



Neuropsychological Evaluations

for Children and Teens: What Parents Should Know

1. WHAT IS A NEUROPSYCH EVALUATION?

A neuropsychological evaluation (sometimes called "neuropsych testing") is a detailed assessment of how your child's brain works. It is performed by a neuropsychologist — a specially trained psychologist who uses standardized tests and observations to measure many areas of your child's thinking and behavior, including:

Areas we assess:

Cognitive Skills



- Intelligence and reasoning
- Attention and concentration
- Learning and memory
- Language skills
- Processing Speed (how quickly the brain takes in and uses information)
- Executive functioning (planning, organization, flexibility, impulse control)
- Visual-spatial skills

Academic Skills



- Reading
- Writing
- Math

Emotional & Behavioral



- Social skills
- Emotional Functioning
- Behavioral Regulation

Evaluations typically take 4-5 hours and include one-on-one testing, questionnaires from parents and teachers, a review of records and a detailed developmental history.

2. WHY MIGHT MY CHILD NEED TESTING?

Your child's doctor may recommend a neuropsych evaluation if there are concerns about:

- ✓ Difficulty learning in school despite effort or tutoring
- ✓ Attention or focus problems
- ✓ Behavioral challenges at home or school
- ✓ Emotional difficulties such as anxiety or mood changes
- ✓ Social skill difficulties
- ✓ A known medical condition that can affect the brain (eg: concussion, epilepsy, premature birth)
- ✓ Symptoms that could be caused by more than one condition (for example, attention problems that could be ADHD, anxiety or a learning disability)
- ✓ Poor response to current treatments or school supports

OVER 70%



of school age children with ADHD have at least one additional learning or mental health condition when a comprehensive evaluation is performed.

3. SCHOOL TESTING VS. NEUROPSYCH TESTING

Schools can provide psychoeducational testing, which is helpful but typically narrower in scope. School evaluations focus mainly on whether a child qualifies for special education services.

A neuropsychological evaluation goes further by:

- Assessing a wider range of brain functions (memory, executive function, processing speed, and more)
- Interpreting results in the context of your child's full medical history
- Identifying conditions that may be missed by school testing alone
- Providing detailed, individualized recommendations for home, school, and treatment

School testing and neuropsychological evaluations can complement each other.

They are NOT a replacement for one another.



4. WHAT HAPPENS DURING THE PROCESS?

1 Before the Appointment



- Parent interview
- Review of any school and medical records
- Questionnaire from parents and teachers

2 Testing Day



- One-on-one activities with New England Neurodevelopment's team
- Puzzles
- Reading
- Writing
- Attention tasks
- Memory activities
- Problem solving



4-5 hours with breaks

3 After Testing



- Meet with you to explain the results, including areas of strengths and difficulty
- Provide a written report with specific diagnoses (if applicable) and detailed recommendations
- Offer guidance for school accommodations, such as Individualized Education Program (IEP) or Section 504 Plan
- Suggest therapist, interventions or strategies for home and school
- Communicate findings to your child's medical team to help guide treatment

The recommendations section of the report is often the most valuable part for families and teachers, because it translates test results into practical, actionable steps.

5. HOW CAN THIS HELP OUR FAMILY?



Clarifies Diagnoses

Many conditions look alike on the surface. Testing can distinguish between ADHD, learning disabilities, anxiety, autism spectrum disorder or identify when more than one condition is present.



Identifies Strengths

Highlights your child's abilities so we can build on them.



Guides Treatment

Understanding your child's specific cognitive profile helps doctors choose the right medications, therapies, and interventions.



Supports School Success

The evaluation provides the documentation needed to request appropriate school services, accommodations, and supports under federal law (IDEA and Section 504).



Tracks Progress

Re-evaluation every 2-3 years help monitor development and determine whether current interventions are working.



Empowers Families

Research shows that most parents report that neuropsychological evaluations improved their understanding of their child and their ability to support their child at home and at school.

The goal is to create a roadmap for success at home, at school and in life.

6. HOW SHOULD I PREPARE ?



Gather previous school testing, report cards and IEP/504 documents



Make sure your child gets a good night sleep before testing.



Bring snacks and water. Testing can take several hours with breaks.



If the patient takes medication ask the neuropsychologist whether to give it on the day of testing.



Let your child know that testing is not a "pass or fail" test. It's a way to learn how their brain works best.

7. QUESTIONS TO ASK

- What specific questions will this evaluation help answer?
- How long will the evaluation take?
- When will we receive the results and report?
- Will the neuropsychologist communicate with my child's school?
- Will re-evaluation be needed in the future?
- Is this covered by insurance?

Evidence Based Information

This handout is based on current clinical practice guidelines and peer-reviewed research in pediatric neuropsychology, developmental-behavioral pediatrics, and child psychology. The information reflects recommendations from leading professional organizations, including the Society for Developmental and Behavioral Pediatrics (SDBP) and the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP), as well as published research on the role of comprehensive neuropsychological evaluations in diagnosis, treatment planning, educational support, and family understanding. A complete list of references is provided [here](#) for those interested in learning more.

For more information or to schedule an evaluation please contact us



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NEW ENGLAND NEURODEVELOPMENT, LLC

Neuropsychological Evaluations for Children and Teens: What Parents Should Know Reference Sheet

This handout is grounded in several key evidence sources. The Society for Developmental and Behavioral Pediatrics (SDBP) guideline emphasizes that comprehensive assessment including psychological testing identifies coexisting learning and mental health conditions in over 70% of school-age children with ADHD, and that formal cognitive/developmental testing is essential for accurate evaluation.^[1] The AAP guideline similarly recommends screening for comorbid conditions including learning disorders, anxiety, depression, and autism spectrum disorder as part of ADHD evaluation.^[2] Research on the distinction between school-based and neuropsychological evaluations highlights that school testing is typically narrower in scope and may not be interpreted within the appropriate medical context.^{[3][4]}

Studies on parent and clinician satisfaction demonstrate that neuropsychological evaluations improve parental understanding of their child's cognitive profile and ability to advocate for appropriate supports. ^{[5][6]} Finally, evidence shows that comprehensive cognitive evaluations with school liaison support improve access to IEP and 504 plan services.

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References

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