Early Reader Skills Scaffold Overview

The Early Reader Skills Scaffold (ERSS) is Amira's structured, highly supported practice pathway for pre-readers and early readers who are not yet ready to read connected text. Instead of starting with story choice/reading, students complete short, targeted activities focused on phonemic awareness, letter–sound knowledge, decoding, and early word reading skills. Student performance is captured in Amira reporting.

The ERSS was designed in collaboration with Dr. Katie Pace Miles and informed by student testing in kindergarten and first grade classrooms to ensure the activity sequence supports early skill acquisition while keeping students engaged and successful.
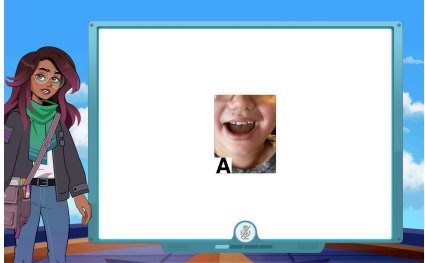
Who Should Use The ERSS

The ERSS is designed for:

- **Kindergarten and first grade students** (recommended starting point)
- **Students identified as early readers or pre-readers**, based on teacher observation or Amira assessment results
- **Students who have difficulty accessing connected text**, including those who are unable to read the kindergarten oral reading fluency passage during assessment and are therefore placed into ERSS

ERSS Activity Sequence

Students move through a repeatable sequence of activities designed to build skills step by step. Each activity targets a specific foundational reading skill while providing scaffolded support as needed.

Activity	Image
Letter/Sound Introduction Students receive explicit instruction and guided practice with a new letter–sound correspondence. Video Example	

Letterflies

Students practice identifying the letter name and producing the sound.

Video Example

Segmenting Slide

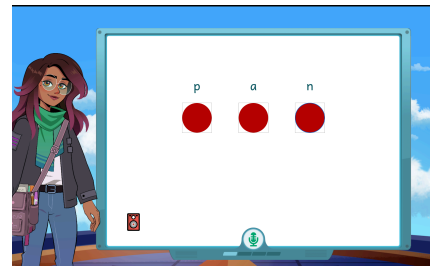Students practice segmenting and blending spoken words with the target sound, without seeing any letters.

Video Example

Elkonin Boxes

Students practice segmenting and blending words with the target sound using Elkonin boxes as a visual scaffold.
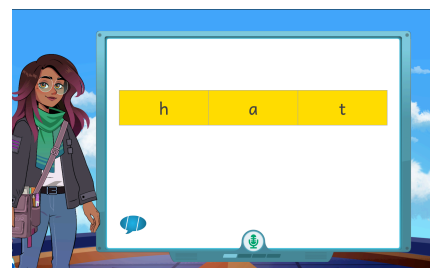
Video Example

Change One Part

Students practice decoding by changing one sound in a CVC (consonant-vowel-consonant) word that includes the target sound.
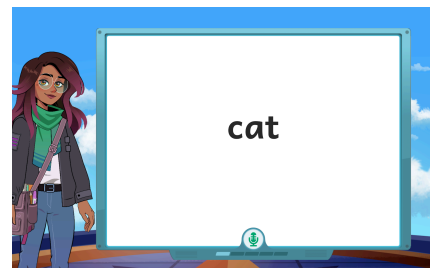
Video Example

Word List

Students practice reading CVC words that include the target sound. If a student is unable to read a word, Amira provides scaffolded intervention and support.

*Students receive an **ARM score** for this activity.*
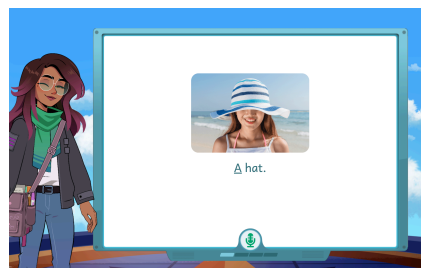
Video Example

Decodable Sentences

Students practice reading simple sentences that include the target sound and previously practiced words. If a student is unable to read the words, Amira provides scaffolded intervention and support.

Students receive an **ARM score** *for this activity.*

[Video Example](#)

A hat.

ERSS Skill Sequence

ERSS follows a defined phonemic scope and sequence that introduces letters, sounds, and high–frequency words across seven modules

Module	Phonetic Elements	High Frequency Words
1	Aa, Mm, Tt, Pp, Ss	the, it, is, a
2	Nn, Ll, Hh, Bb, Ii	i, get, in
3	Ff, Rr, Cc, Ee	can, he, see
4	Dd, Gg, Kk, Oo	was, to, for, at, and, has
5	Jj, Ww, Yy, Uu	this, there, they
6	Qq, Xx, Vv, Zz	him
7	ch, sh, th	will

How to Enable or Assign ERSS

There are two ways students can be placed in the Early Reader Skills Scaffold:

Automatic Placement

- All kindergarten and 1st grade students logging into Amira for the first time will automatically start in the ERSS
- After completing an assessment, students who are unable to complete the Kindergarten Oral Reading Fluency (ORF) passage will automatically be designated with an "**Early Reader**" assessment status and enrolled in the ERSS for their Tutor practice

Teacher Assignment

Teachers can manually place students in the ERSS for Tutor practice through Tutor Settings. [View a walkthrough here](#).

Frequently Asked Questions

1. **If a student is placed in the ERSS from their assessment, do I have to keep them there?**

   No. Teachers have the ability to move students in or out of the ERSS as needed. Teachers can also toggle students between the ERSS and Standard Practice throughout the week to allow students to practice in both modes.

2. **How is usage measured for ERSS students in the Usage Report?**

   For students enrolled in the ERSS, each activity they complete will be displayed as one Tutor story in reporting. Check the Usage Report to view

3. **How can I see students' progress in the ERSS?**

   View students' ERSS activities in the **Progress Report**. Scroll to view their activity list below the performance graph and see a list of completed activities. Click on the Word List or Decodable Sentences activities to listen to a recording of the student's reading.