

Education and Child Care

B.C. launches mandatory early literacy screening to help students succeed

Early literacy screening will help students with reading challenges, including those with dyslexia and other learning disabilities, to get help with reading sooner.

“Starting school should be a time of discovery and excitement, but for some kids, it’s also when learning challenges first appear,” said Lisa Beare, Minister of Education and Child Care. “Early literacy screening helps spot those challenges quickly so students can get the help they need at a younger age, before small struggles become big barriers. Every child should have the opportunity to thrive in school and that starts with recognizing their needs early and responding with care.”

Beginning this school year, kindergarten students in B.C. will be screened to determine where they are in their development of reading skills. This brief screening can identify early signs of reading difficulties and help ensure timely, targeted support is provided to students who may benefit from additional assistance.

“Children enter school with different literacy experiences and needs,” said Alicia Smith, executive director, Dyslexia Canada. “Early screening gives educators an efficient way to understand those needs, plan effective instruction for the whole class and ensure students who need extra support can get help sooner, before they fall behind.”

School districts will use screening tools that align with the criteria set by the Ministry of Education and Child Care. The ministry will be working with school districts, literacy experts, researchers and education partners to plan a standardized approach to screening for students from kindergarten to third grade in the coming years. This will include a single, made-in-B.C. screening tool for all schools to use.

In April 2024, the B.C. government pledged \$30 million over three years to support literacy initiatives to improve literacy for all children, including children with learning differences, such as dyslexia.

Quotes:

Raj Chouhan, MLA for Burnaby-New Westminster –

“Strengthening literacy supports doesn’t just help students do better in school, it also builds their confidence and improves their mental health and well-being. Our government is committed to making sure all students have what they need to grow, thrive and succeed. When we give kids the right help early, we set them up for success in school and in life.”

Sandra Singh, director of instruction, learning and innovation, New Westminster Schools –

“New Westminster Schools gratefully acknowledges the Ministry of Education and Child Care for its support through the K-12 literacy supports initiative grant. This funding enables the implementation of early literacy screening, targeted student interventions and professional learning for educators. We recognize the dedication and commitment of teachers in delivering evidence-informed instruction that meets diverse learning needs. Supporting every student in becoming a confident, proficient reader is key to helping them reach their full potential.”

Learn More:

For more information about the B.C. government’s initiatives to improve literacy for all children, visit: <https://news.gov.bc.ca/releases/2024PREM0020-000563>