

### Inventory of Early Writing Skills

Adapted from *The Early Detection of Reading Difficulties* by Marie M. Clay

Student \_\_\_\_\_ Grade \_\_\_\_\_ Birth Date \_\_\_\_\_

General Education Teacher \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Assessor \_\_\_\_\_

This is an inventory of skills. It is not normed or standardized and is intended to be used to gather information about a young student's skills.

#### *Analysis of Writing Sample:*

Take three samples of the student's stories and rate them for language level, message quality and directional features. Components at each level are arranged to describe successively more sophisticated writing.

#### **Language Level**

#### **NOTES**

- alphabetic (letters only)
- word (any recognizable word)
- word group (any two-word phrase)
- sentence (any simple sentence)
- punctuated story (two or more sentences)
- paragraphed story (two themes)

#### **Message Quality**

- has concept of signs (uses letters, invents letters, uses punctuation)
- has concept that a message is conveyed
- a message is copied
- repetitive use of sentence patterns like "Here is a ..."
- attempts to record own ideas
- successful composition

#### **Directional Principles**

- no evidence of directional knowledge
- part of the directional pattern is known; start top left, or move let to right, or return down left

- reversal of the directional pattern  
(down, right to left)
- correct directional pattern
- correct directional pattern and spaces  
between words
- extensive text without any difficulties of  
arrangement and spacing of text

**NOTES****Test of Writing Vocabulary:**

Give the student a blank piece of paper and pencil and say, "I want to see how many words you can write. Can you write your name? (Begin ten-minute timing.)"

If student says "No," ask him if he knows any single-letter or two-letter words. "Do you know how to write 'is'?, 'to'?, 'l'?, 'a'?"

If the student says "Yes" say, "Write your name for me." When the student finishes say, "Good. Now think of all the words you know how to write and write them all for me."

Give the student 10 minutes to write known words. When the student stops writing or appears to need prompting, suggest words that he or she might know how to write.

Continue for 10 minutes or until the student's writing vocabulary is exhausted. Prompts may include questions regarding categories of words, such as "Do you know how to write the names of any animals?"

Tally each word completed accurately as correct. Forms of words can be tallied as separate words.

**Summary of Student's Writing Skills:**