

**Sample Parent/Caregiver Letters**

**Schools Can Send to Share with Families about Tier II Dyslexia Screener Results**

**(and if dyslexia signs are identified, next steps)**

**Details about this Sample Letters**

To support their child’s learning, families want clear, accurate, and understandable information about what their child is learning in school and how they can support their child at home. The following letters are not required for schools to use, but they provide examples for schools to adapt and tailor for the families of their students. Each district should work with staff and families of young children to determine the most appropriate and understandable messaging. The first example letter below can also serve as a Reading Improvement and Monitoring Plan (RIMP) letter to families.

In accordance with Ohio Law, the letter should provide families with:

* a clear explanation of screener results, and if the letter is serving as the RIMP communication, whether their child is reading “on grade level” or not,
* information about dyslexia, and options for the family if their child is identified as having signs of dyslexia on the screener,
* a jargon-free definition of structured literacy instruction,
* a description of the specific services the school will provide for the instruction the child needs based on the screener results and the structured literacy program guidelines,
* how, and how frequently the school will be communicating about the child’s progress with the family,
* ideas for what the family can do to support their child’s early literacy at home,
* if the letter is serving as the RIMP, an explanation of the 3rd grade retention policy.

This sample letter was written by the Ohio Statewide Family Engagement Center at The Ohio State University in collaboration with the Ohio Department of Education and Ohio parents/caregivers of children with dyslexia. If you would like to submit feedback on this sample letter, questions, or your own sample letters/phrases to explain results, please contact OhioSFEC@osu.edu.

**Letter Template Option 1 (Includes RIMP information):**

Dear \_\_[*parent/caregiver name(s)*]\_,

*[Insert personal greeting, like* “I hope you are well.”] I am writing to share with you how I will be working with \_[*child’s name*]\_\_ this year on reading skills. This is our Reading Improvement and Monitoring Plan for \_[*child’s name*]\_\_.

\_\_[*Child’s name*]\_ [*is/is not*] currently meeting the grade-level goals for reading at this point in the year.

Based on the results of the \_[*screener name*]\_\_ screenings, which are in the table below, I will be using some specific strategies in class called “structured literacy” (see more info below) to make sure \_\_[*child’s name*]\_\_\_\_\_\_ has all the support they need with \_\_[*describe skills teacher will be working on with child, such as “letter naming and first sounds in words”*]\_\_. [*Refer to* [*Ohio Dyslexia Guidebook*](https://education.ohio.gov/getattachment/Topics/Learning-in-Ohio/Literacy/Dyslexia/Dyslexia-Guidebook-update0722.pdf.aspx?lang=en-US) *(pg. 24) to determine which grade-level skills to include in the table below.*]

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Reading Task** | **Goal** | **Your Child’s Result on \_\_[*date*]\_\_\_** | **Your Child’s Result on \_[date]\_\_\_** | **Our Class’s Average Score**  | **Status****(Area of Strength or Area Needing More Support)** |
| Letter Naming |  |  |  |  |  |
| First Sounds in Words |  |  |  |  |  |
| All Sounds in Words |  |  |  |  |  |
| Reading Nonsense Words |  |  |  |  |  |

*If screener does not show signs of dyslexia, consider providing the following information to families in the letter:*

The screener did not show signs of dyslexia for your child. However, if you have any questions or concerns about these results and would like to talk with me, let me know! I value your perspective and ideas about \_[*child’s name*]\_’s education.

*If screener does show signs of dyslexia, consider including the following in the letter:*

As your child’s teacher, I do not provide a formal diagnosis of dyslexia. However, the screener did show some *signs* of dyslexia, as you can see in the table above. Dyslexia can affect students in many ways, and can look very different from one person to the next. To learn more about dyslexia, visit [go.osu.edu/dyslexiaguide](https://go.osu.edu/dyslexiaguide).

I am going to work very closely with \_\_\_[*child’s name*]\_\_ this year, which should be very helpful. [*Optional, if applicable:* There will be another teacher helping out in my classroom who will be working with your child, named \_[*teacher’s name*\_.] I am confident that with this focused attention, \_\_\_[*child’s name*]\_\_ will have the support they need to learn to read. You can read more about the structured literacy supports we will be using in the section below.

**What is structured literacy?**

Structured literacy is a way to teach students to read.

**What does it look like or sound like?**

Structured literacy follows a specific order to teach reading, from simple to more complex skills, based on how we know people’s brains work. It is also very direct. Teachers focus on the exact skills that students need to know to go from speech to printed words. Structured literacy is hands-on learning. Listening, speaking, reading, and writing are often paired with one another to support a student’s learning. Structured literacy teaching can begin in early childhood and continue through high school.

It looks like:

* Teaching letter names and sounds,
* Sounding out letters and how they blend together into words,
* Building words with letter tiles and other objects,
* Tapping or clapping out sounds and syllables in words,
* Using a word mapping chart to show students how each separate sound in a word is made by one or more specific letters,
* Making sentences with words on cards, and
* Color-coding sentences in paragraphs.

*[Consider including a picture and brief explanation of one of the materials you are currently using in your classroom, such as phoneme graphing mapping boxes.*]

Structured literacy is based on hundreds of thousands of research studies. This body of knowledge is called the Science of Reading.

*[Include details here about specific supplemental services the child will be receiving (amount of services, when and where they will occur, who will provide them, etc.)*.]

**How is this different than other ways to teach students to read?**

Following a structured literacy curriculum, we do not ask students to “guess” words, or use “context clues” in a book to teach them how to read. We encourage students to get to know the sounds that each letter makes, and how they go together to form words. We introduce new sounds and other skills in a specific order and review those new teachings often, using reading materials that match the specific skills we are teaching. We correct mistakes made during reading time so that students get that immediate feedback they need.

**How will I know if my child is back on track? [include this section if child is not on-track]**

We will check \_*[child’s name’s]*\_\_\_ progress on each of these reading skills again in \_\_*[add number]*\_\_\_ weeks, and will send an update to you in *[add number here]* weeks. Although it might seem like third grade is a long way away right now, it is important for you to know that according to current Ohio law, if children in Ohio do not reach a certain level of reading ability by the end of third grade, they are required to stay in third grade for a longer period of time (half or full year). This is called Ohio’s “Third Grade Reading Guarantee.”

**How You Can Help At Home**

Over the next few weeks, as we try new things in the classroom, I would really appreciate your help! Here are some ways that you can support \_[*child’s name*]\_’s reading skills:

1) **Stay positive!** Our brains are like a muscle, and the more we work at learning new skills, the more we will learn and grow. Ask your child what they are learning, and how it is going. Talking positively about school and learning, and setting high expectations about learning are some of the best supports that you can provide. I believe in \_[*child’s name*]\_, and together we can help them improve their reading skills.

2) **Try it at home!** If you are interested and it fits into your family’s schedule, you can spend some time each week working on the same skills that we are working on in the classroom. I will be happy to share more about what we do in class, along with some fun family activity ideas. [*Write the best way to learn about activities to try at home, for example:* “I made a short video explaining \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ and I would be happy to send you the link.” Or “Call \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ to schedule a time to come to the school to learn more.” Or, “Here is a great website to learn about the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ activity we’re doing in class.”]

3) **Keep in touch!** You can ask me questions, and share with me how things are going at home. [*Write a way to stay in contact, for example:* “Feel free to send me a message on the school app.” Or, “I am including a small notebook with this letter so that you can tell me what you’re trying at home, how it is going, and any other ideas or thoughts you have.” Or, “Join my virtual office hour on Mondays at 3:30 to ask me any questions that you have.”]

Thank you for partnering with me this year so that \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ can grow as a reader.

Sincerely,

Teacher/Staff Name

Phone Number \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**Template Option 2 (Simpler, does not include all RIMP information):**

Dear \_\_*[parent/caregiver name(s)]*\_,

This year we have been working hard in the classroom to make sure that all the kids make great progress learning the early skills they need to read. We are also regularly reviewing your child’s early reading skills. One reason we do this is to see if they might have signs of dyslexia, because it is one of the most common learning disabilities. People with dyslexia have many strengths but have unexpected trouble learning to read. These difficulties are not related to a person’s intelligence or motivation. For more general information about dyslexia, visit [go.osu.edu/dyslexiaguide](https://go.osu.edu/dyslexiaguide).

I have now screened \_\_\_*[child’s name]*\_\_twice, on \_\_*[date]*\_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_*[date]*\_\_\_\_\_. For the first screener, I [*describe the Tier I screener*; for example, “listen to how your child \_[insert skills]\_.”]. Based on \_*[child’s name]*\_’s results on the first screener, we have been working more on *[skills focused on this last 3 weeks]*. *[Say more about how families have been supporting these skills; for example,* “Thank you for all you’ve been doing at home to help \_*[child’s name]*\_ with these skills. I have really seen them make great progress in \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ lately.”].

We did a \_\_*[Tier II screener name]*\_ screening on \_\_\_*[date]*\_\_ and \_*[child’s name]*\_\_’s results are below, along with a goal score we hope to see all children reach at this point in the school year.

[Refer to Ohio Dyslexia Guidebook (pg. 24) to determine which grade-level skills to include in the table below.]

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Reading Task** | **Goal** | **Your Child’s Current Result** | **Status****(Area of Strength or Area Needing More Support)** |
| Letter Naming |  |  |  |
| First Sounds in Words |  |  |  |
| All Sounds in Words |  |  |  |
| Reading Nonsense Words |  |  |  |

The screener did show that your child has some signs of dyslexia, which you can see in the table above. *[child’s name]*\_ will continue to receive added support for \_*[write what areas are in need of more support]”*\_\_. *[Include details here about structured literacy and the specific supplemental services the child will be receiving (amount of services, when and where they will occur, who will provide them, etc.)*.]

OR:

[“The second screening did not show that \_*[child’s name]*\_ has signs of dyslexia.” *Write what the teacher will do to support the child, such as* “I will continue to provide an added 15 minutes of small group instruction every day to work on letter naming, letter sound, and awareness of the sounds in spoken words, since I am seeing this help with \_\_*[child name]*\_\_\_\_\_\_’s confidence learning to read.”]

I so appreciate how you have partnered with me this year to make sure \_\_*[child’s name]*\_ gets the support that they need. I am attaching \_\_\_*[list the resources]*\_\_\_ to this letter, so you can see the kinds of things we are doing at school. Please continue to feel free to share what types of things you’re doing as a family that support literacy at home and how it is going. Let me know what you think of the resources I’ve shared - I would love to know if they are helpful or not. If you would like to talk more about your child’s results, feel free to contact me on the *[phone/text/email/use app]* at any time. We will check \_*[child’s name’s]*\_\_\_ progress on each of these reading skills again in \_\_*[add number]*\_\_\_ weeks, and will send an update to you in *[add number here]* weeks.

If you would like to keep in contact with me more often, [*write here the ways a family could stay in frequent contact with the teacher about their child’s progress, such as a journal with a practice log*].

Talk to you soon,

Teacher/Staff Name

Phone Number \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_