce correctly.

*Why is this important?* Children who are in control of letter-sound relationships can use this knowledge to decode unknown words in print.

*How can I help my child?* Build three and four letter words with magnetic letters. Read simple alphabet books. Pronounce words slowly and ask your child to identify the first sound of each word.

## **Developmental Spelling**

The Developmental Spelling snapshot is intended to measure the child's level of phonemic awareness, letter-sound knowledge, and sequential letter production.

*Why is this important?* Developmental spelling is a complex task involving three related areas. Teachers use spelling to gain insight into a child's thinking about words, noting whether or not a child can hear the sound components of a word as well as represent them.

*How can I help my child?* Ask your child to write simple dictated words and sentences. (Conventional spelling is not necessary) Play spelling games such as Boggle, Spill and Spell, and Junior Scrabble.

## **Word Recognition**

This snapshot assesses the child's ability to determine the number of isolated words a child can read independently.

*Why is this important?* Children need a large repertoire of words that can be recognized instantly. These are typically words that are seen frequently in texts. (e.g., a, and, to, the) As the number of sight words increases for a child, less attention may be devoted to word recognition, and the child can shift attention to the meaning of the story.

*How can I help my child?* Ask your child to identify simple high frequency words in magazines and newspapers. Make a Bingo game using high frequency words (Your child's teacher can give you a suggested list of words for your child's grade level.)

## **Passage Reading/Comprehension**

This snapshot assesses a child's ability to read connected text (story) aloud at acceptable levels of accuracy, fluency, and comprehension.

*Why is this important?* A child who can read a passage and understand the meaning of the text shows the integration of all early literacy skills.

*How can I help my child?* Read to your child each evening. Ask your child to read books at their "independent reading level." (Your teacher will share this information with you.)

**Vocabulary**

The Vocabulary snapshot is intended to assess a child's knowledge of vocabulary in comparison to students in the same grade.

*Why is this important?* There is a strong correlation between a child's vocabulary knowledge and reading comprehension.

*How can I help my child?* Read books to your child that they cannot read themselves. Have conversations about stories read. Ask your child to connect the books you are reading together to personal experiences. Ask your child to solve word riddles, jokes, and play word games.

**Fluency**

The Fluency snapshot assesses the child's ability to read at a good rate, with good accuracy and with proper intonation and phrasing.

*Why is this important?* Research supports the notion that the ability to read fluently is highly correlated with a child's ability to comprehend text.

*How can I help my child?* Read to your child each evening so that they can hear how reading should sound. Have your child read books at his/her independent reading level each day.