



# Neuropsychological vs. Psychoeducational Evaluation

Patient and Family Education

This teaching sheet contains general information. Please talk with your child's doctor or pediatric audiologist to get more specific information. Call **813-262-1330** to schedule an appointment.

## What skills are assessed with a neuropsychological or psychoeducational evaluation?

These evaluations are composed of a series of tests that evaluate how a child learns and behaves in comparison to what is expected for the child's age. Through these tests, the following abilities can be assessed:

- Intellectual functioning
- Achievement skills, such as reading and math
- Executive skills, such as organization, planning, inhibition, and flexibility
- Attention
- Learning, memory, and processing speed
- Language and social skills
- Visual-spatial skills and motor coordination
- Behavior and emotional functioning

## What is a neuropsychological evaluation?

During a neuropsychological evaluation, the tests will show how your child's behavior and ability to learn are associated with the development of their brain structures and systems. In this type of evaluation, a neuropsychologist will interpret the results using their special expertise in brain-behavior relationships. They are interested in how the child obtained a score on a test as well as the pattern of scores across different tests.

## What is a psychoeducational evaluation?

The purpose of a psychoeducational evaluation is to qualify children for special education programs and/or therapies to enhance school performance, whether or not a medical condition is present. The psychologist performing a psychoeducational evaluation is primarily interested in the score your child obtains. They focus on achievement and skills needed for academic success during this evaluation. Generally, the psychologist does not diagnose learning or behavior disorders caused by altered brain function or development.

## What will the results of these evaluations tell me about my child?

By comparing your child's test scores to scores of children of similar ages, the neuropsychologist or psychologist can create a profile of your child's strengths and weaknesses. The results can help those involved with your child's care in a number of ways, including the following:

- Testing can explain why your child is having school problems.
  - For example, a child may have difficulty reading because of an attention problem, a language disorder, an auditory processing disorder, or a reading disability.
- Testing can guide the neuropsychologist or psychologist's design of interventions to draw upon your child's strengths. The results can identify what skills to work on as well as which strategies to use to help your child.
- Testing can help detect the effects of a developmental, neurological, and/or medical problem, such as epilepsy, autism, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), dyslexia, or a genetic disorder.
- Testing may be done to obtain a baseline against which to measure the outcome of treatment or the child's development over time.

- Different childhood disorders result in specific patterns of strengths and weaknesses. These profiles of abilities can help identify a child's disorder and the brain areas that are involved.
  - For example, testing can help differentiate between an attention deficit and depression or determine whether a language delay is due to a problem in producing speech, understanding, or expressing language, autism, or cognitive delay.
- Testing provides a better understanding of your child's behavior and learning in school, at home, and in the community. The evaluation can guide teachers, therapists, and parents to better help the child achieve his or her potential.

Adapted from the American Psychological Association brochure on Pediatric Neuropsychology