

WHAT IS A PSYCHOEDUCATIONAL ASSESSMENT?

Parents are often asked to have their child undergo a psychoeducational assessment yet are confused about what that means. A psychoeducational assessment is also commonly referred to as a learning, educational, or academic assessment. A psychoeducational assessment is conducted to help us understand how a child learns and processes information. Psychologists are usually asked to complete a psychoeducational assessment when a teacher or parent suspects that a child has a learning disability or difficulties with attention (ADHD). A psychoeducational assessment helps us understand a student's current level of functioning as well as their strengths and weaknesses.

A number of elements are involved in a psychoeducational assessment. First, parents are asked to meet with the psychologist to go over the child's history and development (1.5 hr meeting).

The psychologist then meets the child over 2 to 3 assessment sessions of approximately 2 to 3 hours each. When the student has established rapport with the psychologist, the assessment takes place. Assessments involve the administration of standardized, objective measures of intelligence, processing skills, and academic areas. Assessments are geared to the particular child but some areas that are assessed are:

- Cognitive ability, known as intelligence
- Academic areas (reading, math, writing, comprehension)
- Language skills
- Processing speed
- Motor coordination, eye-hand coordination
- Memory (verbal, visual, working memory)
- Phonological processing
- Visual-motor integration
- Visual processing
- Attention
- Executive Functions
- Social-emotional functioning

The psychologist may ask the child's teacher to complete questionnaires and/or to speak to the psychologist about their observations of the child at school.

Information gathered during the assessment can lead to diagnoses such as Learning Disabilities, attention and behavior-related disabilities such as ADHD. Whether a diagnosis is made or not, the information can be used to identify what the student needs to reach their potential.

Following the assessment, the psychologist meets with parents to verbally review the results, recommendations, and next steps. Parents are also provided with a detailed, comprehensive report outlining all the results and recommendations. These recommendations are usually used by the child's school to put together a plan (IEP) that helps the student reach their potential at school.