

Oral Reading Fluency Measures and Accommodations for School-Age Students Who Stutter



Oral reading fluency is composed of three components: accuracy, automaticity, and prosody.

- *accuracy* refers to correct word identification;
- *automaticity* refers to immediate identification of words; and
- *prosody* refers to the ability of students to read oral passages with appropriate expression of intonation, stress, and timing.

Outcomes from these measures are used to identify students who need additional instructional support in reading and to monitor progress toward meeting instructional goals.

The American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA) Committee on Reading Fluency for School-Age Children Who Stutter conducted a survey to assess the use of oral reading fluency measures for students who stutter and accommodations (e.g., administration of an alternative test of silent reading). The survey was carried out in response to reports that these students were being placed in reading groups based on outcomes from oral reading measures. Such measures may not accurately reflect reading skills, due to the oral fluency breakdowns (omissions, blocks, and repetitions) that are characteristic of a stuttering disorder. These measures also may not be accurate for students with other communication disorders, such as dysarthria or childhood apraxia of speech.

Survey results showed that

- more than a third of school districts require students who stutter to take oral reading fluency tests,
- 43% of districts do not use accommodations for these students,
- more than half of the respondents reported being contacted about this issue a few times each year,
- 36.6% of respondents reported that they had never been consulted about this issue.

Respondents were encouraged to add written comments concerning issues raised in the survey. These comments were grouped in three categories:

1. **Current Status:** Respondents reported that the process is variable and occurs on a case-by-case basis. SLPs are being proactive and suggesting options for students who stutter, but there are misconceptions about the students' need for accommodations among those assigned to administer and/or interpret the test results.
2. **Current Needs:** SLPs reported needing more education on how to provide accommodations, ways to educate others, clarification of roles, and ways this issue can be addressed in the schools.
3. **Barriers:** SLPs reported experiencing frustration when attempting to provide input regarding the process, lack of flexibility or support from other professionals/administrators, lack of awareness by assessors concerning children who stutter, and limited collaboration to put accommodations in place.

Articles:

Children "Quick: Talk Fast & Don't Stutter!"
The ASHA Leader, July 2014, Vol. 19, 44–48.

"Oral Reading Fluency Measures and Accommodations for School-Age Students Who Stutter" *SIG 4 Perspectives on Fluency and Fluency Disorders*, December 2014, Vol. 24, 38–45.