
Special Education Evaluations and Assessments:

— What do All Those Numbers
Mean? —

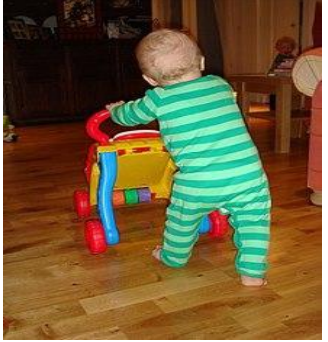
Presented by:

Jen Schwartz, Long Island Advocacy Center (LIAC)

Evaluations

Students must be evaluated in ALL areas of suspected disability

physical



cognitive



social/behavioral



educational

How to Refer to CSE and Request Evaluations

1. Submit the request in writing to a Special Education administrator in your school district.
2. Include your child's name, grade and school they attend.
3. Provide a brief explanation of why you are requesting evaluations and specify which evaluations you are requesting.
4. Make a copy before sending the letter to save for your records.
5. Follow up with the school district within 5 days to ensure they received your request.

From:	_____ Your Name
	_____ Street Address
	_____ Town, State Zip Code
Date:	_____
To:	_____ Name of Special Education Administrator/Director
	_____ Name of Your School District
	_____ Mailing Address or Email Address of Administrator/Director
Dear	_____ Name of Special Education Administrator/Director,
My child,	_____ (DOB: _____) attends the _____ grade at _____ Name of School
Because I am concerned about my child's educational progress, I am requesting a referral to the committee on special education. I am requesting that the district conduct a full and comprehensive psycho-educational evaluation and for a full CSE meeting to be scheduled to review the evaluations. I understand that these evaluations must be completed within 60 calendar days of receipt of this request which includes the summer months as well as during the school year. I would appreciate sufficient written notice of the CSE meeting once scheduled and a copy of all evaluations in advance of the meeting.	
Your prompt attention to this matter is greatly appreciated.	
Very truly yours,	

What Kind of Evaluations Are There?

And How Do I Know Which to Request?



If you have concerns about your child's ability to express themselves:

- their thoughts, feelings, and ideas;
- understand and process what's being said to them;
- follow and execute multi-step directions;
- speak clearly; and/or
- produce spoken words in a way that makes sense

You have the right to request a **Speech and Language Evaluation** to have your child's "receptive" and "expressive" language skills specifically assessed to determine whether or not their language skills are impacting their ability to be educated.

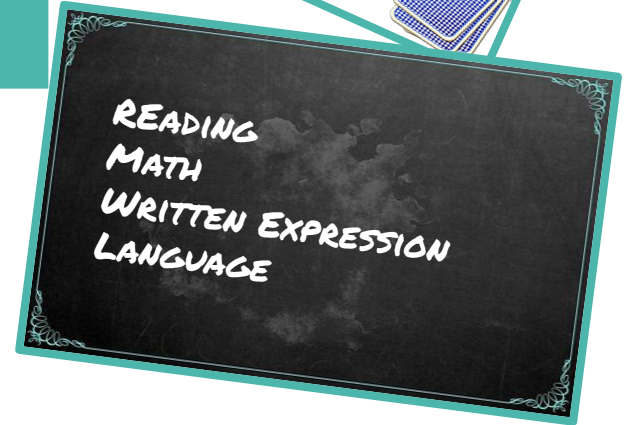
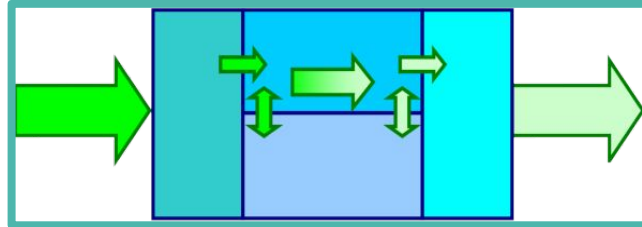
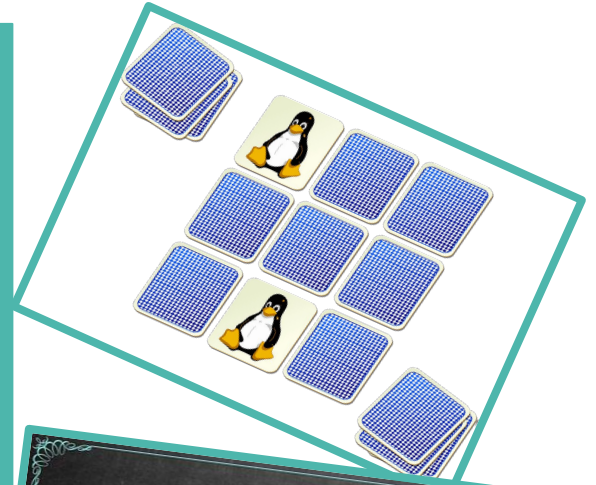
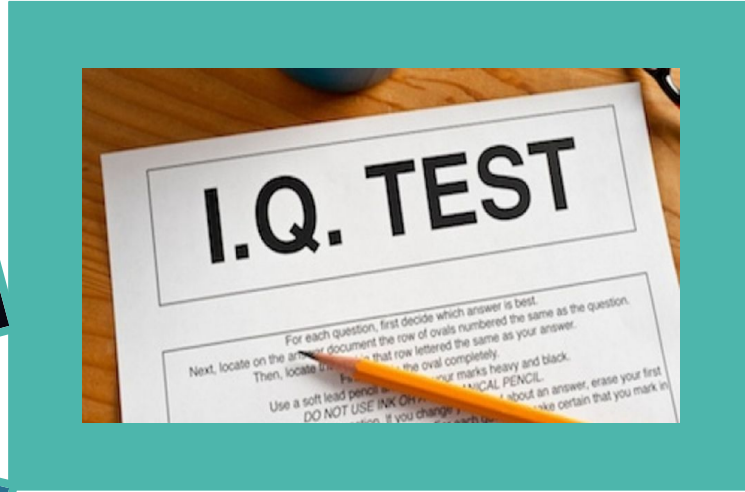


If you have concerns about your child's physical abilities:

- Big muscle movements like walking, running, jumping, skipping
- Small muscle movements like grasping small objects
- Balance
- Coordination
- Sensory processing

You have the right to request an **Occupational Therapy** or a **Physical Therapy** evaluation to assess your child's physical abilities and how any of those delays could be impacting their ability to access their education

Psycho-ed Evaluation (Psychological Eval + Educational Eval)



What does a psycho-ed evaluation assess?

The main component of a *Psychological Evaluation* is an **IQ test**. An IQ test measures the student's **cognitive ability- how “capable” a student is-** in broad areas like reasoning, problem-solving, and how quickly they can figure things out.

Educational Testing measures **academic achievement- how a student is actually performing-** in areas like reading, writing, and math.

While the two evaluations measure different things, the information goes hand in hand. IQ is kind of like a “predictor” of how a student will achieve.

What does that mean?

If a student has a Full Scale IQ score in the “Low Average” range, you would be surprised if that student’s academic achievement scores were in the “Superior” range.

Similarly, if a student has a Full Scale IQ score in the “High Average” range, you would be surprised if that student’s academic achievement scores were in the “Below Average” range.

It makes sense that a student would be able to achieve and perform in school at the same level of their cognitive ability (IQ). **To navigate the world of educational disabilities, you have to look for what doesn’t make sense. The presence of an educational disability can, and often will, impact a student’s ability to perform or achieve in the school setting.**

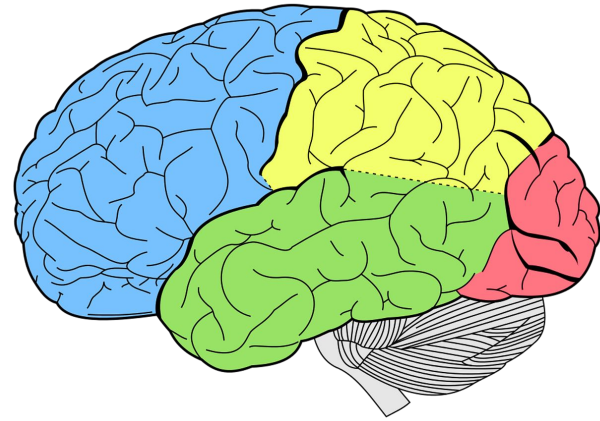
Use the information from the psycho-ed testing to help you understand or figure out if a student has weaknesses in their cognitive ability or their academic achievement, and if so, what specific areas seem to be weaker than others.

Psycho-ed testing can tell you WHAT or WHERE a deficit exists, but it will not tell you WHY...

Neuropsychological Evaluations

When to consider a
Neuropsychological Evaluation:

- when you feel additional information is necessary to understand your child's specific learning disability, their educational needs, and the services or interventions they require in school,
- if you suspect there are multiple disabilities impacting your child and you are concerned the school isn't addressing each one appropriately, or
- if just aren't sure what is going on with your child and the existing evaluations and data doesn't explain or show why your child is having so much difficulty with academic learning



Neuropsychological evaluations help you understand the extent of your child's disability, to confirm or exclude the presence of another disability, and to have a specialist tease out the impact each separate disability is having on your child and the impact the combined disabilities are having on your child.

Behaviors in School? We've got you covered.

Behavior Assessment System for
Children
(BASC)

Connors Rating Scale-Revised
(CRS-R)

Functional Behavior
Assessments
(FBA)



Behavior Assessment System for Children (BASC)

A comprehensive set of rating scales and forms, BASC-3 helps you understand the behaviors and emotions of children and adolescents.

- rating scales are completed by teachers, parents, and the student (age-appropriate)
- helps to provide clinical insight as to what could be “behind” the behaviors
- allows the team to compare information about the child from different perspectives and find areas of concern which overlap

The BASC asks questions to find out information about different symptoms. When the responses are analyzed, a report is generated to show how much each symptom is impacting, or not impacting, the student.

Clinically Significant
the symptom is impacting the student at a level which is much higher and atypical compared to other students.

At-Risk
the student experiences these symptoms slightly more than other students.

Average
the symptom is not seen in this student any more or less than other students of the same age.

***Clinically Significant
or At-Risk Symptoms
Endorsed by Parent or
Guardian***

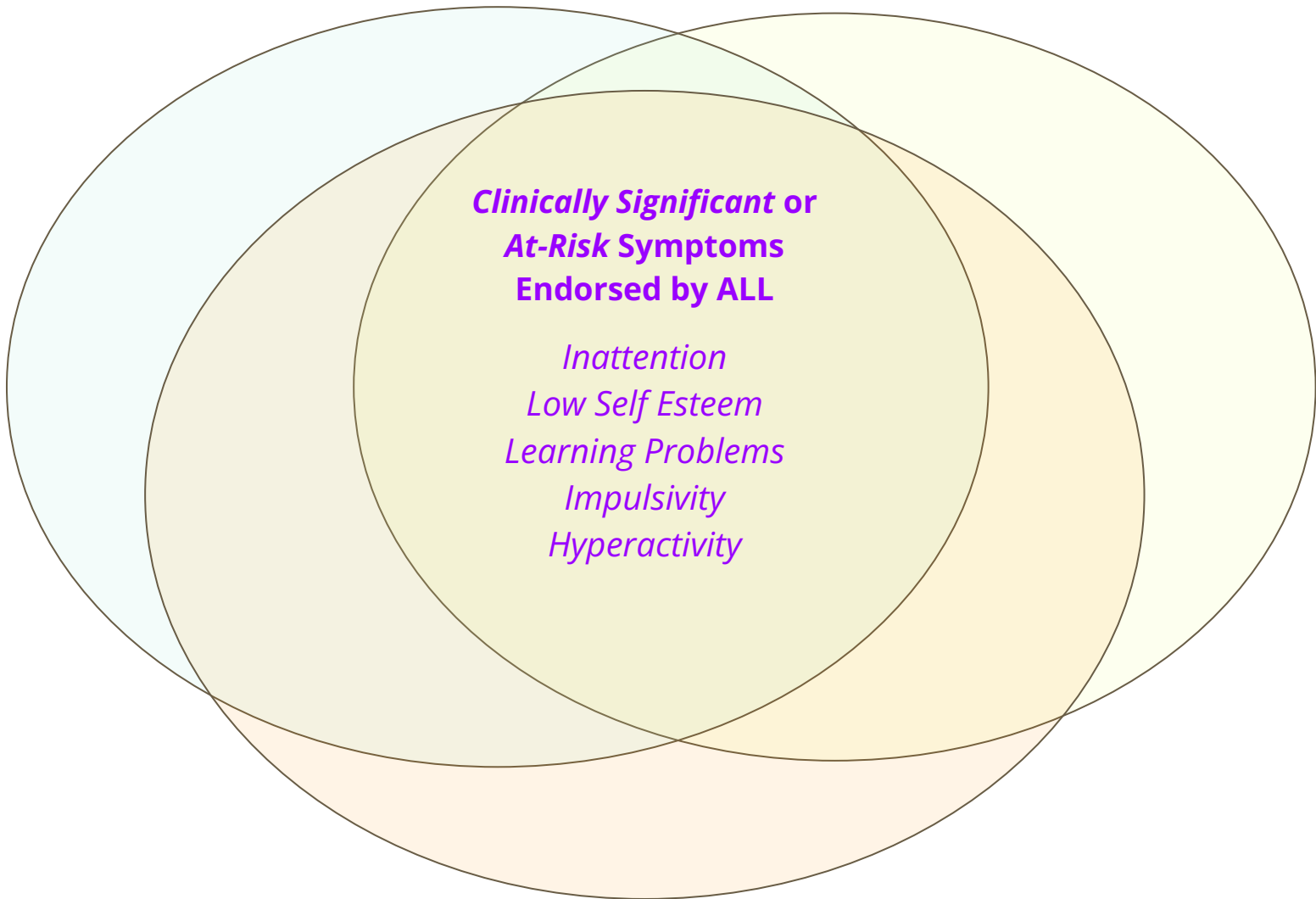
*Inattention
Low Self Esteem
Impulsivity
Depression
Anxiety
Learning Problems
Hyperactivity*

***Clinically Significant or
At-Risk Symptoms Endorsed
by Teachers***

*Attitude to School
Attitude to Teachers
Learning Problems
Aggression
Hyperactivity
Impulsivity
Low Self Esteem*

***Clinically Significant or
At-Risk Symptoms
Endorsed
by Student***

*Attitude to School
Attitude to Teachers
Inattention
Learning Problems
Hyperactivity
Impulsivity
Low Self Esteem*



Connors Rating Scale-Revised (CRS-R)

The CRS-R is a questionnaire that is used to better understand certain behavioral, social, and academic issues in children between 6 and 18 years old. It is often used to help diagnose Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD).

- the Connors can be completed by parents, teachers, and students (age-appropriate)
- helps to identify and measure symptoms related to ADHD and other co-morbid disorders
- questions ask about all areas of life: home, school, work, social gatherings, etc. to try and find a pattern regarding where behaviors exist and to determine if there are symptoms related to ADHD driving those behaviors

Functional Behavior Assessment

Do you receive phone calls/emails from your child's teacher about their behavior;

Does your child receive multiple detentions, in-school or out-of-school suspensions for behavioral reasons?

Does your child's report cards and progress reports reflect certain challenges during the school day such as:

- social skills,
- impulse control,
- compliance, or
- following instructions/directions?

If you answered yes those questions or have experienced similar concerns for your child, today is your lucky day!

It's time to talk about the FBA.



WHO?

No one person is solely responsible for conducting the FBA. Typically the school psychologist is the point person, but data should be collected by classroom teachers, school counselors, social workers, paraprofessionals, and information can be provided by the parent to assist with the process.



WHAT?

An ongoing and continuous assessment of student's behavior. An FBA is used to identify the possible cause(s) of target behaviors, observe the frequency of the behaviors, and discuss a hypothesis about the behaviors.



WHEN?

An FBA should be conducted over several weeks. Data should be collected on different days and at various times throughout each day of data collection.



WHERE?

Data and information should be collected from a variety of settings within the school buildings: academic classrooms, specialty classrooms (structured settings), in addition to hallways, lunch time, and recess (unstructured settings)



WHY?

It is impossible to stop or prevent behaviors if you don't know what is causing them. The information collected from an FBA is used to identify patterns of behaviors and what happened right before the behaviors. If you can eliminate the "trigger", you can eliminate the behavior.

THE NOTORIOUS Behavior Intervention Plans

USE THE RESULTS FROM YOUR CHILD'S FBA
TO CREATE YOUR CHILD'S
BIP

Behavior Intervention Plans:

- address the individual behavioral needs of any student whose behavior interferes with his/her learning or the
- must include positive behavioral intervention strategies and supports,
- provide a roadmap for how to reduce problem behavior, and
- guides treatment and ensures that everyone responds to behaviors consistently.

If you have concerns about your child's **social-emotional well-being**, or if your child is exhibiting some of the following:

- an inability to wake up in the morning;
- a lack of interest or desire to go to school;
- somatic complaints (stomach aches, nausea, headaches), mostly when it's time to go to school or throughout the school day;
- lack of, or decrease in, participation with extracurricular activities or social interaction with peers from school; and/or
- behaviors which result in disciplinary action (ie out of school suspensions)

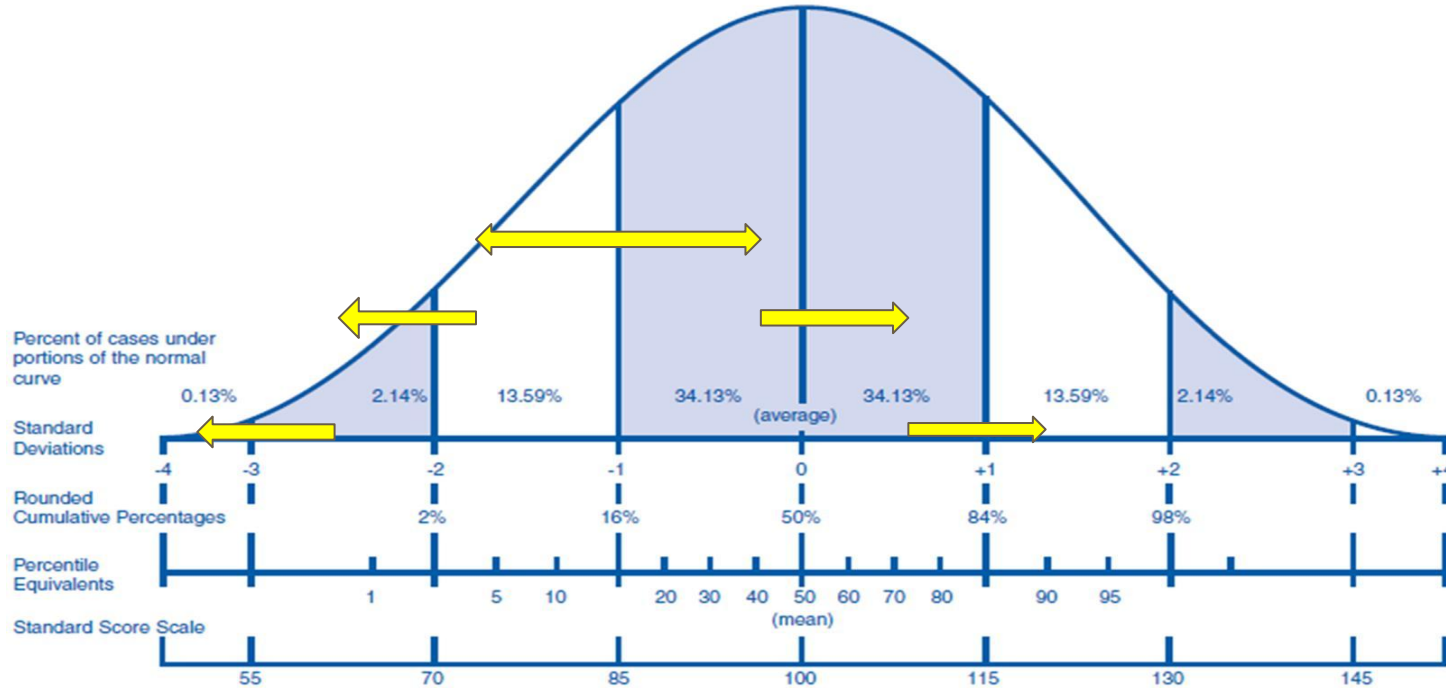
Symptoms of mental illness very often look different in children than they do in adults, oftentimes symptoms of mental illness in children is mistaken for laziness, lack of motivation, defiance, and “typical adolescent behaviors”.

**FIGHT
THE
STIGMA.**
MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS

You have the right to request a **Psychiatric Evaluation** through the Committee on Special Education to determine if there is an *underlying emotional disability which is impacting your child's ability to appropriately access their education.*

**Let's Take a Look at the Data and Figure Out
What Do All Those Numbers Mean?**

THE NORMAL CURVE, PERCENTILES, AND STANDARD SCORES



Age Equivalent- AE
Grade Equivalent- GE
Standard Score- SS
Raw Score- RS
Percentile Rank- PR

You don't need to understand the content of the evaluation
to understand what the data is showing.

Wechsler Intelligence Scale for Children-V Ed.

*interpret with caution

	<u>Standard</u>		<u>Qualitative</u>
	<u>Score</u>	<u>Percentile</u>	<u>Description</u>
<u>Primary Composites</u>			
Verbal Comprehension Index	81	10 th	Low Average
Visual Spatial Index	89	23 rd	Low Average
Fluid Reasoning Index	74	4 th	Borderline
Working Memory Index	74*	4 th	Borderline
Processing Speed Index	129	97 th	Superior
Full Scale IQ	84	14 th	Low Average

Each Index on an IQ test is comprised of smaller subtests.

Wechsler Intelligence Scale for Children-V Ed.

*interpret with caution

	<u>Standard</u> <u>Score</u>	<u>Percentile</u>	<u>Qualitative</u> <u>Description</u>
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Primary Subtests

Verbal Comprehension Subtests

Similarities

Vocabulary

Visual Spatial Subtests

Block Design

Visual Puzzles

Fluid Reasoning Subtests

Matrix Reasoning

Figure Weights

Working Memory Subtests

Digit Span

Picture Span

Processing Speed Subtests

Coding

Symbol Search

The **scaled scores** for each subtest are then **“averaged”** to determine the **standard score** of the Index.

Primary Subtests

Verbal Comprehension Subtests

Similarities

Vocabulary

Visual Spatial Subtests

Block Design

Visual Puzzles

Fluid Reasoning Subtests

Matrix Reasoning

Figure Weights

Working Memory Subtests

Digit Span

Picture Span

Processing Speed Subtests

Coding

Symbol Search

Scaled Score

Qualitative Description

7
6

Low Average
Low Average

7
9

Low Average
Low Average

4
7

Borderline
Low Average

10
1*

Average
Extremely Low

14
16

High Average
Very Superior

Wechsler Intelligence Scale for Children-V Ed.
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Primary Composites

Verbal Comprehension Index

Visual Spatial Index

Fluid Reasoning Index

Working Memory Index

Processing Speed Index

Standard Score

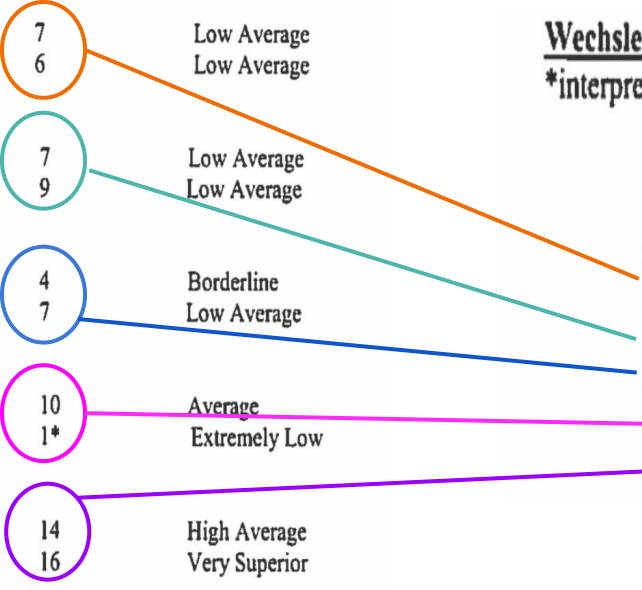
81

89

74

74*

129



The Full Scale IQ score is determined, more or less, by “averaging” the Index Scores.

Wechsler Intelligence Scale for Children-V Ed.

*interpret with caution

	<u>Standard Score</u>
<u>Primary Composites</u>	
Verbal Comprehension Index	81
Visual Spatial Index	89
Fluid Reasoning Index	74
Working Memory Index	74*
Processing Speed Index	129
Full Scale IQ	84

Woodcock Johnson Test of Achievement – IV (WJTA-IV)

<u>Subtests</u>	<u>Standard Score</u>	<u>Percentile Rank</u>	<u>Range</u>
Letter-Word Identification	97	42	Average
Passage Comprehension	79	8	Borderline
Sentence Reading Fluency	109	73	Average
Broad Reading Cluster	98	45	Average
Calculation	83	13	Low Average
Math Facts Fluency	99	47	Average
Applied Problems	97	42	Average
Broad Math Cluster	92	30	Average
Spelling	104	61	Average
Writing Samples	85	16	Low Average
Sentence Writing Fluency	101	53	Average
Broad Written Lang. Cluster	96	40	Average
Academic Skills Cluster	94	34	Average
Academic Fluency Cluster	105	63	Average
Academic Applications Cluster	85	16	Low Average
Broad Achievement	96	40	Average

The Big Picture...

IF IT DOESN'T MAKE SENSE, ASK QUESTIONS!!

The Bottom Line about Scores

Look for what doesn't make
sense

- **Discrepancies:** do the different scores look similar or are there noticeable gaps from test to test?
- **Does it match what you're seeing in the classroom?** If the student is struggling, but testing "looks" ok...
- **Trust your instincts.** Ask yourself: what's missing from the picture?
- **Can't quite put your finger on it?** Now is the time to request additional testing, if needed

I Disagree with the Testing? What Can I Do?

Independent Educational Evaluations

- Disagree with any evaluation that were performed for the student
- Put it in writing (Independent Educational Evaluation “at public expense”!)
- List of evaluators from the school district
- Compare IEE to the original evaluation

Your Name

Street Address

City, State Zip Code

Date

Name of Special Education Administrator

Title of Administration

Name of School District

Mailing Address of Special Education/District Office or
Email Address of administrator

Dear Name of Special Education Administrator,

I am writing to request an Independent Educational Evaluation (IEE), at public expense, in the form of a the kind of evaluation you are requesting (*i.e. a neuropsychological evaluation*), for my child,
_____ child's name _____ (DOB: _____).

I have several concerns regarding his/her educational progress and believe additional information is necessary to understand my child's needs as they relate to his/her education, to ensure he/she is provided the appropriate level and type of support, intervention, and service so he/she can receive the education to which he/she is entitled.

It is my understanding that in requesting an IEE, the Committee on Special Education must approve the evaluation or file for an impartial hearing. If you could please contact me at your earliest convenience to inform me of your decision and how to proceed, I would appreciate it.

Sincerely,

Your Name/Signature

Key Takeaways

- Put your request in writing;
- Know which evaluations you want to have completed and understand why you're asking for them;
- Understand the data and what it tells you about functioning;
- ASK QUESTIONS!
- If you disagree with the results of an evaluation, you have options;
- Trust. Your. Instincts.

Please contact us if you have any questions

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