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Detailed Information regarding HEIGHTS Testing

You have expressed an interest in having your child evaluated for HEIGHTS or enriched academic placement (e.g., Honors, G/T, A/P). Often the screening instruments used in the schools will not produce scores representing your child's true abilities. This may be due to the testing environment (large group) and/or the nature of the screening instrument used.

As a psychologist, I administer intelligence (IQ) and academic achievement tests which are the gold standards in the field, are administered in a quiet setting on an individual basis. These tests will provide a more accurate measure of a child's innate intellectual abilities and academic achievement levels.

Most students are administered the **Wechsler Abbreviated Scales of Intelligence (WASI)** and the **Woodcock Johnson Tests of Achievement, Third Edition (WJ-III)**. Testing time is about three hours, but of course varies by individual student.

The **WASI** consists of four subtests derived from the Wechsler Intelligence Scale for Children, Fourth Edition (WISC-IV) two verbal and two nonverbal, which have proven to produce a score highly consistent with the WISC-IV. Generally, the WASI can be administered in less than an hour.

If your child needs more comprehensive testing of his or her intellectual abilities, the **Wechsler Intelligence Scale for Children, Fourth Edition (WISC-IV)** will be administered. This test consists of 10-12 subtests, each measuring a different aspect of cognitive functioning. Administration takes about an hour and a half to two hours.

Academic achievement levels are measured by administering the **Woodcock Johnson Tests of Achievement, Third Edition (WJ-III)** and the **Tests of Written Language, Third Edition (TOWL-3)**. Descriptions of these tests are on the next page. These tests take up to two hours to administer

Academic testing is billed on a fee-for-service basis at an hourly rate for actual administration, scoring, and generating a written report for your records and for the school. The hourly rate is the same as current "session" fees.

Insurance companies do not reimburse educational testing.

Interpretative information available from WISC-IV Subtests:

WASI Subtests are indicated with an asterisk.

Verbal Comprehension Subtests:

***Similarities:** designed to measure verbal reasoning and concept formation. It also involves auditory comprehension, memory, distinction between nonessential and essential features, and verbal expression.

***Vocabulary:** designed to measure a child's word knowledge and verbal concept formation. It also measures a child's fund of knowledge, learning ability, long-term memory, and degree of language development. Other abilities that may be used by the child during this task include auditory perception and comprehension, verbal conceptualization, abstract thinking, and verbal expression.

Comprehension: designed to measure verbal reasoning and conceptualization, verbal comprehension and expression, the ability to evaluate and use past experience, and the ability to demonstrate practical information. It also involves knowledge of conventional standards of behavior, social judgement and maturity, and common sense.

Perceptual Reasoning Subtests:

***Block Design:** designed to measure the ability to analyze and synthesize abstract visual material. It also involves nonverbal concept formation, visual perception and organization, simultaneous processing, visual-motor coordination, learning, and the ability to separate figure and ground in visual stimuli. One researcher suggests that it involves visual observation and matching abilities for younger children, as well as the ability to integrate visual and motor processes.

Picture Concepts: designed to measure abstract, categorical reasoning ability.

***Matrix Reasoning:** good measure of fluid intelligence and reliable estimate of general intellectual ability.

Working Memory Subtests:

Digit Span: designed as a measure of auditory short-term memory, sequencing skills, attention and concentration. The *Digit Span Forward* task involves rote learning and memory, attention, encoding, and auditory processing. *Digit Span Backward* involves working memory, transformation of information, mental manipulation, and visuospatial imaging. The shift from the *Digit Span Forward* task to the *Digit Span Backward* task requires cognitive flexibility and mental alertness.

Letter-Number Sequencing: involves sequencing, mental manipulation, attention, short-term auditory memory, visuospatial imaging, and processing speed.

Processing Speed Subtests:

Coding: measures processing speed, short-term memory, learning ability, visual perception, visual-motor coordination, visual scanning ability, cognitive flexibility, attention, and motivation. It may also involve visual and sequential processing.

Scope of interpretive information available from the WJ III achievement tests:

Test 1. Letter-Word Identification: measures the subject's word identification skills.

Test 2. Reading Fluency: measures the person's ability to quickly read simple sentences in the Subject Response Booklet, decide if the statement is true, and then circle Yes or No. It is a time-limited test.

Test 5. Calculation: is a test of math achievement measuring the ability to perform mathematical calculations.

Test 6. Math Fluency: measures the ability to solve simple addition, subtraction, and multiplication facts quickly.

Test 7. Spelling: measures the ability to write orally presented words correctly.

Test 8. Writing Fluency. Writing Fluency measures skill in formulating and writing simple sentences quickly (within a 7-minute time limit). Each sentence must relate to a given stimulus picture and include a given set of three words.

Test 9. Passage Comprehension: initial items involve symbolic learning [i.e., the ability to match a rebus (pictographic representation of a word) with an actual picture of the object. The next items are presented in a multiple-choice format and require the person to point to the picture represented by a phrase. Remaining items require the person to read a short passage and identify a missing key word that makes sense in the context of that passage.

Test 10: Applied Problems: requires the person to analyze and solve math problems. To solve the problems, the person must listen to the problem, recognize the procedure to be followed, and then perform relatively simple calculations. Because many of the problems include extraneous information, the individual must decide not only the appropriate mathematical operations to use but also which numbers to use in the calculation.

Test 13: Word Attack: measures skill in applying phonic and structural analysis skills to the pronunciation of unfamiliar printed words.

Test 14: Picture Vocabulary: measures oral language development and lexical (word) knowledge by requiring the person to identify pictured objects. This is primarily an expressive language task at the single-word level.

The Test of Written Language - 3 (TOWL-3) specifically assesses writing ability, or the ability to write meaningfully. This requires an integrated grasp of writing components (vocabulary, word usage, spelling, capitalization, punctuation, and syntax) rather than mere competence in the components when they are measured in isolation. The test measures three areas of a student's spontaneously written story: Contextual Conventions, Contextual Language, and Story Construction.

In the area of Contextual Conventions, points are earned for satisfying specific requirements relative to capitalization, punctuation, spelling, and other arbitrary elements in writing (e.g., paragraph indents). In the area of Contextual Language, the student's story is evaluated relative to the quality of its vocabulary, sentence construction, and grammar. In the area of Story Construction, the student's story is evaluated relative to the quality of its plot, prose, development of characters, interest to the reader, and other compositional aspects.