

DCRC Phonemic Proficiency Assessment

Heavy credit to: Literacy Resources, LLC (Heggerty curriculum-writers) and Kilpatrick’s PAST, from which this assessment has been adapted. *See also Brady (2020), Gillon (2017), Kilpatrick (2015).*

General Teacher Guidelines:

- This assesses students’ **phonemic proficiency**: their ability to isolate, blend, segment, and manipulate individual phonemes automatically.
 - While rhyming, word-level, or syllable-level work is often *easier* than phoneme-level work, Brady (2020) and others (see particularly Gillon, 2017) have found that it may not be essential for students to master those tasks (i.e. phonological sensitivity) to become phonemically proficient. Additionally, aggressive training in phoneme-level tasks has been shown to have a higher predictive influence on later reading ability. **Phonemic proficiency** is one of the three essential skills necessary for orthographic mapping. For these reasons, we do not prioritize rhyme, syllable-level, or word-level work at the Clinic.
- The skills assessed below are in order of typical phonemic proficiency development by both unit of sound and difficulty of skill.
 - **Unit of sound:** (1) external phoneme (initial, then final), (2) internal vowel phonemes, (3) internal consonant clusters, and (4) five-phoneme words (i.e. multiple internal consonant clusters).
 - **Skill:** (1) isolation and identification, (2) blending, (3) segmenting, (4) manipulation (addition and deletion, then substitution).
- This assessment is intended for all grades K-2, so each skill set progresses from 2 or 3 phoneme words to 5 phoneme words. However, the assessor must make a diagnostic choice for Manipulation skill sets: either (1) Varied Manipulation Tasks, which is intended to gauge K and 1st grade students’ ability across varied manipulation tasks and (2) Full Manipulation Battery, which is intended to gauge 2nd grade students’ ability across all manipulation tasks. The decision can be made *while* assessing on the first five subtests. [See options here.](#)
- Correct answers are given a small check. Mark errors by writing what the child said instead.

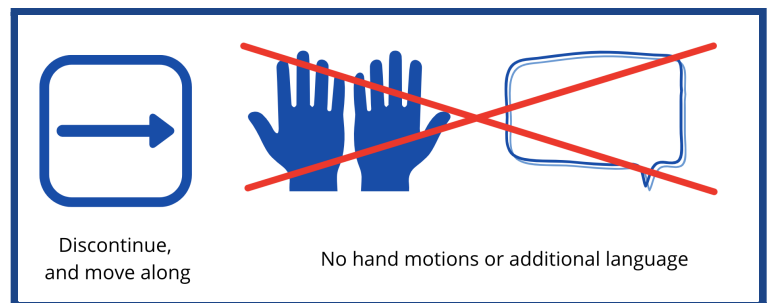
What counts as proficient?

- Kilpatrick (2016) outlines three stages through which children progress toward proficiency:

Stage	<i>The student can do an isolation or manipulation task...</i>
1- Multisensory	...with manipulatives and often makes mistakes (0-50% correct).
2- Knowledge	...mentally (without manipulatives) but not necessarily quickly (50-90% correct).
3- Proficient	...automatically and with no apparent effort. Student rarely makes mistakes.

So, when you assess:

- **Discontinue after three consecutive incorrect or belabored answers.** A skill is not proficient if it takes a student more than **three seconds** to answer.
- **Do not use hand motions.** A skill is not proficient if a student needs teacher hand motions to achieve a correct answer. If a student naturally uses their own hand motions, ask them to “try it without your hands!” If they continue to use hands, simply note correct/incorrect *and* the use of manipulatives for later instruction.
- **Only use the language provided in italics in the gray text box below.** A skill is not proficient if a student requires multiple teacher prompts, corrections, or instruction to achieve a correct answer.



Remember, no hand motions. Discontinue at three consecutive delays or errors.

Initial Sound Isolation: Today we are playing around with the smallest bits of sound! This is called sound work because it's all about little sounds. First, I want you to break apart words and tell me just the first sound you hear. For example, if I said bite, the first sound I hear is /b/. Repeat after me: bite, /b/. [Student repeats.] Let's try one first. What's the first sound you hear in girl?

→ **Correct:** Nice! /g/ is the first sound you hear in girl. Let's keep going.

→ **Incorrect:** Girl starts with a /g/ sound in the back of your throat. Do you hear the sound /g/? Repeat after me: girl, /g/. [Student repeats.] Now, let's try another.

Prompts	Student Response	Results	Stage (circle)
1. wig		___/8	Multisensory (less than 50%, or 4 out of 8)
2. run			
3. bee			
4. foot			
5. lime			Knowledge (50-88%, or 7 out of 8, student may have use hand motions)
6. shout			
7. thank			
8. traps			

Final Sound Isolation: Now, I want you to break apart words and tell me just the last sound you hear. For example, if I said bite, the last sound I hear is /t/. Repeat after me: bite, /t/. Let's try one first. What's the last sound you hear in hill?

→ **Correct:** Nice! Let's keep going.

→ **Incorrect:** Hill has the last sound /l/. Do you hear the sound /l/ at the end? Repeat after me: hill, /l/. Now, let's try another.

Prompts	Student Response	Results	Stage (circle)
1. wig		___/8	Multisensory (less than 50%, or 4 out of 8)
2. run			
3. bee			
4. foot			
5. lime			Knowledge (50-88%, or 7 out of 8, student may have use hand motions)
6. shout			
7. thank			
8. traps			

Medial Vowel Sound Isolation: Now, I want you to break apart words and tell me just the middle vowel sound you hear. Again, this is called the vowel sound. It's the middle of the word. For example, if I said bite, the middle sound I hear is /i/. Repeat after me: bite, /i/. Let's try one first. What's the middle sound you hear in him?

→ **Correct:** Nice! Let's keep going.

→ **Incorrect:** Him has the middle sound /i/. Do you hear the sound /i/ in the middle? Repeat after me: him, /i/. Now, let's try another.

Prompts	Student Response	Results	Stage (circle)
1. wig		___/8	Multisensory (less than 50%, or 4 out of 8) Knowledge (50-88%, or 7 out of 8, student may have use hand motions) Proficient (88-100%, automatic)
2. run			
3. bait			
4. foot			
5. lime			
6. shout			
7. town			
8. traps			

Sound Blending: You've been breaking apart words! Now, let's blend them together. I will say a few sounds. I'd like you to blend them into a word. For example, if I said, /h/ - /i/ - /m/, I blend it into: him! Let's try one for practice: Blend /s/ - /i/ - /t/.

→ **Correct:** Nice! sit is the word.

→ **Incorrect:** /s//i//t/ blends to sit. Can you repeat after me? /s//i//t/, sit? Let's try another.

Prompts	Student Response	Results	Stage (circle)
1. /g//o/		___/8	Multisensory Knowledge Proficient # of phonemes per word prioritized for instruction:
2. /b//ee/			
3. /b//ai//t/			
4. /b//a//m/			
5. /m//a//th/			
6. /f//l//i//ck/			
7. /s//c//r//u//b/			
8. /j//u//m//p/			

Sound Segmenting: Nice job! Now, let's break them apart again. This time, you'll say all the sounds you hear in order. I will say a word and you need to break it up into its sounds. For example, if I said him, I break it into three sounds: /h/-/i/-/m/. Let's try one for practice: Break up the word sit.

→ **Correct:** Nice! /s//i//t/ is correct. Let's keep going.
FYI - Correct answers in green/grey after prompt.

→ **Incorrect:** Sit has three sounds:. Can you hear three sounds? /s//i//t/. Repeat one more time: sit, /s//i//t/. Let's try another.

Prompts	Student Response	Results	Stage (circle)
1. tie (2 sounds)		___/8	Multisensory Knowledge Proficient <i># of phonemes per word prioritized for instruction:</i>
2. miss (3)			
3. shot (3)			
4. flap (4)			
5. shelf (4)			
6. cream (4)			
7. jumps (5)			
8. halos (5)			

Manipulation Section: Choose Either (1) Varied Manipulation Tasks or (2) Full Manipulation Battery. Varied is given to students in Grade K and 1, or Grade 2 students who are only at the Multisensory/Knowledge stage with many of the tasks above. Full is for more advanced students.

<p>Varied Manipulation Tasks: You just broke apart words. Now, we'll play around with sounds. You'll add sounds, take away sounds, and switch them out.</p> <p>Adding Sounds: Let's practice with adding. The word is at. I want to add the /b/ sound to the beginning. The new word would be bat. Can you try? Say at. [Wait for student to repeat.] Now, at /c/ to the beginning. What's the new word?</p>			
<p>→ Correct: Nice! You made cat. FYI - Correct answers in green/grey after prompt.</p>		<p>→ Incorrect: The new word is cat. Try again. Say at. [Wait for student to repeat.] Now, say cat. See the difference? When you add /c/ to the beginning of at, the word is cat.</p>	
Prompts	Student Response	Results	Stage (circle)
Addition Tasks			
1. Say ee. Add /b/ to the beginning. (bee)		___/3	Multisensory Knowledge <small>(100%, not automatic or 66% automatic)</small> Proficient <small>(100%, automatic)</small>
2. Say ay. Add /s/ to the beginning. (say)			
3. Say ore. Add /m/ to the beginning. (more)			
<p>Deleting Sounds: Now, let's take away sounds. Let's do an example: Say bat. [Wait for student to repeat.] Now, take away the /b/ sound. What's the new word?</p>			
<p>→ Correct: Nice! Let's keep going.</p>		<p>→ Incorrect: The new word is at. You try again. Say bat. [Wait for student to repeat.] Now, say at. See the difference? When you take away /b/, what's left is at. Let's keep going.</p>	
1. Say kiss. Take away /k/. (iss)		___/3	Multisensory Knowledge Proficient
2. Say shop. Take away /sh/. (op)			
3. Say pool. Take away /p/. (ool)			
<p>Substituting Sounds: Good job! Now, let's switch out sounds. Here's an example: Say sit. [Wait for student to repeat.] Now, change /s/ to /f/. What's the new word?</p>			
<p>→ Correct: fit! Let's keep going.</p>		<p>→ Incorrect: sit becomes fit. Listen closely: Say sit. [Wait for student to repeat.] Change /s/ to /f/ and the word is fit. Let's try again.</p>	
1. Say red. Change /r/ to /w/ and the word is... (wed)		___/3	Multisensory Knowledge Proficient
2. Say belly. Change /b/ to /j/ and the word is... (jelly)			
3. Say hip. Change /h/ to /l/ and the word is... (lip)			



Full Manipulation Battery: You just broke apart words. Now, we are going to play around with sounds. You'll add sounds, take away sounds, and switch them out.

Adding Sounds: Let's practice with adding. The word is at. I want to add the /b/ sound to the beginning. The new word would be bat. Can you try? Say at. [Wait for student to repeat.] Now, at /c/ to the beginning. What's the new word you made?

→ **Correct:** Nice! You made cat.
FYI - Correct answers in green/grey after prompt.

→ **Incorrect:** The new word is cat. Let's try again. Say at. [Wait for student to repeat.] Now, say cat. See the difference? When you add /c/ to the beginning of at, the word is cat.

Prompts	Student Response	Results	Stage (circle)
Addition Tasks			
1. Say ee. Add /b/ to the beginning. (bee)		___/8	Multisensory (less than 50%, or 4 out of 8) Knowledge (50-88%, or 7 out of 8, student may have use hand motions) Proficient (88-100%, automatic)
2. Say ay. Add /s/ to the beginning. (say)			
3. Say ore. Add /m/ to the beginning. (more)			
4. Say in. Add /th/ to the beginning. (thin)			
5. Say ort. Add /sh/ to the beginning. (short)			
6. Say illy. Add /ch/ to the beginning. (chilly)			
7. Say lipper. Add /s/ to the beginning. (slipper)			
8. Say rash. Add /th/ to the beginning. (thrash)			

Deleting Sounds Now, let's take away sounds. Let's do an example: Say bat. [Wait for student to repeat.] Now, take away the /b/ sound. What's the new word?

→ **Correct:** Nice! Let's keep going.

→ **Incorrect:** The new word is at. You try again. Say bat. [Wait for student to repeat.] Now, say at. See the difference? When you take away /b/, what's left is at. Let's keep going.

1. Say kiss. Take away /k/. (iss)		___/8	Multisensory (less than 50%, or 4 out of 8) Knowledge (50-88%, or 7 out of 8, student may have use hand motions) Proficient (88-100%, automatic)
2. Say shop. Take away /sh/. (op)			
3. Say pool. Take away /p/. (ool)			
4. Say think. Take away /th/. (ink)			
5. Say clock. Take away /c/. (lock)			
6. Say cluster. Take away /c/.			



(luster)			
7. Say brick. Take away /b/. (rick)			
8. Say shrink. Take away /sh/. (rink)			
Substituting Sounds: <i>Good job! Now, let's switch out sounds. Here's an example: Say sit. Now, change /s/ to /f/. What's the new word?</i>			
→ Correct: <i>Nice! fit! Let's keep going.</i>	→ Incorrect: <i>sit becomes fit. Listen closely: I say sit. Change /s/ to /f/ and the word is fit. Let's try again.</i>		
1. Say red. Change /r/ to /w/ and the word is... (wed)		___/8	Multisensory (less than 50%, or 4 out of 8) Knowledge (50-88%, or 7 out of 8, student may have use hand motions) Proficient (88-100%, automatic)
2. Say belly. Change /b/ to /j/ and the word is... (jelly)			
3. Say hip. Change /h/ to /l/ and the word is... (lip)			
4. Say ship. Change /sh/ to /t/ and the word is... (tip)			
5. Say dipper. Change /d/ to /ch/ and the word is... (chipper)			
6. Say sled. Change /s/ to /b/ and the word is... (bled)			
7. Say thred. Change /th/ to /sh/ and the word is... (shred)			
8. Say spring. Change only /p/ to /t/ and the word is... (string)			