PALS Family Letter Template for Kindergarten – FALL 2021 – English

PALS provides this template to divisions and schools to assist with family communication about *PALS*. Division and school leaders are encouraged to send this letter home with the child's *Student Summary*. If applicable, information regarding the *intervention program* you will provide for the student may be entered into this template.

Date: _____

Dear Family of _____,

PALS-K is a screening tool of young children's literacy development which has been used for over twenty years with students in Virginia. Results are used to determine individual children's learning goals, plan classroom instruction, and raise awareness of children who need additional support or instruction in early reading and literacy.

Focusing on early detection and early intervention of reading difficulties is a required state-wide policy (Early Intervention Reading Initiative). The *PALS-K* screening tool is a way to help schools and teachers meet that mandate.

PALS has *individual task scores* which show the number of items a student answered correctly on each task and an overall *Summed Score*. There is a different *Summed Score Benchmark* for each grade-level and each time period (fall/spring).

The *Summed Score Benchmark* for fall of Kindergarten is 29.

Your child's *Summed Score* is _____.

If your child's *Summed Score* meets or exceeds the benchmark, your child is not identified to receive intervention funded through the EIRI initiative. However, your child's individual task scores may still indicate that your child needs instruction in those particular areas.

If your child's *Summed Score* is below the benchmark, this indicates that your child is *significantly* behind in basic literacy development and has been identified by *PALS* for intervention. Identified students are required by the Early Intervention Reading Initiative (EIRI) to receive 2.5 hours of additional instruction per week above and beyond regular classroom instruction.

Divisions and schools determine how intervention is provided. The 2.5 hours per week may include time with a *person* or a *program*, or a *combination* of the two. You may ask your child's teacher for clarification.

Your child's intervention:
- Describe the child's intervention here. Consider including:
  - Days of the Week (e.g., Monday through Friday)

- ○ Time of Day (i.e., 10:00-10:30 am)
  - ○ Intervention focus/goals (i.e., phonemic awareness, spelling)
  - ○ Mode of intervention (e.g., direct instruction or computer program, individual or small group)
  - ○ Name of the person working with student's intervention
  - ○ Description of materials (i.e., what will the student use?)
  - ○ Description of instruction (i.e., what will the student do?)

On the next few pages, you will find:
- a sample *Kindergarten Student Summary* for fall to help you understand your own child's report
- a table with more detailed task information
- a *Family Information Sheet for Literacy Screening in Virginia* that answers common questions about *PALS*
- your child's Student Summary

Sincerely,

Principal/School Division staffer name/ signature

STUDENT SUMMARY - FALL 2021 | pals

This report lists all scores entered for the student. In the Fall and Spring columns, task benchmarks or a Summed Score benchmark is in parentheses following selected task scores. In the Mid-Year column, Mid-Year ranges are in parentheses following selected task scores. Benchmarks and Mid-Year ranges are only valid for students who were given the assessment using Standard Administration.

▸ Student: **Kindergarten ExampleStudent**　　▸ Grade: **Kindergarten**

▸ Teacher: **Michele Burke**　　▸ School: **Example Elementary**

PALS TASK			FALL SCORES RA	FALL MAX
	Group Rhyme		4 (5)	10
	Group Beginning Sound		3 (5)	10
	Individual Rhyme		5 (5)	10
	Individual Beginning Sound		3 (5)	10
ENTRY-LEVEL TASKS	Lower-Case Alphabet Recognition		9 (12)	26
	Letter Sounds		3 (5)	26
	Spelling		1 (2)	20
	Concept of Word	Pointing	0	0
		Word ID	0	0
		COW Word List	0	0
	Summed Score		21 (29)	92
SUPPLEMENTAL TASKS	Blending		4	20
	Sound-to-Letter		3	40
OPTIONAL TASKS	Preprimer Word List			20
	Primer Word List			20
	First Grade Word List			20

In Fall, COW tasks were not administered by the teacher. COW tasks autopopulate with scores of 0 for all students.

RA: Remote Administration and below Summed Score Benchmark (not an option at M-Y)

▪ END OF REPORT

Individual Rhyme and *Individual Beginning Sounds* are only administered if the group score is below the fall benchmark of 5. If the group score is below 5, the individual score counts toward the *Summed Score*.

Concept of Word was not administered this fall. Scores of 0 populate for all students assessed in a standard manner.

Blending, Sound-to-Letter and the *Word Lists* are OPTIONAL tasks. Teachers may administer the tasks at their discretion. The data does not count in the Summed Score.

An **RA** symbol indicates one or more tasks was administered remotely. If the **RA** is red, the score is also below the *Summed Score benchmark* and the student must receive 2.5 hours of literacy intervention *per week* during the school year.

An **ID** symbol indicates that the student either: 1) scored below the *Summed Score Benchmark* of 29, or 2) remains **ID'd** from a previous screening window if assessed remotely. A student with the **ID** designation must receive 2.5 hours of literacy intervention *per week* during the school year.

The numbers in parentheses represent the minimum score, or the **benchmark**, for each task. A score below the benchmark requires targeted instruction. The number in the gray column indicates the **maximum** score for that task.

Kindergarten Fall 2021 *PALS* Tasks

	Task	Purpose	Max	Fall Benchmark (Minimum)
Entry-Level Tasks	**Rhyme Awareness**	identify words that rhyme	10	• Fall benchmark = 5 • If the group score is below the benchmark of 5, the task is administered individually
	Beginning Sound Awareness	match pictures based on shared beginning sound	10	• Fall benchmark = 5 • If the group score is below the benchmark of 5, the task is administered individually
	Alphabet Recognition	identify lowercase letters of the alphabet	26	• Fall benchmark = 12
	Letter Sounds	produce letter sounds for uppercase letters	26	• Fall benchmark = 5
	Spelling	use letters to represent sounds in short (3 letter) words	20	• Fall benchmark = 2
	Concept of Word		0	• *Concept of Word* was not administered • Task scores of 0 populate for all students who were administered *PALS* in a standard manner
Summed Score			92	**Fall *Summed-Score Benchmark* = 29**
Supplemental/ Optional Tasks	**Blending**	orally blend 2-4 speech sounds to produce words	20	• No benchmark in kindergarten
	Sound-to-Letter	Identify letters at the beginning, middle, and end of words	40	• No benchmark in kindergarten
	Word Lists	read words commonly found in grade-level texts	20	• No benchmark in kindergarten

pals K—3
Phonological Awareness Literacy Screening

palsK–3
Phonological Awareness Literacy Screening

Family Information Sheet for Literacy Screening in Virginia

What is literacy?

Literacy means that someone can read and write. The goal of reading is to be able to understand (comprehend) what one reads. Children need to be able to:

1. *decode* –blend sounds together to read words
2. *encode* – spell words
3. *understand and use language*

As children's skills improve in these three areas, they develop *fluency* and *comprehension*.

What is a screener?

A literacy *screener* (also known as a *test* or *assessment*) is designed to identify children at high risk for reading problems. If students are identified as needing additional support, they receive *intervention* (i.e., extra instruction) to help the student make progress. Early intervention is critical because research tells us that risk for reading difficulties can be detected as early as kindergarten. Additionally, *PALS* task scores allow teachers to target instruction to meet student needs.

What is *PALS*?

PALS is the Virginia Department of Education sponsored literacy screener that is designed to give a snapshot of critical literacy skills at a single moment in time. Rather than focus on all parts of literacy, *PALS* focuses on *decoding* and *encoding*. *PALS* does **not** offer a comprehensive picture of your child's literacy skills.

What do *PALS* scores mean?

PALS has *individual task scores* which show the number of items a student answered correctly on each task and an overall *Summed Score*. If a child's *Summed Score* is below the *Summed Score Benchmark*, the student is eligible to receive state dollars for intervention. There is a different *Summed Score Benchmark* for each grade-level and each time period (fall/spring).

If your child's *Summed Score* meets or exceeds the benchmark, your child's individual task scores may still indicate that your child needs instruction in these particular areas.

If your child's *Summed Score* is below the benchmark, this indicates that your child is *significantly* behind in basic literacy development and has been *Identified below the Summed Score Benchmark* by *PALS*.

Students who have 🆔 and/or 🟥 by their name have a *Summed Score* below the benchmark and are required by the Early Intervention Reading Initiative (EIRI) to receive 2.5 hours of additional instruction per week above and beyond regular classroom instruction. Divisions and schools may decide what intervention looks like and how to communicate the plan to families. The 2.5 hours may include time with a *person* or a *program*, or a *combination* of the two. *You may ask your child's school about EIRI intervention provided for your child.* The *PALS Office* provides a letter template that divisions and schools can use to give you additional information about your child's *PALS* scores.