Your Child’s PALS 1–3 Scores
What Parents Should Know

**PALS** stands for **Phonological Awareness Literacy Screening**, a tool that teachers use with all Wisconsin first grade students to

- identify students who are struggling with learning to read,
- find out what each student is ready to learn next, and
- check on each student’s reading progress during the school year.

Teachers must give all first grade students the PALS 1–3 assessment at the beginning and end of the school year. Each time your child takes PALS 1–3, s/he receives an overall score, called a Summed Score, as well as scores for individual reading tasks that make up the assessment. Some students may need extra help, called “intervention,” to get on track to becoming a reader. The PALS Summed Score is used to identify students who would benefit from this additional instruction beyond what is provided in the regular classroom.

Here are three ways PALS scores tell you about your child’s progress in reading and spelling:

1. **Look at your child’s Summed Score** on the PALS Student Summary Sheet. Now find the Summed Score benchmark (shown in parentheses). Is your child’s Summed Score above or below the Summed Score benchmark?

   **The school is required to give extra reading help, or intervention, to students who do not meet the Summed Score benchmark.**

   Intervention should happen **in addition** to regular reading and language arts time in the classroom. The extra instruction will focus on helping each child strengthen specific skills s/he needs to become a good reader. Intervention should continue until each student meets the Summed Score benchmark on the next PALS assessment.

2. **Look at your child’s scores for each specific task.** If your child’s score fell below the benchmark score in any task (such as spelling or letter sounds), the teacher will plan activities for your child individually and in small groups to strengthen this skill. What is your child’s Instructional Oral Reading Level? All reading instruction for your child should be targeted at this level or easier for maximum reading growth to occur. Spelling instruction should target those spelling features for which your child scored 2–3 points (indicating some knowledge of this feature but not full mastery).

3. **If this Summary Sheet includes mid-year and/or spring scores, look at the progress your child has made.** Compare mid-year/spring scores to fall scores. What skills show improvement for your child? Has s/he reached or exceeded benchmarks on individual tasks? Which tasks need strengthening?

**Ask your child’s teacher:**
- What s/he will do **in the classroom** to improve your child’s reading skills.
- If needed, what **additional help (intervention)** your child will receive in reading during the day.
- What **you can do at home** to continue to grow your child’s reading skills.

Reading instruction should be based on your child’s strengths and needs in reading. PALS gives teachers specific information about each student’s level of knowledge and fluency in letter and letter sound recognition, oral reading, and spelling patterns so they can design the best instruction possible for each student to grow in reading and spelling.

In addition, parents play a very important role in helping children to develop as readers by reading with them, talking about new experiences, and encouraging them to write, spell, and learn. Visit [https://pals.virginia.edu/parents-monthly-activity.html](https://pals.virginia.edu/parents-monthly-activity.html) for ideas to support literacy development at home.

**What’s in a PALS score?**

Look at the Student Summary Sheet.

The first number in the score column is your **child’s score** on that task.

The number in parentheses ( ) shows the **benchmark score** for that task. If your child scores at or below the benchmark, it indicates they need more help with that skill.

The number in the MAX column shows the **total possible score** for that task.