

Kindergarten: Recommended Pathway of Instruction, Differentiation, and Flexible Grouping

Extra Support	Instructional Path	Enrichment
<p>Each of these units has a formal end-of-unit assessment to support instructional planning. Students having difficulty in these early units can often be supported by simply pausing the whole class’s instruction one or two days and working with struggling students in a small group (using materials from the Pausing Point activity bank), while giving others enrichment or the opportunity for independent work. Children can continue to receive support as you move into subsequent instructional units by incorporating these same targeted Pausing Point activities during centers or GRAIR.</p> <p><i>For students who really struggle with these early units, it should be a red flag to the possibility of more serious needs and likely needs to be handled on a case-by-case basis.</i></p>	<p style="text-align: center;">UNITS 1–2</p> <p>Complete the first two units of kindergarten to gather information regarding key pre-literacy skills (e.g., writing strokes, blending, listening and following directions, high-level phonological awareness) and to establish routines.</p> <hr/> <p style="text-align: center;">UNITS 2–5</p> <p>All students move together into and through Units 3–5. These units are critical to establishing the alphabetic principle and segmenting and blending skills that the children will continue to use throughout grades K–2. For this reason, we recommend all children complete these units.</p> <hr/> <p style="text-align: center;">END OF UNIT 5: FIRST PLACEMENT AND SMALL GROUPS</p> <p>The majority of students will be ready for Unit 5 and to continue through Units 6– 8. However, they may need their experience within these units to vary. For some, the pace of instruction can be maintained, but there are vulnerabilities that require explicit instructional support or re-teaching during small group time. For others, the instructional path fills minor holes and children should challenge themselves with the material through more independent approaches to the work. Grouping children helps teachers organize this differentiated support.</p>	<p>Using end-of-unit assessments will help you create enrichment activities (for use during Pausing Point days), center activities, and GRAIR activities to support your stronger students.</p> <p>Additionally, you may want to access exceptionally strong students using the Pseudoword Reading Assessment (Unit 8, pp. 97–103). This test provides a clear and stringent look at whether children have fluent and automatic access to the sounds and spelling patterns that will be taught in kindergarten. Often children who can read in highly contextualized situations will not be able to successfully do this task (i.e., they will read them very haltingly or cannot read them at all) because they do not know specific letter-sound correspondences. This data will help support your decision making around the value/importance of the kindergarten instructional units, even for the students who come into kindergarten with some reading skills.</p> <p>If a child scored above 26 on the Pseudoword Reading Assessment, it <i>could</i> suggest that this child may be able to handle skipping units of instruction, but this must be considered VERY cautiously and needs to be made in the context of many variables (support available in terms of staff, number of other children who are at a similar level, maturity of child to move classrooms, etc.).</p>

Extra Support

For children who can maintain the curricular pace but are vulnerable, Pausing Points are critical for review. GRAIR and centers should also continue to support key skills with Assessment & Remediation (A&R) materials.

There may be some students whose vulnerabilities are more significant and they will need the pace of instruction to slow. A key decision point is the end of Unit 5. (*If this need for slowing becomes obvious at a later unit, teachers should be responsive whenever they note this need.*)

Grade-level grouping can help create a classroom that maintains a slowed pace of instruction for students who need it. Grade-level grouping allows a teacher to plan for only a single unit of instruction and spend time considering how to fine tune differentiated support within that instruction.

As long as pacing moves children through Unit 8 by the end of kindergarten, these children can be considered on grade level and prepared for first grade. If children cannot move at a pace that will allow them to get through Unit 8, it is important to keep instruction at the pace they need and layer in tiered support—in the form of extra time and extra assistance (e.g., specialists)—to support these children meeting end-of-grade expectations by the end of the year. This would be akin to a formal Tier 2 model. The *A&R Guide* materials are designed to help support such a model.

Instructional Path

END OF UNIT 8: A REASSESSMENT POINT

For students who continued to move through Units 6–8, the end of Unit 8 presents another decision point. In CKLA, it is critical that children master skills they are taught before moving on. End-of-unit assessment data from Units 6–8 will allow you to see what children need to practice to aid acquisition of the skills necessary to be prepared for first grade.

Units 9 and 10 introduce Tricky Words and content that will be taught again in first grade.

As such, the end of Unit 8 is the time to decide whether some students should move into a placement where review and re-teaching of critical content from Units 6–8 occur, or whether the children are prepared to go into Units 9–10.

It is also possible that some students who had slowed in Units 6–8 are now moving more quickly and may be able to rejoin those students who may move into Units 9–10. It is critical that no curricular lessons are skipped during this process, but students can easily re-integrate back to the more accelerated pace if GRAIR time is used to quickly catch up.

Enrichment

For the majority of students who are strong readers, the systematic scope and sequence of the kindergarten CKLA curricula is actually important as it fills certain holes that are simply the result of these children not having had explicit literacy instruction.

As strong students move through the kindergarten scope and sequence, they will receive enrichment through Pausing Point times, centers, and GRAIR, and will also have leadership and independent work/accelerated activity opportunities within the curricular units themselves (as part of differentiated small group time).

Strong students who continue to adhere to the K curricula will likely be the students to make it through all 10 units of instruction as Units 9–10 of kindergarten are essentially first grade-level units.