

# Multi-Tiered Systems of Support Literacy/Reading Instruction for English Language Learners

## Key Questions Checklist 2

The proper referral and identification of English language learners for special education services can be difficult. The process requires the determination that language and cultural differences, along with other factors, are not the primary cause of a student's learning difficulties. To assist local education agencies develop sound processes to ensure that students with limited English proficiency receive equal educational opportunity and timely intervention to enable progress in school, the *Multi-Tiered Systems of Support Literacy/Reading Instruction for English Language Learners Key Questions Checklist 2* has been developed by a team of Ohio education specialists to guide the identification and referral of English language learners with disabilities.

As the second of a series of tools to assist Ohio school intervention teams, the *Multi-Tiered Systems of Support Literacy/Reading Instruction Key Questions Checklist* may be used with the *Referral and Identification of English Language Learners with Disabilities Key Questions Checklist 1*. The questions presented by each will assist in determining the quality and appropriateness of a student's core curriculum literacy/reading instruction. In this process, the student's instructional environment is reviewed to gather evidence of whether, and to what extent, opportunities to learn have been effectively designed and presented. To more efficiently record and document relevant student data, the checklist may be used as is, for users to write observations and notes relative to the assessment of the English language learner's engagement with quality literacy instruction delivered within a positive teaching environment.

Using a multi-tiered systems of support framework (see *Background and Resources for English Language Learners-Students with Disabilities Guidance*), the intervention team is more informed to make an objective determination of the relative impact of disability, language acquisition and other environmental factors upon the student's academic progress. The key questions should assist teams in organizing and addressing information gaps that arise in mandates to determine the causes of an English language learner's school difficulties. This document should be used in combination with *Referral and Identification of English Language Learners with Disabilities Key Questions Checklist* to guide instructional intervention of English language learners within a systematic referral and identification process.

For background and additional information and resources regarding the referral and identification process of English language learners with disabilities, see *Background and Resources for the English Language Learners-Students with Disabilities Guidance*, available on the Ohio Department of Education website. As a dynamic document that incorporates best practice and research findings, the key questions will be updated annually to reflect the ongoing work of the English language learners-students with disabilities development team. Questions and comments should be directed to the Lau Resource Center at (614) 466-4019.

**Note: This document is intended to complement federal and state guidelines. The presence of an obvious physical or other disability condition (i.e., blindness, hearing impairment, severe cognitive delays, severe autism) should trigger the initiation of the special education evaluation process. English language learners with clear, organic disabilities should have access to specialized, individualized instruction and supports without delay.**

# Multi-Tiered Systems of Support Literacy/Reading Instruction for English Language Learners

## Key Questions Checklist 2

### TIER 1 INDICATORS: QUALITY OF GENERAL EDUCATION CLASSROOM INSTRUCTION FOR ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS

#### Universal Supports for All

Key Questions	Y/N	Evidence
1. Has the approach/program of instruction been identified?		
2. Is the identified program evidence-based and validated with diverse student populations that include English language learners?		
3. Do students receive direct, systematic, linguistically appropriate instruction of phonemic awareness, phonics and reading fluency skills?		
4. Do students receive direct, systematic, linguistically appropriate instruction for reading comprehension?		
5. Does the instruction provide explicit vocabulary instruction and multiple opportunities for students to hear, speak, read and write new vocabulary in meaningful contexts?		
6. Has the framework of universal design for learning and differentiated instruction been implemented to take into account the students current English language proficiency development?		
7. Are differentiated learning materials that address diverse skill levels available for all students?		
8. Do learning materials and texts reflect inclusive environments, non-stereotypic images and diverse communities?		
9. Are culturally relevant practices implemented?		
10. Does the curriculum support and connect with students' prior experiences?		
11. Does the teacher receive professional development opportunities to gain		

knowledge and skills to provide academic instruction and to in supportive ways with English language learners?		
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### Universal Environmental Considerations

Environmental Considerations	Y/N	Evidence
1. Are school-wide behavior support processes implemented and monitored: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Clear expectations posted and taught;</li> <li>• Clear acknowledgement system;</li> <li>• Clear consequence system.</li> </ul>		
2. Does the school environment promote parent and family involvement?		
3. Is an effective, ongoing communication system with families in place (using home language in oral and/or written formats as needed)?		
4. Is linguistic diversity supported, for example, via presence of visuals, pictures, translations, interpreters and other English dialects and languages?		
5. Do school personnel recognize and understand how cultural differences can impact a range of student behaviors?		
6. Have guidelines such as the <i>Multicultural Needs Assessments</i> been reviewed to guide assessment of the school setting? (Banks et al., 1976)		

### Universal Assessment Considerations

Assessment Considerations	Y/N	Evidence
1. Are universal screening data (e.g., quarterly assessments) collected and reviewed by a team that has knowledge and skills regarding the appropriate assessment of English language learners?		
2. Have the universal screening data been analyzed to determine the achievement of subgroups with attention to disproportionality within the school, district and state (i.e., English language learners, race, ethnicity, gender, SES, disability)?		

3. Are families informed of assessment results using language that is understandable, e.g., using translators and interpreters as needed?		
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**Observation Checklist for Instructional Strategies that Increase Comprehensible Input for English Language Learners**

Strategy/Practice	Degree Exhibited in Classroom Rate using 0-4 scale with 0 = not observed; 4 = frequently observed					Evidence
Activate prior knowledge/build background/plan content with explicit language objectives, e.g., as defined by the Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol (SIOP)	0	1	2	3	4	
Verbal support such as think alouds, modeling, narration and expansion	0	1	2	3	4	
Visuals, e.g., Total Physical Response (TPR), gestures, pictures, images, non-linguistic representations	0	1	2	3	4	
Scripting (e.g., sentence frames, cloze exercises)	0	1	2	3	4	
Incorporating leveled questions	0	1	2	3	4	
Cues, questions, advance organizers	0	1	2	3	4	
Graphic organizers	0	1	2	3	4	
Tiered vocabulary instruction	0	1	2	3	4	
Targeted home/native language (L1) support	0	1	2	3	4	
Journaling/learning logs	0	1	2	3	4	
Personal dictionaries/word study books	0	1	2	3	4	
Use of an electronic or other format dictionary/thesaurus	0	1	2	3	4	
Peer-mediated activities/cooperative learning strategies/structured partner	0	1	2	3	4	

learning (including interactions with peers fluent in English)					
Hands-on materials/manipulatives	0	1	2	3	4
Other(s) – continue on new sheet	0	1	2	3	4

## TIER 2 INDICATORS

### Targeted Intervention for Individual and Small Group Support

Intervention Considerations	Y/N	Evidence
1. Are the Tier 2 interventions provided in addition to Tier 1 universal supports for all?		
2. Are evidence-based interventions that have been validated for use with English language learners implemented to address the student's specific needs?		
3. Does the intervention plan correspond to a primary skill deficit area, including either or both: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Literacy skills (see tier 1 key indicators);</li> <li>English language development (listening/speaking/reading/writing).</li> </ul>		
4. Is instruction culturally and linguistically responsive to the student's needs?		
5. Is oral language proficiency development provided so that English language learners have frequent opportunities to respond to comprehensible input and practice speaking standardized, academic English?		
6. Are identified interventions implemented with procedural fidelity, e.g., with prescribed frequency, duration and intensity?		
7. Was the English language learner's individual plan implemented and documented?		

### Assessment for Individual and Small Group Interventions

Assessment Considerations	Y/N	Evidence
1. Do the universal screening data correspond to and support areas of concern (e.g., using oral language reading fluency data to make decisions regarding student's written expression)?		
2. Are screener/progress monitoring data (i.e., academic, language, behavior indicators) collected and reviewed periodically to assess student's response to intervention?		

3. Are screener/progress monitoring data collected and reviewed periodically in the home language (L1), if instruction is provided in that language?		
4. Do the universal screening data indicate concern when compared to age-appropriate local/state/national benchmarks?		
5. Are the data considered in the context of the English language learner's: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Language proficiency levels;</li> <li>• Level of acculturation;</li> <li>• History of instruction?</li> </ul>		
6. Do the universal screening data indicate concern when compared to peers with similar cultural experience?		

### TIER 3

#### Individualized, Intensive Intervention Support

Individualized Intervention Support Considerations	Y/N	Evidence
1. Does the intervention team include individuals who are able to address issues relevant to the student's: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Culture/history of reinforcement;</li> <li>• Language proficiency (L1, L2, L3...);</li> <li>• Language acquisition process.</li> </ul>		
2. Are the parents/guardians of the student: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Involved as meaningful, respected partners;</li> <li>• Kept well-informed;</li> <li>• Provided with opportunities to receive information and communicate using the language/form that they understand?</li> </ul>		
3. Is the intervention process implemented using a problem-solving framework that includes the use of observable, measurable indicators to identify and discuss key concerns?		
4. Does the intervention process develop an individualized plan for the English language learner following a problem-solving framework that collects and analyzes multiple sources of data? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Observations;</li> <li>• Interviews;</li> <li>• Curriculum-based measures;</li> <li>• Curriculum-based assessments;</li> <li>• Other assessments (e.g., alternate, portfolio, performance).</li> </ul>		
5. Is the individualized plan aligned with the identified needs of the English language learner?		
6. Are the interventions implemented as part of the Tier 3 individualized plan appropriate for English language learners, research-based, rigorous and aligned with standards?		

7. Are the teachers/staff who implement the interventions trained appropriately e.g., to communicate with the student, follow the intended procedures with fidelity?		
8. Are the instructional supports/strategies and interventions provided in Tiers 1 and 2 continued, not dropped, as the Tier 3 individualized plan is implemented?		
9. Is the effectiveness of the plan evaluated using progress monitoring and other data sources?		
10. Are assessments conducted in the L1/home language, as appropriate?		

## Evaluation Team Questions for Consideration

Use information from the intervention team process to answer key questions relevant to the special education eligibility determination process.

Key Questions	Y/N	Evidence
1. Has the English language development of the student including, but not limited to, proficiency levels in listening, speaking, reading and writing been determined?		
2. Has the student's acculturation process been described and taken into account?		
3. Has the classroom/learning environment of the student been observed and described to detect areas where misunderstanding, behavior challenges or conflict might be decreased?		
4. Has the student's history of formal instruction in the U.S. and/or home/other countries been described and taken into account?		

**Based upon the responses to the key questions, the team should be able provide evidence to support responses for each of the following statements:**

	Y/N	Evidence
A significant difference in performance on targeted areas is demonstrated between this student and similar peers.		
A significant difference in rate of progress on targeted indicators is demonstrated between this student and similar peers.		
The aforementioned differences impact adversely on the student's access to learning in the general education environment with regular English language support.		
A need for specially designed, individualized instruction has been demonstrated.		

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