



MACARTHUR CHILDREN'S DEVELOPMENTAL CLINIC



Why an IQ Test?

There are three major reasons why a child may be referred for a psychometric test. There may be concerns about their overall development, or because they are struggling with acquiring basic literacy skills or there is a query about whether the child is gifted.

A young child may be referred for a psychometric assessment to help determine whether there is a cognitive delay. These children seem to be developing skills more slowly than their peers and the parents and/or professionals involved with them may feel that the difficulties are the result of a developmental disability. The IQ test will help to establish the level at which the child is functioning cognitively. This has implications for entrance into early intervention programs and once they start school, for eligibility for integration funding or inclusion into a support class or school. The child may have a mild disability, and may be eligible for integration funding to enable them to be educated in a mainstream class. The amount of funding they receive is determined not only by the IQ score, but also by their overall social and self-care skills. Many of these children cope well in the integrated setting in their early years, but as they get older, the discrepancy between their development and that of their peers with average ability becomes larger and they will require more support in the classroom, which may include a modified program. A child with a moderate disability has delays in all areas of their development, particularly in language and social skills. Their needs are generally best met in a support class or unit in a mainstream school. Where there are behavioural problems or more than one disability, a School for Specific Purposes will often provide the best support and educational program.

The second reason a child may be referred for assessment is because they are having difficulty with acquiring basic literacy skills. This may be because they are of lower cognitive ability or they have a specific learning problem. The IQ test will identify the child of lower ability, but a child with a specific learning problem will often be of average or above average intelligence. The test has eliminated one cause for the difficulty they are having, but may not provide any clear evidence of the learning problem. The student with a learning problem is best identified through achievement or academic testing, as well as psychometric testing. This testing can

identify whether they have a difficulty with reading and will help establish where the problem lies. The scores from a test such as the Wechsler Individual Achievement Test – 3rd Edition (WIAT–III) can be compared against the scores from the WISC–IV and this will indicate whether the student is performing at a level commensurate with their cognitive ability, or whether there is a discrepancy between the scores.

Children may be referred for assessment because of a query as to whether they are gifted. The Department of Education requires that children turn five years of age on or before the 31st of July of the year they begin school. Parents of gifted children, who want their child to begin school earlier, have to provide proof that the child is gifted. For a young child to cope well at school, they need to have good language skills and be socially competent as well as being intellectually gifted. Although there are arguments as to the need for IQ testing for children, up to date and relevant testing is an important tool for helping identify children’s differing educational needs.

Referances: Wechsler, D. (2002) Technical and Interpretive Manual for the Wechsler Preschool and Primary Scale of Intelligence (ed. 3) San Antonio: The Psychological Corporation

Sattler, J.M. (1992) Assessment of Children (3rd Ed) San Diego: Jerome M Sattler, Publisher, Inc

