

### How to prepare your child for PALS.

There is no need to prepare your student specifically for PALS. We encourage parents to read to their children and spend time sharing books. These interactions help students develop important early literacy skills.

### Where can I find sample or practice PALS questions?

Video demonstrations highlighting each PALS task can be found at <http://pals.virginia.edu/>.

### PALS is aligned to which Standards?

Expectations for curriculum as outlined in the Reading Foundational Common Core State Standards available at <http://www.corestandards.org/ELA-Literacy/RF/K/> align with the subtests for PALS, as well as the Early Literacy Wisconsin Model Early Learning Standards available at <http://www.collaboratingpartners.com/wmeis-documents.php>.

### More Information

More information about PALS is available at <http://www.palswisconsin.info>.



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## Information for Families 2015-16



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## What is PALS?

PALS stands for Phonological Awareness Literacy Screening, a tool teachers use to:

- Identify students who are struggling to learn to read
- Find out what each student is ready to learn next, and
- Check each student's reading progress during the school year.

Teachers give students the PALS screener three times per year: the beginning, the middle (optional), and the end of the school year.

"Phonological awareness" refers to a student's awareness of the sound structure of words. It is an important predictor of later reading ability.

PALS is a research-based screener for classroom teachers to use with students. There are three PALS screeners currently required in Wisconsin public schools:

- **PALS-PreK (for 4K students)** – The Phonological Awareness Literacy Screening for Preschool measures student skills in:
  - Name Writing
  - Alphabet Knowledge
  - Beginning Sound Awareness
  - Print and Word Awareness
  - Rhyme Awareness
  - Nursery Rhyme Awareness
- **PALS-K** – The Phonological Awareness Literacy Screening for Kindergarten measures student skills in:
  - Phonological Awareness
  - Alphabet Knowledge
  - Knowledge of Letter Sounds

- Spelling
- Concept of Word
- Word Recognition in Isolation
- **PALS 1-3 (for 1<sup>st</sup> & 2<sup>nd</sup> grade students)** – The Phonological Awareness Literacy Screening for first through third grades measures student skills in:
  - Spelling
  - Word Knowledge
  - Letter Sounds
  - Oral Reading in Context
  - Alphabet Knowledge (for students who have more basic literacy skills)
  - Phonemic Awareness (for students who have more basic literacy skills)

### Is PALS a reading test?

PALS is not a reading test. PALS is used to identify students who may be struggling to learn to read or who may lag behind other students in their grade.

### How are the test results used?

PALS provides teachers information about each student's strengths and needs in reading. This allows teachers to plan their lessons to meet the needs of each student. Teachers use PALS to prevent reading problems before they happen, and to plan instruction for both grade-level readers and struggling readers.

Results from the PALS screener do not affect your child's report card grades. State law requires schools to provide interventions or remedial reading services to each student who is identified as being at risk of reading difficulty.

## What type of scores will be provided?

PALS-PreK scores (for 4-year-old kindergarten) compare each student's skills to a range of skills which students are expected to know by the spring of the PreK school year, which is the spring prior to entering kindergarten. While PALS-PreK tasks are appropriate to use with three- and four-year-old students, the scoring ranges apply only to four-year-olds the spring before they start kindergarten.



PALS-K provides teachers with information about skills each student must know as they start to read. PALS-K reports students' development by area

and by tasks. Student scores on each task are added to create a Summed Score. This score is compared to expectations for fall and for spring. Summed Scores help identify students who would benefit from extra instruction designed to meet their needs.

For PALS 1-3, each student's scores on specific tasks are added together to create a Summed Score. This Summed Score is compared to minimum expectations for fall and for spring. If a student's Summed Score is below the benchmark – or below expectations – the student proceeds to additional tasks of PALS 1-3 (alphabet knowledge and phonemic awareness tasks). Students who score below minimal expectations may benefit from extra instruction to help them progress.