

PARENT'S GUIDE TO THE PEDIATRIC NEUROPSYCHOLOGICAL ASSESSMENT

What is a Neuropsychological Assessment?

Neuropsychological assessment is testing of how your child learns and behaves compared to others' their age. These tests are non-invasive, meaning they will not involve needles, X-rays, scans, or being attached to machines. The results give information about your child's **strengths and weaknesses**, which is important for setting and tracking treatment and education goals. The assessment helps us better understand your child's:

- Intelligence and Reasoning
- Academic Achievement
- Executive Functioning
- Attention
- Learning and Memory
- Language
- Visual-spatial skills
- Processing speed
- Fine Motor skills
- Behavior
- Emotions
- Social skills

Why Does My Child Need this Assessment?

Children are referred for neuropsychological assessment when they have cognitive, emotional, behavioral, adjustment, or learning problems after having cancer, a traumatic brain injury, sickle cell, stroke, epilepsy or other diagnoses related to a medical or developmental condition.

What is a Neuropsychologist?

Neuropsychologists are doctorate-level psychologists (Ph.D.) with specialized training related to the brain. We do not prescribe medications like physicians (M.D.) but can give information about helpful treatments supported by research.

What is Different from the School or Clinical Psychologist's Assessment?

School or clinical psychologists can also measure some of your child's thinking and academic skills. The purpose of school testing is to qualify children for special education programs and/or therapies to improve their school performance. Neuropsychologists may give some of the same tests as a clinical or school psychologist. However, neuropsychologists have specialized training in how your child's medical condition affects their learning and behavior. School testing also may not measure all thinking skills (ex. attention or memory), which can be measured in a neuropsychological assessment.

Information Needed / What to Prepare for the Appointment

1. Please have your medical insurance information available when you call to schedule the appointment.
2. Please bring the following to your scheduled appointment(s):
 - Completed history form available on the website.
 - Copies of any previous psychological or neuropsychological assessments.
 - Copies of your child's Individual Educational Plan (IEP) or 504 Plan.
 - Glasses, hearing aids, or other adaptive equipment your child uses every day.
 - Snacks for your child to eat during breaks.
3. **Take all medication as directed on the day(s) of the evaluation.** This includes any stimulant medication (ex. Ritalin, Concerta, etc.) prescribed by your child's physician.
4. **Make sure your child gets a good night's sleep and has eaten before the assessment.**

How to Prepare Your Child for the Neuropsychological Assessment

You can share the following explanation with your child: *We are going to see a neuropsychologist so that you can learn and feel better. A pediatric neuropsychologist is a doctor who will help us find out how to help you at school and home. You will not have any shots or painful tests. You will do a bunch of different things including listening and talking, playing with blocks or puzzles, building things, and drawing. Some things will be like school where you do reading and math. You will be able to take breaks to go to the bathroom when needed.*

What is Involved in a Neuropsychological Evaluation?

The evaluation is usually completed in two to three visits. The neuropsychologist will first meet you and your child to gather information about medical, developmental, school, and behavioral health concerns. Then they will complete testing with your child, which involves different problem-solving activities, such as puzzles and drawing. Younger children complete the testing in one day and older children come for two different days (each is a 2-3 hour appointment). After the assessment, the pediatric neuropsychologist interprets the results and writes a report with recommendations. You will have another appointment (about 1 hour) to go over the results and a recommended intervention plan. You may have recommendations for a school plan and be referred to a clinical psychologist or other providers for ongoing help to meet your child's needs.

TGH Pediatric Neuropsychology Staff

Pediatric Neuropsychologist: Elyse Parke, Ph.D., ABBP-CN

Scheduling/Referrals: Patient Access Specialist

When you have a prescription from your doctor or ARNP, call our office at **(813) 844-7719, ext. 5**. Our staff will verify your insurance benefits and schedule the assessment.