

WIDA Alternate Screener FAQ

What is the screener for potential EL students with the most significant cognitive disabilities?

WIDA Alternate Screener is an assessment designed to provide an initial measure of English language proficiency for students identified with the most significant cognitive disabilities. It is given to incoming students in grades K-12 to help determine whether they qualify for English language support services. Typically, it is appropriate for potential English learners (EL) whose IEP team has determined they meet the criteria to participate in the Oklahoma Alternate Assessment Program (OAAP), aligned with the alternate academic achievement standards, and whose parent has provided the required consent in accordance with 70 O.S. §13-114.6.

What are the eligibility criteria for WIDA Alternate Screener?

The student must have a language other than English response listed on at least one of the Home Language Survey questions. If there is evidence indicating that the student may have a significant cognitive disability, a Group of Qualified Professionals (see definition on p. 97-99 of OSDE's Special Education Policies and Procedures) is responsible for determining if WIDA Alternate Screener is appropriate for the student; it is a separate decision from WIDA Alternate ACCESS participation. The screener does not determine which summative ELP assessment (WIDA Kindergarten ACCESS, WIDA ACCESS, WIDA Alternate ACCESS) should be given to students. The Group of Qualified Professionals can determine screener and summative assessments independent of each other.

Students with existing IEPs or 504 Plans that indicate the student will or will most likely participate in alternate assessment are eligible for the WIDA Alternate Screener. For students who do not have an IEP or 504 Plan, the screener determination should be conducted simultaneously with the Review of Existing Data (RED).

In addition to an existing IEP, 504 Plan, or Review of Existing Data (RED) to determine the appropriate screener to administer, the following resources may assist the Group of Qualified Professionals:

- [Tell Us about Your Child Survey](#)
- [Alternate Proficiency Level Descriptors](#) and [WIDA Alternate Can Do Descriptors](#)
- WIDA Alternate Screener Participation Decision Tree in the [Accessibility and Accommodations Manual](#)

What is the required training to administer WIDA Alternate Screener?

A WIDA Alternate Screener may be administered by any local staff who successfully completes the Alternate Screener training course with a score of 80% or higher. Both certified staff (i.e., teachers) and paraprofessionals may administer the WIDA Alternate Screener, but only certified staff may administer the WIDA ACCESS or Alternate ACCESS assessments.

What are the entry and exit criteria for the WIDA Alternate Screener?

If a student scores a 4.0 or higher on the WIDA Alternate Screener, they are considered fluent and should be coded 1634 Fluent English Speaker or 1633 Native English Speaker in the student information system dependent upon bilingual guidance.

If a student scores a 3.0 or lower, the student qualifies as an English Learner and should be coded 2349 English Learner or 1637 Declined Services in the student information system.

If a returning student has already participated in the WIDA ACCESS or Alternate ACCESS in Oklahoma, there is no need to rescreen them unless they have a gap in enrollment of a school year or more in Oklahoma public schools.

What domains of the WIDA Alternate Screener should be administered to Kindergartners?

If the IEP team has determined a kindergarten student will participate in the WIDA Alternate Screener, a student entering the first semester of kindergarten should be administered only the speaking and listening domains (oral domains). A student achieving a 4.0 or above on the oral composite will not qualify for English Learner services. A student scoring 3.0 or lower will qualify as an English Learner.

Students in the second semester of kindergarten or the first semester of first grade will be administered all four domains of the assessment. A student achieving a 4.0 or above on the overall composite will not qualify as an English Learner. A student scoring a 3.0 or below on the overall composite will qualify for English Learner services.

As the WIDA Alternate Screener is administered to students with extremely limited literacy skills and exposure to formal assessment, LEA staff should note the following points:

- As with other WIDA assessments, the WIDA Alternate Screener allows the test administrator to pause and potentially discontinue a domain if the student is unable or unwilling to continue.
- The capacity of the WIDA Alternate Screener to accurately determine the English language proficiency of a kindergarten-aged student may be influenced by interpersonal and environmental factors unrelated to the assessment's design. A student in this age group may have extremely limited or no experience with formal assessment and may exhibit reservation and situational anxiety if placed in an unknown environment and/or with an unfamiliar adult administering the assessment. As such, LEAs are strongly encouraged to implement the following best practices prior to screener administration:
 - Introduce and allow the student to explore the testing environment,
 - Ensure the student has experienced one or more positive interactions with the test administrator(s),
 - Provide one or more structured classroom activities that align to the assessment's administrative format and process.

Can a previously identified English Learner student be rescreened with the WIDA Alternate Screener?

Screening, if required, must be completed with any administrative considerations, universal tools, or accommodations that the ESL/SPED educators deem necessary. This procedure must be completed in accordance with the outlined guidelines, and the student must be placed in the appropriate language instruction educational program (LIEP) based on the information available at the conclusion of the identification procedure.

If a student is initially screened with the WIDA Kindergarten Screener or WIDA Screener and placed in a Language Instruction Educational Program (LIEP), but is later determined to have a significant cognitive disability that may have impacted the validity of the screening—and the student's IEP, with parental consent, indicates participation in the Oklahoma Alternate Assessment Program (OAAP)—the student may be re-screened using the WIDA Alternate Screener, provided they have not already participated in the WIDA Alternate Screener, ACCESS, or Alternate ACCESS. Conversely, if a student was screened with the WIDA Alternate Screener but did not participate in ACCESS or Alternate ACCESS, and it is later determined that parental consent for OAAP was either not provided or revoked, the student may be re-screened using the standard WIDA Screener.

If the student does not meet the criteria for identification as an EL based on this subsequent testing, then the district must contact the OELP to remove the EL identifier, and the student should be removed from the LIEP.

How do I document fluent WIDA Alternate Screener scores in Accountability Reporting if there is a conflict when the student is rescreened after receiving an IEP?

If a student meets criteria to be rescreened and scores fluent (4.0 or higher) on the WIDA Alternate Screener and generates a conflict in the Accountability Reporting application, the LEA should create a Student School ELL Flag DVR and upload the student's fluent scores (4.0 or higher) and IEP or 504 Plan indicating participation in alternate assessment.

It is not necessary to upload qualifying EL scores (3.0 or lower) as these students should be coded as 2349 English Learner or 1637 Declined Services in the student information system.

What WIDA Alternate Screener scores qualify a student as needing EL services if they have a disability and an IEP that precludes participation in one or more test domains?

A student with a documented disability whose IEP precludes participation in one or more of the Alternate Screener domains must achieve a score of 4.0 or above on all test domains completed in order to demonstrate English language proficiency as an Overall Composite Score cannot be generated for a screener with less than four domains.

For example, if a 4th grade student can only complete the reading and writing domains, then he/she must achieve a proficiency level of 4.0 or above in both reading and writing to exclude them from identification as an EL.

A student with a documented disability whose IEP precludes participation in one or more of the Alternate Screener domains will qualify as an English Learner if achieving a score of 3.0 or below in any of the test domains completed.