



# INTRODUCTION TO A PSYCHO-EDUCATIONAL ASSESSMENT

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## For Parents & Caregivers

### HOW DO I KNOW IF MY CHILD NEEDS AN ASSESSMENT?

- School personnel may suggest assessment when your child experiences academic, behavioral, and/or social-emotional difficulties.
- An assessment may be appropriate if you feel your child is not "keeping up with" other children his or her age.
- You feel your child is advanced and may need an individualized education plan.
- An assessment may be necessary to access funding from government agencies to provide your child with specialized support.

### WHAT IS A PSYCHO-EDUCATIONAL ASSESSMENT?

- A psycho-educational assessment is comprehensive in that it goes beyond obvious symptoms and focuses on the factors that affect your child's functioning. For example, attention and memory are underlying factors that may contribute to learning problems with reading, writing, and math.
- An assessment identifies your child's strengths and needs related to intellectual, academic, school functioning and/or behavioral needs.
- A psycho-educational assessment is critical to identifying children with learning and behavioral difficulties, as well as children who are academically talented (gifted).
- A psycho-educational assessment is also a component in identifying children who may require multidisciplinary assessment of such conditions as:
  - Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD)
  - Behavior/Conduct Disorders
  - Anxiety Disorders
  - Mood Disorders
- Assessment tools utilized are developmentally appropriate, and are formal (e.g., standardized tests) and informal (e.g., non-standardized interviews and observations).

### WHO DOES THE ASSESSMENT?

- Psycho-educational assessments are conducted by psychologists who have received specialized graduate and post-graduate level training in test administration and interpretation.



## HOW LONG DOES AN ASSESSMENT TAKE AND WHAT IS THE PROCESS?

- As the assessment process is comprehensive, 2–3 sessions of approximately 2 hours each may be required to identify broad areas of need. It is a time and energy intensive process.
  1. The first session is done as a diagnostic interview with the parents. During this interview we collect all relevant developmental, academic, social, emotional and behavioral information from pre-natal to-date about your child. We ask you come to this appointment prepared with the forms we have asked you to fill out. This will allow us to maximize our time together.
  2. The first testing session will involve an assessment of your child's intellectual functioning. This will involve examining your child's verbal skills, reasoning ability, attention, working memory and visuo-spatial functioning.
  3. During the next testing session, your child's academic achievement will be assessed, allowing us to determine whether your child is learning at the rate expected of his/her age.
  4. Further assessment sessions may be necessary to clarify factors affecting your child's level of functioning (e.g., visual-motor skills, language skills, memory deficits, executive functions etc).
  5. Once the testing is complete, the psychologist will score and interpret the results of all the assessments and prepare the report. The report is very comprehensive and lengthy. It is a compilation of all relevant
  6. Background information, medical and psychological history, educational history, social/emotional/behavioral information, as well as the results of the assessments and a very thorough list of recommendations. During this time the psychologist will consult another clinical psychologist on the team using 'blind scores' method to ensure we have done a proper analysis of the scores and the diagnosis. Each case has two psychologists looking at all the data. Taking all the aforementioned into consideration, we endeavor to have reports completed within 10 – 14 days following the final assessment session.
  7. Once the report is complete, you are asked to come back in for a feedback session, during which the psychologist will help you understand your child, his/her cognitive, academic, and behavioral profile, as well as teach you how to read the report.

## WHAT INFORMATION DOES AN ASSESSMENT PROVIDE?

- A comprehensive assessment pinpoints your child's strengths and areas of need and provides practical recommendations for successfully managing intellectual, learning, behavioral and/or social-emotional differences.
- The information obtained is consolidated into a formal report that you will be given.
- During a separate feedback session, the psychologist will explain the results and recommendations to you in understandable terms and you will have an opportunity to ask questions.
- When you receive the written report, it is recommended that you read through the report thoroughly before sharing it with the school. It is important for you to know what the report says and feel comfortable that the report accurately describes your child's current needs. You may want to add comments or highlight certain recommendations on the copy you share with the school.
- We will not provide soft copies of the reports in the interests of maintaining confidentiality. If you decide to share the report with your child's school, we will be able to consult with the school regarding the assessment results and recommendations once we have received your permission.



## HOW AM I INVOLVED IN THE ASSESSMENT?

- **You are the expert on your child.** Information you provide through interview and questionnaires will be invaluable in developing a picture of your child in his or her world.
- Please ensure you bring all rating forms completed yourself and by teachers to the first assessment. Also, please bring all school report cards and any relevant psychological/medical reports.
- Prepare your child for assessment by letting him or her know that he/she is coming to work with someone whose job it is to look at how he/she learns, why school is hard, etc.
- Check with your child's school calendar to make sure there are no field trips or special activities that they will be disappointed to miss when they are scheduled for the assessment.
- Ensure your child is well rested and well nourished before he/she comes for assessment. This will help your child to be relaxed and perform at his/her best.
- Ensure your child has taken any regular medication and is wearing his/her glasses, if required.

## WHAT DO I TELL MY CHILD BEFORE BRINGING THEM TO THE ASSESSMENT?

- We advise you do not mention that the child is going in for a 'test,' 'assessment,' or seeing 'a doctor' or going to a 'clinic'. This language creates unnecessary anxiety in the child.
- You may say "You are going to go see a lady who is going to do many different things with you. There will be things like puzzles, pictures, and even some writing, maths and reading. Some things will be easy for you and others may not be so easy—the only thing you have to do is do your best."
- If your child asks why they are doing the assessment, you can tell them "It will help us understand what you are really good at and what we can help you with."
- If your child asks if he/she can study for the assessment- you tell them "This isn't a kind of thing that you can study for. You just have to go in and do your best."

If you have any questions regarding any of the above or need some clarification, please call us on **T. (0)4 380 2088** or email Dr. Rebecca Steingiesser - Assessment Lead at **[drsteingiesser@lighthousearabia.com](mailto:drsteingiesser@lighthousearabia.com)**