

Assessing Letter-Sound Skills

- Letter-name and letter-sound tasks are standard on kindergarten screening batteries
- Some achievement batteries have a letter-naming test
- Letter naming and letter sounds
- Letter-sound skills + phonological blending = phonic decoding

Nonsense Word Reading

- Unfortunately deemed “inauthentic” by some, however
 - All newly encountered words are functionally nonsense words before they are properly identified
 - Most multisyllabic words have one or more syllables that, by themselves, are nonsense words
- Correlation between nonsense word reading and real word reading is very high
- The correlation between nonsense word reading and irregular word reading is very high

The value of Nonsense Word Reading

- Best way to assessing phonic decoding skills
- Phonic decoding skills represent a necessary level of word-reading development
- Given its foundational nature for word-level reading, every evaluation of word-level reading should include an assessment of nonsense word reading

Timed vs. Untimed nonsense Word Reading Tests

- Ideally, administer both time and untimed nonsense word reading subtests
 - Untimed: letter-sound knowledge
 - Timed: letter-sound proficiency

Concerns Regarding Phonic Decoding Assessment

- Requires the interpretation of individual subtests
- Use at least 2 nonsense word reading subtests from 2 batteries
- Keep timed and untimed separate-they are not parallel for addressing subtest reliability

Interpreting nonsense Word Reading Scores

- More weight on nonsense word reading scores than real word reading scores
- More weight on timed scores than untimed scores
- Recalibrate what is considered “average”