

Dear Parents,

The teachers and administrators at our school are committed to helping your child become a successful reader. As part of this commitment, our school has chosen to use a test called DIBELS to help us examine how your child is doing in learning important reading skills.

DIBELS stands for *Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills*. DIBELS tests five skills that are necessary for learning to read. Children who learn these skills become good readers. The skills are:

- Phonemic Awareness: Hearing and using sounds in spoken words
- Alphabetic Principle: Knowing the sounds of the letters and sounding out written words
- Accurate and Fluent Reading: Reading stories and other materials easily and quickly with few mistakes
- Vocabulary: Understanding and using a variety of words
- Comprehension: Understanding what is spoken or read

DIBELS is made up of seven short individual tests, called subtests. Each DIBELS subtest focuses on a different skill and takes about 1 minute to do. Your child may be given two to five of the DIBELS subtests depending on his or her grade level.

Each DIBELS subtest takes only about one minute to do because they are used as *indicators*. Much like using a thermometer to take a child's temperature is an indicator of overall health, each subtest is an indicator of how well a child is doing in learning a particular early reading skill. DIBELS is used with millions of children throughout the United States. A child's score on a subtest tells us whether the child is likely to be "on track" for learning to read, or whether that child may need some help in learning important reading skills. Your child's teacher will use the information to better help your child. For example, the DIBELS test may tell us that we need to spend more time teaching your child how to "sound out" unknown words.

DIBELS is used to identify children who may need extra help to become good readers and check up on those children while they receive the extra help to make sure they are making progress. DIBELS also may be used by your school to make decisions about how well the school's overall reading program is working for all children. DIBELS should never be used to grade your child, or for decisions about retention.

We are working hard at school to make sure that every child is on target for success, and we thank you for your efforts at home. Together, we will help your child become a successful reader.

Sincerely,