

## **Elements of a Well-Rounded Evaluation**

*An initial evaluation should include the following elements:*

### **Intelligence assessment:**

Either verbal or nonverbal assessment tools are used to establish a student's level of cognitive function. A student with language impairment would be able to demonstrate his/her cognitive abilities by pointing to indicate their responses. Standard scores are reported; these have a mean of 100 and a standard deviation of 15 points.

### **Academic achievement assessment:**

This assessment tool would be verbal and or nonverbal for a child at preschool to kindergarten level and verbal for kindergarten to high school level. All older students would participate in testing verbally and in writing. Standard scores are reported; these have a mean of 100 and a standard deviation of 15 points. Some assessment tools provide grade level score and/or age level scores and/or stanine scores.

### **Parent Input:**

This is often informal but there may be reason to include formal behavior rating scales, if there are behavioral concerns, self-help skill concerns or concerns about specific handicapping conditions, such as autism. Some formal assessment tools provide Standard scores are reported; these have a mean of 100 and a standard deviation of 15 points as well as age level scores.

### **Student Input:**

All students, capable of verbal communication, could be asked to respond to general questions to obtain their ideas and opinions. Older students could be asked to respond to formal self-rating scales. Older students responding to formal assessment tools would be informed that their responses would result in formal scores, such as Standard scores, which have a mean of 100 and a standard deviation of 15 points as well as age level scores.

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### **Teacher Input:**

This input should be objective, based on measurable academic criteria and specific to the areas of concern, e.g. concerns about reading or math would warrant explicit teacher input; teachers might be asked to complete formal behavior rating scales similar to those asked of parents; these have a mean of 100 and a standard deviation of 15 points. Some assessment tools provide grade level score and/or age level scores and/or stanine scores.

### **Formal Observation:**

Observations should occur in multiple settings when possible but specifically in the area or subject of concern and conducted by a professional who is trained to accurately interpret observable behaviors across settings. Formal observations should reflect observable behaviors that can yield an understanding of a child's achievement and/or behavior.

\*Additional components may be included in an initial evaluation, however, these should be purposefully chosen and identified to parents/guardians as to the intent of such assessments. For example, if a psychiatric examination by a licensed provider is needed, the purpose of this evaluation should be discussed prior to the scheduling of this appointment and should be included to address a specific concern or need.

*\*\*Reevaluations are handled in various ways by school districts, ranging from a review of records of the prior school years all the way to formal re-testing of students. The parent/guardian and the district should be in agreement about which elements a re-evaluation should include.*

## Evaluation and Reevaluation Terms

**Measurement** - process by which the attributes or dimensions of characteristic are made.

**Assessment** - a process of gathering information to monitor progress or make decisions – includes tests/measurements, as well as observations, interviews, etc.

**Standardized Assessments**- instruments used to measure performance in areas where student is having difficulty/concern (i.e. ability or IQ, academic achievement, processing (visual, auditory, sensory), emotional/behavioral, motor skills (fine or gross) Standardized tests are those that have been administered to a group of people (referred to as the norm group) to obtain information about the likelihood of each possible score on the test.

**Evaluations** - procedure used to determine whether a subject meets a pre-set criterion and includes results of assessment, as well as other important factors

## Aptitude and Achievement Tests

### Aptitude

- **Cognitive Ability**: easiest to think about as IQ
  - Measures what the overall expectation could be of what this child SHOULD BE ABLE TO achieve
  - Not a single score because it measures different specific abilities and then groups them largely by verbal and non-verbal abilities (most common tests)
  - For students with widely scattered scores on different subtests, the overall score is less meaningful AND it's important to look at the scatter pattern when thinking about services and supports
- **Achievement**: Standardized tests that measure knowledge and skills in academic subject areas (i.e., math, spelling, and reading).

### **Achievement Levels**:

- What skills a Student is able to demonstrate on individualized standardized tests that measure reading, writing, math

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- Look at the scores on standardized tests in relationship with how a child is actually doing in school (grades, school-based group standardized achievement tests)
- Differences between ability and achievement MAY BE indicator of a learning disability

### **Behavioral assessments**

FBA (Functional Behavior Assessment)

- Over 14
- Vocational technical education assessment results
- Interests
- Preferences

**Adaptive Abilities** - How does the student do with activities of daily living such as eating, dressing, toileting, protecting his/her safety in the community.

### **Current Classroom Based Assessments**

- Curriculum Based Assessments to determine a student's performance based on grade-appropriate standards in core academic subjects
- Include summary of progress monitoring data
- Include PASA, PSSA and local assessment scores
- If 14 or over, should include a Transition Assessment that considers what are interests, skills, strengths, and areas of need that relate to planning for the student's life after school.

### **More Terms**

- Decoding: how well can a student break down words into their component sounds
- Fluency - how well/smoothly does a student read basic words or complete basic math problems
- Comprehension - how well does a student understand what he/she reads or what he/she is asked to do in math
- Working Memory - How well does the student hold either verbal information or pictorial/symbolic information in short-term memory and be able to use it within more complex tasks