



# Primary Reading Pledge

**Learning Difficulties Australia  
Weekly Wednesday Webinar  
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**Jennifer Buckingham**

Director of Strategy and Senior Research Fellow, MultiLit  
Founder and director, Five from Five

# Primary Reading Pledge

A plan to have all students reading  
by the end of primary school

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# five from five

Five from Five is a community education initiative of MultiLit Pty Ltd.

Five from Five provides educators, parents and policy makers with information and resources about evidence-based reading instruction.

**AUSPELD**  
supporting people with learning disabilities



AUSPELD is the Australian Federation of SPELD (Specific Learning Difficulties) organisations, which supports children and adults with learning and language difficulties, through professional learning, evidence-informed intervention, resources and assistance for schools, and policy advocacy.



Learning Difficulties Australia (LDA) is an association of teachers and other professionals dedicated to assisting children with learning difficulties, both directly and through publications and events to raise awareness of evidence-based teaching practices.

## School-based programs

- ▶ Whole-class, small group and one-to-one instructional programs
- ▶ Resources supporting programs, such as decodable readers
- ▶ Professional Development
  - program-focused and stand-alone workshops

## Literacy Centres

- ▶ Delivering one-to-one programs to students needing intensive instruction
- ▶ Face-to-face, online and in partnership with schools



## MultiLit Research Unit

- ▶ Undertaking research in the literacy field
- ▶ Managing field and research trials
- ▶ Capturing the latest scientific research on literacy
- ▶ Providing academic leadership in program development

## Education and outreach

- ▶ Disseminating knowledge and promoting discussion and debate on evidence-based literacy instruction



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# What is the Primary Reading Pledge?

1. An evidence-based framework for reading assessment and intervention for primary schools that can be enacted without delay.
2. A practical action plan for schools and systems to reduce the number of children who finish primary school unable to read.

# Why is the Primary Reading Pledge needed?

## **NAPLAN 2019 Year 7 Reading**

Below National Minimum Standard = 16,912 students

At National Minimum Standard = 35,158 students

➡ 52,070 students who struggle to read



**Table 2.** Percentage and number of Year 3 and Year 5 students below and at NMS for reading in 2019

	Year 3 reading			Year 5 reading		
	Number (%) below NMS	Number (%) at NMS	Total	Number (%) below NMS	Number (%) at NMS	Total
<b>NSW</b>	3,357 (3.4%)	8,097 (8.2%)	11,454	4,793 (4.9%)	8,706 (8.9%)	13,499
<b>VIC</b>	2,673 (3.4%)	4,482 (5.7%)	7,155	3,196 (4.1%)	5,536 (7.1%)	8,732
<b>QLD</b>	2,719 (4.0%)	6,390 (9.4%)	9,109	3,515 (5.1%)	6,755 (9.8%)	10,270
<b>WA</b>	1,521 (4.4%)	3,561 (10.3%)	5,082	1,943 (5.7%)	3,137 (9.2%)	5,080
<b>SA</b>	1,060 (5.2%)	2,018 (9.9%)	3,078	1,421 (6.8%)	2,069 (9.9%)	3,490
<b>TAS</b>	345 (5.4%)	781 (12.2%)	1,126	494 (7.2%)	720 (10.5%)	1,214
<b>ACT</b>	234 (4.0%)	457 (7.8%)	691	230 (4.1%)	353 (6.3%)	583
<b>NT</b>	959 (27.3%)	488 (13.9%)	1,447	1,075 (31.6%)	387 (11.4%)	1,462
<b>AUST</b>	12,868 (4.1%)	26,237 (8.3%)	39,105	16,667 (8.3%)	27,773 (8.8%)	44,440

**Source:** Student numbers estimated using Australian Bureau of Statistics, Schools Australia 2019, 4221.0 Table 42b

# What is the evidence base of the Primary Reading Pledge?

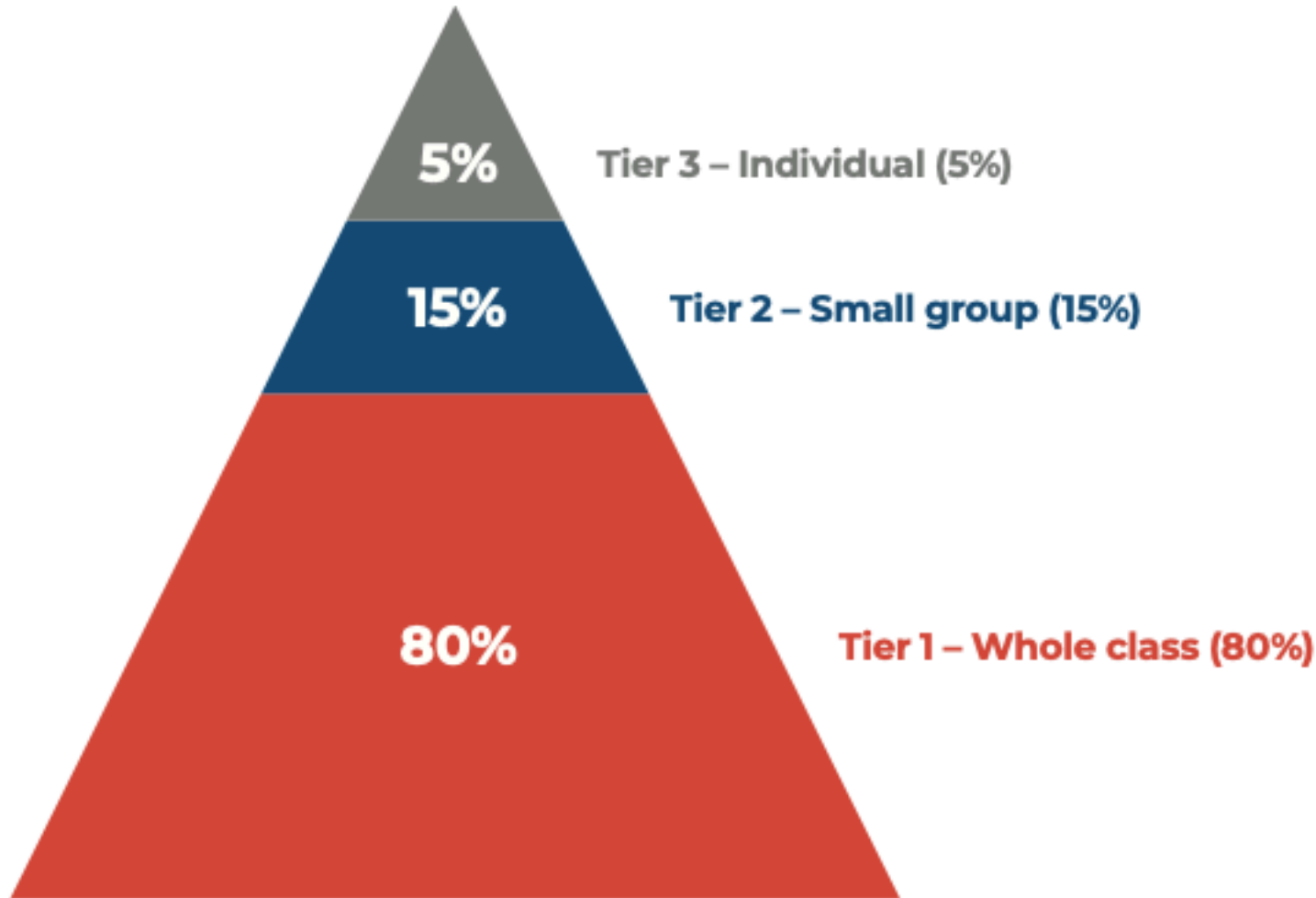
1. The Simple View of Reading
2. Response to Intervention

# Simple View of Reading

$$\text{Reading Comprehension} = \text{Word Identification} \times \text{Language Comprehension}$$

“The Simple View of Reading continues to withstand rigorous empirical evaluation, providing a strong explanation of what reading is at its broadest level.” - Hoover & Tunmer 2018

# Response to Intervention



## Year 1:

Standard RTI protocol where Tier 2 is the first stage of intervention.

## Year 3 & 5:

Tier 2 or Tier 3 based on

- Whether the student already had Tier 2 intervention
- The severity of their difficulties

# What does the Primary Reading Pledge propose?

All students who are at or below the NMS in NAPLAN Year 3 or Year 5 reading assessment (or are absent or withdrawn) should be provided with a screening assessment and the most appropriate intervention.

# Why NAPLAN?

- NAPLAN is the only systemic standardised reading assessment taken by (almost) all children and it could be utilised better
- NAPLAN is a general reading comprehension assessment that indicates a student is struggling with reading, but it does not tell us why. Targeted screening assessments are required for this purpose
- Proposed changes to NAPLAN in the recent review and/or the introduction of NAPLAN Online do not affect the Primary Reading Pledge

# What about earlier assessment and intervention?

- Assessment is an ongoing process beginning in the first weeks of school to inform teaching.
- Year 1 is a critical period in reading development. A phonics check at this stage is vital to ensure all students are mastering this foundational skill.
- The Year 1 Phonics Check is a systemic assessment in South Australia but all schools have access via the federal government's online version. <https://literacyhub.edu.au/phonics-check.html>

YEAR 1 STUDENT BELOW BENCHMARK RANGE IN PHONICS CHECK, OR DID NOT PARTICIPATE  
YEAR 3 /YEAR 5 STUDENT AT OR BELOW NAPLAN NATIONAL MINIMUM STANDARD, OR DID NOT PARTICIPATE



**STANDARDISED ASSESSMENT**  
**Appendix 1**

PHONIC DECODING ASSESSMENT  
+  
LANGUAGE ASSESSMENT



**EVIDENCE-BASED OR EVIDENCE-  
INFORMED INTERVENTION**  
**Appendix 2**

STUDENT HAS NOT PREVIOUSLY HAD  
EVIDENCE-BASED OR EVIDENCE-INFORMED  
TIER 2 INTERVENTION



**TIER 2 INTERVENTION**

STUDENT HAS PREVIOUSLY HAD EVIDENCE-  
BASED OR EVIDENCE-INFORMED TIER 2  
INTERVENTION OR HAS SEVERE DIFFICULTIES



**TIER 3 INTERVENTION**

	<b>LOW DECODING</b>	<b>ADEQUATE DECODING</b>
<b>LOW LANGUAGE</b>	INTERVENTION: PHONICS + LANGUAGE	INTERVENTION: LANGUAGE
<b>ADEQUATE LANGUAGE</b>	INTERVENTION: PHONICS	SHORT-TERM TEACHING OF COMPREHENSION STRATEGIES



# Reading assessments

**Appropriate assessment** depends on the stage of reading development and the purpose of the assessment

## **Standardised screening assessment**

- Used to identify specific strengths and weaknesses in individual student reading
- Provide a basis for intervention decisions

## **Diagnostic assessment**

- Comprehensive and specialised instruments
- Used to identify specific difficulties in reading profiles
- Usually administered by allied education and health professionals, eg. psychologists and speech pathologists.

# Reading interventions

## **Evidence-based interventions**

- Developed using scientific research on reading development and instruction
- Have been found to be effective in quantitative evaluations using strong research protocols, as well as in evidence gathered from practice.

## **Evidence-informed interventions**

- Developed using scientific research on reading development and instruction
- Have not been subjected to research trials but have demonstrated success in evidence gathered from practice.

# Non-categorical approach to intervention

- Instruction is tailored to the specific educational need of the child, not the perceived needs of a category of diagnosed difficulty or disability
- Good instruction is good instruction: Intervention is more targeted and more intensive form of instruction
- Intervention is more effective if it is consistent with and supportive of Tier 1 instruction

# Criteria for high quality intervention

- Evidence-based or evidence-informed
- Explicit and direct instructional methods
- Incorporates dual coding (visual and verbal)
- Sequence of content and skills
- Repetitive
- Systematic
- Well-paced
- Comprehensive and thorough
- Regular monitoring and cumulative assessment

# Programs or teacher expertise?

- BOTH: Even the best program will be more effective when delivered by an expert teacher
- Nonetheless, using a published program has significant benefits.
  - ✓ Thousands of hours of expertise and attention to detail invested in instructional design and teaching resources
  - ✓ Tried and tested in schools to ensure it works both in terms of delivery and learning outcomes
  - ✓ Scope and sequence aligned to Australian curriculum
  - ✓ Allows teachers to concentrate on their teaching and student progress instead of lesson planning.
- The development of teacher expertise is a longer-term goal that is being pursued in other ways
- The Primary Reading Pledge was written with the objective of providing a framework with easily available resources, programs, and assessments that can be used by schools right now.

# Support the Primary Reading Pledge

- Sign the Pledge page
- Email state or territory education minister and encourage them to endorse the Pledge
- Make sure your school has a copy of the Pledge and the school executive and teachers are aware of it

<https://fivefromfive.com.au/primary-reading-pledge>

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# Primary Reading Pledge

*"There is no excuse for children spending seven years in full-time education without learning to read. Every state and territory education minister must make a pledge to provide the keys to literacy to every child before they leave primary school."*