



IREAD-3: Something New for Parents to Worry About

By Julie Steck, Ph.D., HSPP

Parents of elementary school children have one more thing to worry about now: Will their child pass the IREAD-3 Assessment? This new standardized test was designed to measure whether a student has acquired the foundational reading skills needed to progress to Grade 4. The assessment springs from Public Law 109, which requires the evaluation of reading skills for students who are in 3rd grade beginning in the Spring 2012 semester. In response to Public Law 109, educators from across the state worked with the Indiana Department of Education to develop a test blueprint and to review test questions that have now become the *Indiana Reading Evaluation And Determination (IREAD-3)* Assessment.

The results of the first administration of the IREAD-3 Assessment were released on May 15, 2012. Overall, 84% of third grade students in the state passed this assessment. CRG believes that this passing rate reflects well on the state of Indiana. IREAD-3 is a criterion-based assessment, meaning that the state has established skills which need to be acquired by the end of Grade 3. The test identifies which students have achieved these skills. The specific skills being tested are described on the Indiana Department of Public Instruction website: <http://www.doe.in.gov/sites/default/files/assessment/iread-3-parent-guidance-fall-2011-v2.pdf>. The 16% of students who did not pass IREAD-3 have a second chance to pass it during Summer 2012. The state requires that schools offer students who did not pass IREAD-3 90 minutes a day of targeted reading instruction using proven, effective reading strategies. Those students who did not pass should also receive more small group instruction, more frequent progress monitoring, and targeted interventions in addition to the 90 minutes of reading instruction.

Students who do not pass the summer administration of IREAD-3 will be retained in Grade 3. There are some students who may be exempt from retention. These include students who have been retained twice previously, have an IEP as a student with a disability, or are English Learner students with an ILP.

As mentioned, IREAD-3 is a criterion-based assessment but not a diagnostic test. This means that it does not explore *why* the student has not met the criterion. So, what are the most common reasons that a student would not pass IREAD-3? Here are a few:

- Approximately 9% of children in elementary school have Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD). Individuals with ADHD are diagnosed with Predominantly Inattentive Subtype, Predominantly Impulsive/Hyperactive Subtype, or Combined Subtype. A child or adolescent with ADHD may be able to adequately read words but does not retain what he/she reads or follow directions well. This could cause difficulty with performance on a test such as IREAD-3. For more information regarding ADHD, refer to www.chadd.org.

- Nearly 15% of Americans have significant difficulties with reading, according to the National Institute of Child and Human Development. This condition is referred to as a Reading Disorder ([DSM-IV](#)), a Specific Learning Disability in Reading ([Indiana Article 7](#)), or dyslexia. Children, adolescents, and adults with reading disorders struggle with the underlying phonetic skills that form the basis of reading ability and demonstrate difficulty with sequential memory (i.e., days of the week, phone numbers, addresses, spelling words). Some individuals with reading disorders – but not all – have had early language delays. They are at high risk for difficulty with reading, as reading is primarily a function of the brain’s language sections. More information can be found at <http://ncld.org/ld-basics/ld-aamp-language/reading/dyslexia> and <http://www.ninds.nih.gov/disorders/dyslexia/dyslexia.htm>
- Children with below average intellectual potential are at very high risk for not keeping up with the academic standards set by the state. While these students may work hard and keep up in 1st grade, they often begin to fall behind by 2nd and 3rd grade. Depending on the definition of “below average,” the 16% to 25% of children who fall below average are at the highest risk of increasing academic difficulties.

Each of the above conditions dictates a different type of intervention and remediation. As the reliance on criterion tests for measuring success has increased, public schools have significantly cut back on diagnostic testing. If your child has not passed IREAD-3, something is going on that needs to be addressed. At CRG, we strongly encourage parents to push for further psychoeducational evaluations through the school or through this office. With a comprehensive evaluation, you will have a much clearer roadmap of your child’s needs and a better plan for addressing these needs at home and advocating for them at school.

Despite what the popular media and the Department of Education would have us believe, inadequate instruction, poor parenting, and environmental factors are not the primary factors that cause inadequate performance on standardized tests. Rather, the neurobiological and genetic factors are the primary cause of deficits in academic performance. Accepting this basic truth helps us, as a society, realize that we need to determine alternative methods of intervention and not blame the students, their families, or teachers for academic difficulties.