Families and Schools Partnering for Children’s Literacy Success
School Track Facilitator’s Guide: Address Concerns Together

For more information: https://improvingliteracy.org/kit/

The research reported here is funded by a grant to the National Center on Improving Literacy from the Office of Elementary and Secondary Education, in partnership with the Office of Special Education Programs (Award #: S283D160003). The opinions or policies expressed are those of the authors and do not represent views of OESE, OSEP, or the U.S. Department of Education. You should not assume endorsement by the Federal government. Copyright © 2020 National Center on Improving Literacy.

Note: Greet participants and begin workshop with introductions as needed. Follow the facilitation procedure notes appropriate for the workshop session.

For the traditional blended and virtual dissemination models, activate the tutorial link and start with the introduction slide and then continue to the next slide.

For the flipped blended dissemination model, ask participants in they have any questions about the purpose of NCIL’s tutorial on Families and Schools Partnering for Children’s Literacy Success.

Overview of The National Center on Improving Literacy (NCIL)
The NCIL’s mission is to increase access to, and use of, evidence-based approaches to screen, identify, and teach pre-K to grade 12 students with literacy-related disabilities, including dyslexia.
Note: This slide explains why the topic is important/the session big ideas.

You and families can discuss what their children have learned and what skills they are still working on. You can encourage families to share their understanding of their child’s learning needs and tell you what activities or tasks are giving their child trouble at home and how they’ve helped.
Learning Objectives

• To learn what makes reading a complex and unnatural process
• To learn how to appropriately address children’s literacy needs early
• To learn about reading disabilities, including dyslexia

Note: Participant learning objectives to display and communicate when the workshop begins.
Learning to read is a complex and unnatural process. This may explain why so many children do not learn to read through exposure to books and language alone. All children benefit from explicit, systematic reading instruction in phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension. Yet, some children continue to struggle with reading even with high-quality classroom instruction. By appropriately addressing children’s literacy needs early, children can learn to read. Click Watch Video to see Linda Farrell discuss why every child can become a better reader. Click Learn More for information to share with families on how to recognize if their children might have reading problems.

**Video:** Play Watch Video Reading Rockets (0:35)
I go to some schools and students really aren’t scoring well on their tests. And there are a number of reasons for that. And what is so satisfying is when teachers say, “I know they’re not scoring well on their tests but they can, they can.” We know how to do this. Help us do even more. And that is fabulous because every student can learn more. Every student can learn more. And, I have yet to find a student who cannot learn to decode.

**Guiding question to check for understanding:** What is your key takeaway from the video?

**Resource:** Distribute, review, and discuss Recognizing Reading Problems with participants. Have participants share how they would use this resource with families and what they would say.
If you or families are concerned that children’s reading difficulties are unexpected and unusual, seek further information from your school and others about next steps. One type of learning disability in reading is dyslexia. Other learning disabilities in reading may be related to challenges in comprehension or a combination of skills. Families can request that the school evaluate their children for a reading disability if they suspect one. Click Child Find for more information. In the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), the federal special education law, a child with characteristics of dyslexia or other literacy-related disabilities may qualify for IDEA services under the category of a specific learning disability. Click Learn More for more information. Click Try It Out for tips on having a difficult conversation with families.

**Note:** Click Child Find and read aloud the first paragraph to participants. Encourage participants to review the additional hyperlinks/information on their own.

**Resource:** Distribute, review, and discuss Dear Colleague: Dyslexia Guidance to participants. Explain to participants that it’s always been OK to say dyslexia, dysgraphia or dyscalculia in an IEP. But in 2015 the Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) at the U.S. Department of Education clarified the use of these terms in a Dear Colleague letter. It encouraged states and school systems to use these terms when appropriate and reminded them that there’s nothing in the law that says they shouldn’t use those words. That letter encourages states to remind their districts to use the terms in IEPs, at IEP meetings and in evaluations used in determining eligibility for services.

**Resource:** Distribute, review, and discuss Having Difficult Conversations With Families: A Teacher’s Guide to participants. Tell participants they can use the document back at their school to practice having these conversations with families. If time permits, see activity below.
**Activity:** Provide time for participants to pair up and use the guide to articulate and practice having these conversations with families. Encourage pairs to script the conversations using information from the guide, with one participant taking the role of teacher and the other of a family member.
The main difference between instruction appropriate for all children in the classroom and children with or at risk for dyslexia is the way in which instruction is provided. Instruction should be more explicit, comprehensive, intensive, and supportive that the instruction that is provided to most children. Click Understanding Dyslexia Toolkit for NCIL’s toolkit on understanding dyslexia. Click Learn More for information on the relationship between dyslexia and MTSS-R.

Click Watch Video to hear distance learning tips from students with dyslexia.

**Video:** Play Watch Video Bookshare (Eli, 2:45)

Share the clip of Eli with participants. Encourage participants to watch the remaining ones of their own.

What are your teachers doing that is working for you? One of my teachers is doing something I really enjoy that I enjoy but think is really important. They are putting up videos going through what we’re suppose to do today, which I think is pretty important for me because I need to be talked through things. I’m not somebody who...my teachers are like go take everything and learn stuff from chapter twelve in math. I can’t do that. I’m like wait a second. So, I think it’s really important that she in particular is walking us through things in a video. What assistive technology tools are you using? So, I mainly use three tools. I use Read & Write, Bookshare, and voice typing. So I’m going to share my screen quickly and show you how I use those. OK, so say this is a history question so I use Read & Write. I underline it and then this bar up here is Read & Write. I can highlight things, but the main thing I use it for is to play the audio. So once I play the audio, OK I know what this
question says. So then I go to the voice typing and say, “There are 50 states in the U.S.” and then I just do the whole problem or whatever with that. What do you do for self-care at home? Well, like I said, I’m trying not to do everything at once when it comes to school work. But I’m also trying to go outside on my trampoline and exercise, trying to eat healthy. I think those are all really important things. Just general things to take care of yourself.

**Guiding question to check for understanding:** What are the key takeaways about the distance learning needs of these students with dyslexia?

**Note:** Click Understanding Dyslexia Toolkit to show the landing page for the toolkit for more information to share with families on this learning disability. Click Learn More to show the response to the questions What is the relationship between MTSS and diagnosis of dyslexia? Does MTSS slow down the diagnosis?
To start addressing concerns about children’s literacy development with families, think about and prepare responses to these questions:
- How are all children’s language and literacy learning being supported in your school’s system of literacy services and support?
- What types of support can be offered to children if they are struggling to read or write?
- What accommodations does your school provide to help children read or write?
- What might happen next if children continue to struggle?

Responses should build common understanding and promote joint action between home and school.

**Activity:** Provide time for participants to think about and prepare responses to the slide questions. Encourage participants from the same setting to discuss and record their responses and use them to confer and reach consensus with others back at school.

**Resource:** Distribute, review, and discuss Route to Reading: All Systems Go with participants. Tell participants they can use the infographic back at their district and school to think about and prepare responses to the questions about systemic family engagement for literacy.
Summarize the big ideas for participants:

• All children benefit from explicit, systematic reading instruction in phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension.
• Some children continue to struggle with reading even with evidence-based classroom reading instruction.
• If you or a family member is concerned that a child’s reading difficulties are unexpected or unusual, seek further information from the school and others about next steps.

You have now completed the section on addressing concerns together. Click on the bar to continue.

Note: This completes Session 4: Address Concerns Together.
Think about what you’ve learned about partnering with families to help Dave. Dave is interested in learning about his child’s school system of literacy support and services and how his child is being supported within that system. What can Dave say or do to find out more? Choose the answer that best fits. Find out what opportunities are provided to help with literacy learning at the school; discuss what literacy skills his child has learned and what he or she is still working on; ask for literacy activities matched to his child’s skill level and share what worked well and what did not; request information on his child’s literacy progress and talk about what happens if he has concerns about the progress being made; or all of the above. Click submit after choosing your answer.

**Note:** Provide time for participants to review and discuss the scenario. Then, ask participants to discuss the correct answer with their tablemates. Poll participants on the answer and click Submit to see if correct.
The National Center on Improving Literacy’s mission is to increase access to, and use of, evidence-based approaches to screen, identify, and teach pre-K to grade 12 students with literacy-related disabilities, including dyslexia. This tutorial expands upon information in NCIL’s partnering with your child’s school literacy brief and infographic. Click the partnering with your child’s school icon to access the literacy brief and infographic and click the NCIL icon to learn more about the National Center on Improving Literacy.

**Resource:** Distribute copies, review, and discuss the Partnering with Your Child’s School literacy brief and infographic with participants. Tell participants that the session topic is related to the literacy brief.
Want to learn more? Search the NCIL Resource Repository for literacy resources and activities you can do with your child at home or in your community. Sort by audience, topic area, and resource type to find resources matched to skills in this tutorial. Click the icon to take you there.
Slide to use for soliciting questions from participants and discussing answers on session content and related information at the end of the workshop. Review the big ideas from all three sessions and clarify as needed.

**Activity:** Distribute to participants the Families & Schools Partnering for Children’s Literacy Success Checklist and have them reflect on the item statements related to the session learning objectives, including identifying a next step they will take after the workshop to further action on the item.
Thank You!

- [insert contact information]

Slide for inserting contact information so participants can communicate with you after the workshop.