

**DIBELS – Initial Sound Fluency<sup>1</sup>**  
**Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills 6<sup>th</sup> Ed.**  
**University of Oregon**

Directions for Administration and Scoring

Target Age Range

Initial Sound Fluency is intended for most children from the last year of preschool through the middle of kindergarten. It may be appropriate for monitoring the progress of older children with very low skills in phonological awareness. ISF does not meet our criteria for benchmark screening so there are no benchmark goals.

Description

DIBELS Initial Sound Fluency (ISF) is a standardized, individually administered measure of phonological awareness that assesses a child's ability to recognize and produce the initial sound in an orally presented word (Kaminski & Good, 1998; Laimon, 1994). The examiner presents four pictures to the child, names each picture, and then asks the child to identify (i.e., point to or say) the picture that begins with the sound produced orally by the examiner. For example, the examiner says, "This is sink, cat, gloves and hat. Which picture begins with /s/?" and the student points to the correct picture. The child is also asked to orally produce the beginning sound for an orally presented word that matches one of the given pictures. The examiner calculates the amount of time taken to identify/produce the correct sound and converts the score into the number of onsets correct in a minute.

The ISF measure takes about 3 minutes to administer and has over 20 alternate forms to monitor progress. The ISF measure is a revision of the Onset Recognition Fluency (OnRF) measure incorporating minimal revisions. Alternate-form reliability of the OnRF measure is .72 in January of kindergarten (Good, Kaminski, Shinn, Bratten, Shinn, & Laimon, in preparation). By repeating the assessment four times, the resulting average is estimated to have a reliability of .91 (Nunnally, 1978). The concurrent, criterion-related validity on OnRF with DIBELS PSF is .48 in January of kindergarten and .36 with the Woodcock-Johnson Psycho-Educational Battery Rediness Cluster score (Good et al., in preparation). The predictive validity of OnRF with respect to spring-of-first grade reading on CBM ORF is .45, and .36 with the Woodcock-Johnson Psycho-Educations Battery Total Reading Cluster score (Good et al., in preparation).

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Good, R. H., Laimon, D., Kaminski, R. A., & Smith, S. (2002). Initial Sound Fluency. In R. H. Good & R. A. Kaminski (Eds.), *Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills* (6<sup>th</sup> ed.). Eugene, OR: Institute for the Development of Educational Achievement. Available: <http://dibels.uoregon.edu/>.

**Materials:** Examiner copy of probe, student practice pictures, student probe pictures, clipboard, stopwatch, colored pen.

Directions for Administration

1. Place examiner copy of probe on clipboard and position so that student cannot see what you record.
2. Place the student copy of 4 practice pictures in front of the child.
3. Say these specific directions to the student:

***This is mouse, flowers, pillow, letters.*** (point to each picture while saying its name) ***Mouse*** (point to mouse) ***begins with the sound /m/. Listen, /m/ mouse. Which one begins with the sounds /f/?***

<p>CORRECT RESPONSE: Student points to flowers, you say,</p>	<p>INCORRECT RESPONSE: If student gives any other response, you say,</p>
<p><b><i>Good. Flowers begins with the sounds /f/.</i></b></p>	<p><b><i>Flowers</i></b> (point to flowers) <b><i>begins with the sounds /f/. Listen, /f/ flowers. Lets try it again. Which one begins with the sounds /f/?</i></b></p>

***Pillow*** (point to pillow) ***begins with the sound /p/. Listen, /p/ pillow. What sound does letters*** (point to letters) ***begin with?***

<p>CORRECT RESPONSE: Student says /l/, you say,</p>	<p>INCORRECT RESPONSE: If student gives any other response, you say,</p>
<p><b><i>Good. Letters begins with the sound /l/.</i></b></p>	<p><b><i>Letters</i></b> (point to letters) <b><i>begins with the sound /l/. Listen, /l/ letters. Lets try it again. What sound does letters</i></b> (point to letters) <b><i>begin with?</i></b></p>

***Here are some more pictures. Listen carefully to the words.***

4. Show the child the first page of student probe pictures. Point to each picture and say the name following the standardized directions.
5. Present the first question as written on the score sheet. **After you finish asking the question, begin your stopwatch. Stop your stopwatch as soon as the child responds.** If the child does not respond after 5 seconds, score the question as zero and present the next question.

6. As soon as the student responds, present the next question promptly and clearly. Begin your stopwatch after you have said the question, and stop it as soon as the student responds, as above.
7. Score the child’s response as either correct (1 point) or incorrect (0 points).
8. If the child stops or struggles with a question for 5 seconds, score the question as zero and present the next question.
9. After the first 4 questions, proceed to the next page of student probe pictures. Continue until the end of the questions. When the child finishes the last question, record the total time on your stopwatch in seconds and add the number of correct responses. Record the total number correct and the time in seconds on the bottom of the scoring sheet.
10. Calculate the ISF Score using the formula:
 
$$ISF = \frac{60 \times \text{Number Correct}}{\text{Seconds}}$$
11. **Prompting Rule.** If a child has done the examples correctly and does not answer the questions correctly, say “**Remember to tell me a picture that begins with the sound** (repeat stimulus sound).” This prompt can be given once.

Directions for Scoring

1. **Discontinue Rule.** If a child has a score of 0 on the first five questions, discontinue the probe and give a score of 0.
2. If the child names the correct picture instead of pointing to it, score as correct.

PROMPT:	STUDENT SAYS:	SCORE:
<b>This is pie, letter, flower and mouse. Which picture begins with /p/?</b>	“pie”	0 (1)

3. If the child re-names a picture *and* the name begins with the correct (target) initial sound, score as correct. For example, if the target picture is “hand” for /h/ and the student points at road and says “highway,” score as correct.

PROMPT:	STUDENT SAYS:	SCORE:
<b>This is road, barn, hand and egg. Which picture begins with /h/?</b>	“highway”	0 (1)

4. If the child re-names the picture and the name begins with an incorrect initial sound, score as incorrect. For example, if the target picture is “barn” for /b/ and the student points at barn but says, “house,” score as incorrect.

PROMPT:	STUDENT SAYS:	SCORE:
<b>This is road, barn, hand and egg. Which picture begins with /b/?</b>	“house”	(0) 1

5. Correct Initial Consonant Sound: If the word starts with an initial consonant sound, the child can respond with the first sound or initial sounds. For example, if the word is “clock” a correct initial sound would be /c/ or /cl/ or /klo/ but not /l/ or “clock.”

PROMPT:	STUDENT SAYS:	SCORE:
What sound does “clock” begin with?	/k/	0 1
What sound does “clock” begin with?	/kl/	0 1
What sound does “clock” begin with?	/klo/	0 1
What sound does “clock” begin with?	/l/	0 1
What sound does “clock” begin with?	“clock”	0 1

6. Correct Initial Vowel Sound: If the word starts with an initial vowel sound, the child can respond with the initial vowel sound or initial sounds. For example, if the word is “elephant” a correct initial sound would be /e/ or /el/ or /ele/, but not the name of the letter /ea/.

PROMPT:	STUDENT SAYS:	SCORE:
What sound does “elephant” begin with?	/e/	0 1
What sound does “elephant” begin with?	/el/	0 1
What sound does “elephant” begin with?	/ea/	0 1
What sound does “elephant” begin with?	/ele/	0 1

7. Schwa sound (/u/) added to a consonant is not counted as an error. Some phonemes cannot be pronounced correctly in isolation without a vowel, and some early learning of sounds includes the schwa.

PROMPT:	STUDENT SAYS:	SCORE:
What sound does “clock” begin with?	/ku/	0 1
What sound does “clock” begin with?	/klu/	0 1

8. Articulation Difficulty: The student is not penalized for imperfect pronunciation due to dialect, articulation, or second language interference. For example, the student responds /th/ when asked for the first sound in “sink.” If the student consistently says /th/ for /s/, as in “thircle” for “circle,” he or she should be given credit for a correct initial sound. This is a professional judgment and should be based on the student’s responses and any prior knowledge of his/her speech patterns.

PROMPT:	STUDENT SAYS:	SCORE:
What sound does “sink” begin with?	/th/	0 1

**Pronunciation Guide:**

Different regions of the country use different dialects of American English. These pronunciation examples may be modified or distinguished consistent with regional dialects and conventions. See scoring note on Page 12 for clarification.

<u>Phoneme</u>	<u>Phoneme Example</u>	<u>Phoneme</u>	<u>Phoneme Example</u>
/ai/	bait	/th/	thin
/ea/	bead	/TH/	then
/ie/	tie	/sh/	shed
/oa/	boat	/SH/	measure or beige
/oo/	food	/ch/	chin
/a/	bad	/j/	jam & edge
/e/	bed	/p/	pen
/i/	bid	/t/	tap
/o/	cod or law	/k/	can
/u/	bud and “a” in about	/b/	bat
/uu/	good	/d/	dad
/ow/	cow	/g/	gun or frog
/oi/	noise or point	/m/	man or jam
/ar/	(1 phoneme) car	/n/	nap
/ir/	(1 phoneme) bird	/ng/	sing
/or/	(1 phoneme) for	/f/	fat
/ai/ /r/	(2 phonemes) chair	/v/	van
/ea/ /r/	(2 phonemes) clear	/s/	sit
/oo/ /r/	(2 phonemes) tour	/z/	zoo
		/r/	rat or frog
		/l/	lap
		/w/	wet
		/h/	hot
		/y/	yell

The assessor...	Yes	Continue Practicing
1) ...holds clipboard and stopwatch so the student cannot see what he/she records.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
2) ...performs standardized directions verbatim: <b><i>"This is 'mouse, flowers, pillow, letters.' 'Mouse' begins with the sound /m/. Listen, /m/ mouse. Which one begins with the sound /f/?"</i></b> Correct: <b><i>"Good. 'Flowers' begins with the sounds /f/."</i></b> Incorrect: <b><i>"'Flowers' begins with the sounds /f/ (point to flowers). Listen, /f/ 'flowers.' Let's try it again. Which one begins with the sounds /f/?"</i></b> <b><i>"Pillow begins with the sound /p/. Listen, /p/ 'pillow.' What sound does 'letters' begin with?"</i></b> Correct: <b><i>"Good. 'Letters' begins with the sound /l/."</i></b> Incorrect: <b><i>"'Letters' begins with the sound /l/. Listen, /l/ 'letters.' Let's try it again. What sound does 'letters' begin with?"</i></b>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
3) ...responds to correct and incorrect responses appropriately.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
4) ...points to each picture while saying its name.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
5) ...starts the stopwatch immediately after presenting the question and stops the stopwatch as soon as the student responds.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
6) ...moves through pictures and questions promptly and clearly.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
7) ...marks correct responses as 1, incorrect responses as 0.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
8) ...scores question as 0 and presents next question if the student does not respond in 5 seconds.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
9) ...writes "sc" above an error if self-corrected within 5 seconds and the next item has not been presented.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
10) ...uses correction procedure if the student did examples correctly but does not answer assessment questions correctly: <b><i>Remember to point/tell me a picture that begins with the sound</i></b> (stimulus sound).	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
11) ...discontinues if the student has a score of 0 after the first 5 questions, and records a score of 0.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
12) ...except when the discontinue rule is applied, administers all questions.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

**The assessor...**

	Yes	Continue Practicing
13) ...records the correct number of responses, and the cumulative time from the stopwatch in seconds.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
14) ...is within 1 point on the number of correct responses and within 2 seconds on the total time, when shadow scoring with an expert examiner.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
15) ...calculates score correctly and records it on front cover: $ISF = \frac{60 \times \text{Number Correct}}{\text{Seconds}}$	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>