

To: Elementary School Principals
Speech/Language Pathologists

From: Laura Nichols
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The purpose of this memo is to describe procedures for the Kindergarten and PreK Speech/Language Universal Screenings conducted by our Troup County Speech/Language Pathologists.

Purpose: Many researchers have indicated that children experiencing speech and language acquisition difficulties are also likely to experience frustration and academic failure later. Because oral and written communication skills are critical to a student's success in school, it is important to identify students who may need additional classroom instruction in speech and/or language as early as possible.

As part of Tier 1 of the *Response to Intervention* initiative, Troup County Speech/Language Pathologists will collaborate with classroom teachers to informally assess the communication skills of students enrolled in the TCSS PreK and Kindergarten classes. The purpose of the screenings is to identify students who may need differentiated classroom instruction and progress monitoring in the areas of speech and language.

When: It is recommended that Kindergarten students be screened towards the end of the first quarter of the Fall semester (around mid October). Principals and SLPs in each building should discuss the most appropriate specific time frame for their school.

It is recommended that PreK students be screened early in the second semester of each school year, perhaps in January or early February. This allows the PreK student ample time to adjust to the school setting. If intervention/differentiated instruction is needed, this would allow for many weeks of intervention within that school year.

The screenings will take place during the school day on days and times arranged by the school speech therapist, classroom teachers, and principals. The screening will take approximately 5 minutes per student and students are seen individually.

Please note, if a classroom teacher notes that a student exhibits obvious speech/language impairment, the teacher may consult with the SLP at any time. There is no requirement to wait until the screening period.

Where: Typically, the screenings will be conducted inside or just outside of the PreK or Kindergarten classroom environment.

What screening tool is used? An informal speech and language screening tool has been developed by the Speech/Language Pathologist in Troup County. We are currently in the process of collecting data to develop local normative data and criteria. Speech Pathologists are not limited to using only this instrument and may supplement the screening with classroom checklists and teacher observations/input.

How will parents be notified of these Universal Speech/language screenings?

A letter will be prepared by the Coordinator of Speech Services informing parents of the screenings and then distributed to the principals so that they may distribute the letter to parents. Parents are not required to provide permission for the screening since this is a Tier I Response to Intervention/Universal Screening activity provided to all PreK and Kindergarten students. Parents are given an opportunity to opt-out of the screenings by written notification to their child's classroom teacher.

Principals and School SLPs will determine the most appropriate time and manner in which to distribute the letter to parents at their schools.

What is done with the results of the screening? The results of the screenings will be shared with the classroom teachers and with the school principal. (See Appendix A and Appendix B)

If the results of the screening indicate that the student is not exhibiting difficulties in the areas of speech and language, no further action is needed for that student and he/she continues to receive Tier I Research-based classroom instruction.

If a student was screened in the Winter of his/her PreK year and the screening indicated no problems, then re-screening the student in the Fall of the Kindergarten year is not necessary, unless deemed so by the classroom teacher, SLP, principal or parent.

If the results of the speech/language screening indicate that the student may need additional instruction in this area, the SLP will share this information with the PreK or Kindergarten teacher. The teacher may then consider initiation of Tier II interventions and progress monitoring for that student. As with all Tier II interventions, the goal and progress will be shared with the parent of the student by the classroom teacher.

The SLP is available for consultation and guidance at the Tier II level of Response to Intervention.

If you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact Laura Nichols at EEC. Thank you.