

Psychological Testing and Psychoeducational Assessment

Psychological Testing or a Psychoeducational Assessment by a psychologist can be extremely useful when there is lack of clarity or understanding regarding the reasons and causes of various emotional, psychological, learning, or behavioral problems of a child or adolescent.

Psychological testing refers to the administration of standardized tasks and procedures which allow for a sampling of behavior, in order to understand and predict a given individual's psychological, emotional, and behavioral functioning in a variety of settings.

Psychoeducational testing, an even more comprehensive process, includes the aforementioned, as well as an examination of cognitive functioning and learning problems, which might impact a child or teenagers ability to be successful in school. Psychoeducational testing can help to identify the particular learning style of a child, and determine if there is a learning disability, cognitive difficulties, or executive functioning problems which impede the learning process. Both psychological testing and psychoeducational testing assists the psychologist in formulating a mental health treatment plan and/or educational intervention strategy, and educates the school and family about a child's needs.

Psychological and psychoeducational assessment is a comprehensive evaluation process that involves not only the administration and interpretation of psychological tests, but also involves the integration of information from multiple sources. Such sources include child interviews, interviews with parents, collateral information from teachers, school educational or testing reports, medical history, as well as information from other mental health professionals who may have provided therapy to a child or teenager.

Common reasons why a psychological or psychoeducational evaluation may be recommended include:

- Behavioral and conduct problems
- Concerns about cognitive and intellectual factors which may be leading to problems in the learning process at school
- Learning and academic problems; learning disability
- Determine cause of attention and concentration problems, such as ADHD or otherwise
- Understanding causes of emotional problems such as depression, anxiety, social skills deficits, low frustration tolerance or extreme anger, poor impulse control, mood instability, poor coping or emotion regulation skills
- Speech and language problems
- Recommendations for school or residential treatment placement
- Determine eligibility for special education services
- Identify factors underlying problem behaviors
- Determine if there is a specific cause for a child's academic, social, or psychological

difficulties

In evaluating psychological and emotional functioning in children or adults, Dr. Keithly frequently uses the following tests:

- Behavior Assessment System for Children - 2
- Children's Depression Inventory
- Children's Anxiety Scale
- VINLAND- 3 (behavior and adaptive scale)
- Minnesota Multiphasic Inventory - II (MMPI-II)
- Attention Deficit Disorder Evaluation Scales
- GARS-3/ CARS-2 (Autism)

In evaluating cognitive, intellectual, IQ, and executive functioning, Dr. Keithly frequently uses the following tests:

- Wechsler Intelligence Scale for Children - V (WISC-V)
- TONI-4 (Non- Verbal IQ)
- Beery-Buktenica Developmental Test of Visual Motor Integration
- Neurocognitive (NEPSY-II)
- WRAML- 2 (memory scale)
- CTOPP-2 (phonological processing)
- KTEA-3 (academic test)

Following the completion of the psychological evaluation, Dr. Keithly prepares a comprehensive written report, which is reviewed in a feedback session with the parents (teenagers may also be included at this meeting), and can also be submitted to other professionals or schools at the parents request.

What is a Licensed Educational Psychologist (LEP)?

California Business and Professions Code
Section 4989.14: Scope of Practice

The practice of educational psychology is the performance of any of the following professional functions pertaining to academic learning processes or the education system or both:

- (a) Educational evaluation.
- (b) Diagnosis of psychological disorders related to academic learning processes.
- (c) Administration of diagnostic tests related to academic learning processes including tests of academic ability, learning patterns, achievement, motivation, and personality factors.
- (d) Interpretation of diagnostic tests related to academic learning processes including tests of academic ability, learning patterns, achievement, motivation, and personality factors.
- (e) Providing psychological counseling for individuals, groups, and families.
- (f) Consultation with other educators and parents on issues of social development and behavioral and academic difficulties.
- (g) Conducting psychoeducational assessments for the purposes of identifying special needs.
- (h) Developing treatment programs and strategies to address problems of adjustment.
- (i) Coordinating intervention strategies for management of individual crises.

The Difference Between a School Identification and a Clinical Diagnosis By Peg Rosen

- Dr. Keithly is licensed in both clinical and school identification.

The doctor tells you your child has dyslexia and ADHD. So does the IEP team at school. So they've both diagnosed your child, right? Not exactly.

People often say the school "diagnosed" their child. But technically, that's not what happened. Schools don't diagnose conditions. Only doctors and other clinicians do.

What schools do is somewhat different. IEP teams "identify" learning and attention issues. Then they determine if a child is eligible for special education supports and services.

This chart explains the differences between a school identification and a clinical diagnosis.

	School Identification	Clinical Diagnosis
What it refers to	A learning "disability" or health impairment (including ADHD) that's identified after a school evaluation.	A medical condition (including ADHD) or learning "disorder."
Who makes the determination	An IEP team at school.	A doctor, clinical child psychologist, pediatric neuropsychologist, speech-language pathologist, or other qualified clinical professionals.
The basis for	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Schools identify conditions based on 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clinical professionals diagnose

	School Identification	Clinical Diagnosis
using the term	<p>IDEA, the special education law.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The law covers 13 categories of disability. For a child to be eligible for special education services, the school must identify learning and attention issues that fall under one of those categories. • Most learning issues fall under “specific learning disability.” ADHD often falls under “other health impairment.” • Conditions must also affect the child’s ability to function in the classroom or elsewhere in school at that time they’re identified. • Child must be reassessed, and issues formally identified, at least every three years. 	<p>conditions found in the DSM-5 (<i>Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders</i>).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conditions don’t have to affect school performance in order for clinicians to diagnose them. • Diagnoses that aren’t covered by IDEA might be used under Section 504. • Conditions are considered ongoing unless symptoms change and the diagnosis is revised.
The purpose behind it	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Determines if a child is eligible for special education. • Entitles eligible student to the supports and services he needs to get a free and appropriate public education through an IEP. • The same information may be used by a 504 committee at the school to determine eligibility for a 504 plan. 	<p>To understand the cause of symptoms and to guide decisions on treatment. (May also provide information to help with the evaluation process at school.)</p>
What the evaluation process might involve	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Observation in classroom and other school settings. • Review of developmental milestones, plus medical and family history. • Standardized assessments of intellectual ability, speech and language skills, and more. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Physical exam and other medical testing. • Review of developmental milestones, plus medical and family history. • Standardized assessments of intellectual ability, speech and language skills, and more.

	School Identification	Clinical Diagnosis
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mental health screening. • Parent or caregiver interviews. • Teacher input. • Review of educational history. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mental health assessment. • Parent or caregiver interviews. • Teacher input. • Review of educational history.
Cost	Free, if done through the public school special education process.	Parent pays; health insurance may provide some coverage.
How they relate to each other	<p>An IEP team might consider any clinical information that's available when it's determining if a child is eligible for special education. That includes a clinical diagnosis.</p> <p>A diagnosis alone doesn't satisfy IDEA requirements for getting supports and services in school, however.</p>	<p>A clinician should consider how the diagnostic process could be helpful for educational planning.</p> <p>A diagnosis doesn't automatically qualify a child for special education. It might be enough to qualify him for 504 accommodations, however.</p>

A diagnosis and an identification have a common goal: to get your child the support he needs.