



Assessment of Learning Problems at *childpsych* Frequently Asked Questions

1. What do you do when you assess for learning difficulties?

When a child is evaluated for learning problems the goal is to find out if they have something like “Dyslexia”. The psychologist will use a range of tests, such as memory testing, to find out where the problem is and what can be done to help the child. These tests are called “cognitive tests” but are also commonly called “IQ tests”. Psychologists are less interested in the “IQ” score and more interested in the child’s overall neurological functioning. The psychologist is treating the human brain like a computer and checking things such as how fast the child can process information, their visual attention span, their auditory attention span, general language skills and so on. The psychologist will also want to collect information about the child’s development as an infant, birth history and so on as these provide clues about the causes of learning problems. This is called a clinical interview and includes a general mental health evaluation.

2. How are the sessions structured?

The first session goes for 1.5 hours and involves a 40-50 minute clinical interview. The child usually waits in the waiting room while the parents complete the interview. Then for the next 20-30 minutes the child completes some basic academic testing. This helps the child to meet the psychologist, feel comfortable and allows the psychologist to begin to think about where the problems may lie. The psychologist can tell from the sorts of mistakes the child makes what the possible problems are. Then at a later date (usually 2 weeks later), the child completes 2 hours of cognitive testing. This involves activities such as listening to sounds on a CD player, completing a maze, answering questions and so on. Most children find this more of a game than “testing”. If the child is young or has poor attention then this 2-hour session is split up into two 1-hour sessions over a few days. In the mean time the classroom teacher is contacted (with the parents’ permission), and further information is collected off the classroom teacher. Another 2 weeks later and the report is ready and a 1 hour discussion session is scheduled with the adults to discuss the report. An option of the psychologist attending the school for a meeting is also available.

3. Do we have to pay up front?

No. But you must pay as you go. The approximate two-week gap between sessions helps most people with budgeting. We can consider alternative payment options in exceptional circumstances.

4. What is the difference between the NeuroEducational Evaluation and PsychoEducational Assessment?

A NeuroEducational Evaluation includes an extra hour of assessments. Our website has a downloadable brochure. The NeuroEducational Evaluation is a more comprehensive assessment of central nervous system and peripheral nervous system functioning. It is excellent for picking up subtle learning difficulties. It involves testing such things as the child’s balance, visual motor skills and provides clues about the causes of such things as poor reading speed and impulsiveness.

5. Can you also assess for other problems like ADHD and anxiety?

Yes. For no extra cost.

6. What makes *childpsych* unique compared to other psychologists who can conduct the assessments?

First, at *childpsych* a psychologist who is also an experienced and registered classroom teacher conducts the assessment and report. This means that the psychologist is familiar with classrooms and what works and doesn’t work. They have a practical understanding. Second, the recommendations are written for teachers and include suggested teaching strategies and so on. Feedback from schools has been very positive about the quality of our reports and recommendations.