

# Using the Acadience Spelling Preliminary Cut Points for Decision Making

© Acadience Learning, Inc. / August 2023

Research indicates that there is a strong relationship between reading and spelling. Both reading and spelling rely on the same underlying knowledge of letters and sounds, such as phonemic awareness, and basic and advanced phonics skills. Students who have difficulty with these underlying foundational skills are likely to have difficulty with both decoding words (reading) and encoding words (spelling). In fact, research suggests that instruction in spelling can support fluent reading. According to Moats (2005), when a student knows how to spell a word it facilitates fluent reading of that word.

The Acadience Spelling preliminary cut points for risk (see *Table 1*) aid educators in their use and interpretation of Acadience Spelling data. Specifically, the cut points provide educators with an additional piece of information useful for identifying students who are at increased risk with respect to their literacy outcomes and for identifying additional targets for instruction and intervention. Acadience Spelling offers two indices of spelling performance with its two scores: Correct Spelling Sequences (CSS) and Correctly Spelled Words (CSW). Both CSS and CSW are highly correlated, but in the rare case where a student falls into different risk categories, their performance on CSS should be given precedence.

**Table 1**  
*Acadience Spelling Preliminary Cut Points for Risk*

Grade	Measure	Risk Status	Beginning of Year	Middle of Year	End of Year
Kindergarten	Correct Spelling Sequences	Low-Risk	–	12+	33+
		Some-Risk	–	8–11	26–32
		At-Risk	–	0–7	0–25
	Correctly Spelled Words	Low-Risk	–	2+	8+
		Some-Risk	–	1	5–7
		At-Risk	–	0	0–4
First Grade	Correct Spelling Sequences	Low-Risk	32+	40+	46+
		Some-Risk	21–31	32–39	40–45
		At-Risk	0–20	0–31	0–39
	Correctly Spelled Words	Low-Risk	3+	6+	8+
		Some-Risk	2	4–5	6–7
		At-Risk	0–1	0–3	0–5

Students who earn Acadience Spelling scores in the Low-Risk range are unlikely to be at additional risk, provided their scores on other Acadience Reading K–6 measures are At or Above Benchmark and they are receiving high-quality, evidence-based core reading instruction. Students whose Acadience Spelling scores fall in the Some-Risk range may be at increased risk, in particular if their scores on other Acadience Reading measures fall into the Below or Well Below Benchmark range. These students may need strategic or intensive support to achieve important reading outcomes in the future.

Finally, students who earn Acadience Spelling scores in the At-Risk range are at increased risk of reading difficulties, in particular if their scores on other Acadience Reading measures fall in the Below or Well Below Benchmark range. Students with scores in the At-Risk range likely will need intensive support to meet subsequent reading outcomes. Preliminary cut points are provided for grades and times of year for which there are sufficient data for analysis. In addition, the data examined to create the cut points were from a convenience sample. As more data becomes available, these cut points may be adjusted and expanded.

### **Reference**

Moats, L. C. (2005). How spelling supports reading. *American Educator*, 29, 12–43.