

National Center on Student Progress Monitoring

What Is Curriculum-Based Measurement and What Does It Mean to My Child?

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Curriculum-Based Measurement (CBM) is a method teachers use to find out how students are progressing in basic academic areas such as math, reading, writing, and spelling. CBM can be helpful to parents because it provides current, week-by-week information on the progress their children are making. When your child's teacher uses CBM, he or she finds out how well your child is progressing in learning the content for the academic year. CBM also monitors the success of the instruction your child is receiving – if your child's performance is not meeting expectations, the teacher then changes the way of teaching your child to try to find the type and amount of instruction your child needs to make sufficient progress toward meeting the academic goals.

How Does CBM Work?

When CBM is used, each child is tested briefly each week. The tests generally last from 1 to 5 minutes. The teacher counts the number of correct and incorrect responses made in the time allotted to find the child's score. For example, in reading, the child may be asked to read aloud for one minute. Each child's scores are recorded on a graph and compared to the expected performance on the content for that year. The graph allows the teacher, and you, to see quickly how the child's performance compares to expectations. (The figure at the end of this

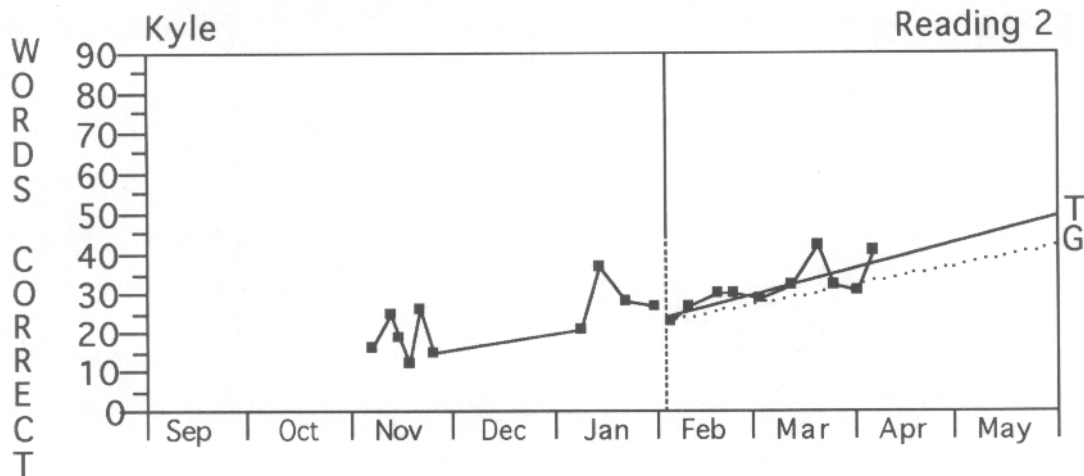
The teacher can change instruction in any of several ways. For example, he or she might increase instructional time, change a teaching technique or way of presenting the material, or change a grouping arrangement (for example, individual instruction instead of small-group instruction). After the change, you – and the teacher – can see from the weekly scores on the graph whether the change is helping your child. If it is not, then the teacher can try another change in instruction, and its success will be tracked through the weekly measurements.

Other Ways CBM Can Help You

CBM can also help you work more effectively with the school system on your child's behalf. CBM graphs make the goals, and your child's progress, clear to you and to the teacher. In this way, CBM can help parents and teachers communicate more constructively. You can use the CBM graph in conferences with teachers and administrators, as it gives you specific information about your child's progress and the success of the instructional methods being used. You can also use the CBM graph in IEP (Individualized Educational Program) meetings, to go over specific information about your child's current performance so that you and the school can develop measurable goals and objectives that will lead to more meaningful progress for your child.

For More Information

If you are interested in more detailed and technical information about using CBM, see the article at www.studentprogress.org entitled *Monitoring Student Progress in Individualized Educational Programs Using Curriculum-Based Measurement*, by Pamela M. Stecker.



Sample of a CBM graph.

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