

Video Transcript: Understanding Routine School Assessments

[Link to Video](#)

Transcript

Speaker: Have you ever heard your child's teacher mention that it's assessment time at school? Have you ever wondered, "What assessment or test is my child taking, and what does this mean?" If so, you're not alone, and you're in the right place.

You might think of an assessment as a map for a road trip your child is taking with their teacher. Imagine starting a journey but not having a destination in mind. Assessments are tests that plot your child's learning journey from the beginning of the school year to their final destination at the end of the year, with a few stops in between for monitoring their progress.

Your child will take assessments of one form or another during the school year. These assessments are routine and are not meant to be a source of worry. In fact, routine assessments help your child's teacher understand exactly what they know, what they need to know, and how to personalize instruction to get them to where they need to be. Here are a few ways you can support your child.

Get to know the terms used to describe assessments. Teachers may say "benchmark" or "formative." Benchmark assessments take place at the beginning of the year, while formative assessments are used regularly throughout the year. They help teachers track your child's learning progress to identify and make a plan to fill any gaps in their knowledge.

Progress monitoring assessments are smaller-scale assessments that take place at different times during the year and are used to assess students' academic performance, rates of improvement or progress, and to determine how they are responding to instruction. Think of these as getting oil changes and tire checks during a road trip, just a way of checking in to make sure that all is well and as it should be.

They are also early warning indicators that your child might be struggling. Thankfully, the assessments will indicate areas where your child needs extra help and teachers can target instruction to meet your child's identified needs. In Florida, children in VPK through 10th grade

who are enrolled in public and charter schools will be tested using the Florida Assessment of Student Thinking. It's also known as FAST.

Children are assessed three times a year. Progress Monitoring 1 occurs August through September, Progress Monitoring 2 takes place December through January, and Progress Monitoring 3 is April through May. These timeframes are called testing windows.

Your child's teacher can provide you with specific assessment dates. Some children may feel a little anxious, as assessments can change their routines. Make sure your child is well-rested and in a good frame of mind as they set off to school. Many assessments provide parent-friendly reports, so be sure to ask for assessment results soon after each testing window.

You can ask for your child's results by paper or by email. Arrange a conference with your child's teacher if there is anything you are concerned about or if the report seems confusing. It's okay to ask – your teacher will welcome partnering with you to help your child. Give your child lots of praise for any growth they've made. Remember, you are your child's first teacher and #1 cheer squad.

Keeping track of their progress at school helps you support their journey towards becoming confident readers.