



Position paper

The Proposed Commonwealth Year 1 Phonic Checks and Assessment Screening

SAPPA is deeply concerned by recent Commonwealth Government proposals that State and Territory jurisdictions should introduce 'assessment screening' for Year 1 students across Australia. Principals view the proposal as an ill-informed reaction to recent reports on Australian schooling that fails to address the real issues about improving student outcomes in Literacy and Numeracy.

All state and territory jurisdictions already have in place early years assessment tools, including phonics screening that are used to inform the learning and teaching from the very first year of formal schooling. Current assessments are not used for the purpose of simplistic external accountability. Schools use these early entry assessments to make judgements about student achievement that identify students at risk and support teacher planning.

The proposed administration of a nation-wide phonics check and numeracy assessment in Year 1 is based on false assumptions that schools do not have essential learning screening in place.

Principals and teachers are already well aware of where support is needed in the early years. National testing for very young children could result in unjust data comparisons, and a further narrowing of the curriculum for very young children, when opportunities for creativity and play-based learning are vital.

SAPPA welcomes ACARA's investigation of the various phonic tests that are currently available with the intent of providing guidance to schools on recommended screening resources.

SAPPA opposes any move towards extending the existing National testing regime.

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