

PARENTS' / CARERS GUIDE TO PAEDIATRIC NEUROPSYCHOLOGICAL ASSESSMENT

What Should I Expect?

- A neuropsychological interview usually includes an interview with the parents / guardian about the student's medical, developmental, psychological and educational history, current concerns, observation of and interview with the child / adolescent, and direct testing.
- Parents / guardians are asked to fill out questionnaires about their child's development and behavior.
- Testing involves paper and pencil, hands-on activities and sometimes the use of a computer. Parents / guardian's, teachers and students will also be asked to complete questionnaires about cognitive functioning, mood, psychological symptoms, behaviour and / or adaptive functioning.
- Each assessment battery is customized to the unique needs and concerns of the child / adolescent. Your neuropsychologist will choose the tests that you are given. Some of the tests will be administered and scored by trained examiners who work under direct supervision of the neuropsychologist, so the student may see more than one person during the evaluation.
- Parents are usually not in the room during testing, although they may be present with very young children.
- The time required depends on the concerns identified and age. An evaluation typically lasts from 3-5 hours depending on your child's age and developmental level although evaluation of older teenagers and young adults may take longer. Emerging skills can be assessed in very young children; the evaluation of infants and preschool children is usually shorter in duration because the child has not yet developed as many skills.
- Assessments are often completed in session; however, assessment may require even more sessions before all information needed is collected.
- Neuropsychological evaluation reports are permanent medical records, so the neuropsychologist will need to have as much information as possible before a final report is completed. Usually reports can take anywhere from 2 to 8 weeks to be completed, depending on the available information. However, preliminary results could be released within a week after the completion of the neuropsychological evaluation.

What Should I tell my Child / Adolescent to Prepare Him / Her for the Neuropsychological Assessment?

- What you tell your child about this evaluation depends on how much he or she can understand. Be simple and brief and relate your explanation to a problem that your child knows about such as “trouble with spelling,” “problems following directions,” or “feeling upset.”
- Children sometimes think that visits with a doctor will involve shots. It is important to reassure your child that no shots or painful procedures will be involved in the visit with the neuropsychologist.
- Explain to your child in simple words the reason for the assessment. Relate your explanation to a problem that your child knows about such as “trouble with spelling,” “problems with remembering,” etc. Tell your child that you are trying to understand his/her problem to make things better.
- You may also tell your child that nobody gets all the questions or tasks right and the important thing is to try his or her best.
- It is imperative that your child / adolescent has a good night’s sleep before the testing.
- Make sure that your child / adolescent has eaten before testing. It is recommended that you bring along snacks to ensure that the student is not going to be hungry during the assessment.
- If your child / adolescent wears glasses or a hearing aid or any other device, be sure to bring it with you.
- If your child / adolescent has special language needs, please alert the neuropsychologist to these.
- If your child / adolescent is on stimulant or any other type of medication, check with the neuropsychologist beforehand about coordinating dosage time with testing.