

Assessment, Evaluation and Reporting

When a child is struggling to read, someone will probably suggest that he or she be tested or evaluated for a specific learning disability such as Dyslexia. Evaluation describes the process of determining if someone has a specific learning disability. The word evaluation encompasses identification, screening, testing, diagnosis, and all the other information gathering involved when the student, his or her family, and a team of professionals work together to determine why the student is having difficulty and what can be done to help.

An evaluation is the process of gathering information to identify the factors contributing to a student's difficulty with learning to read and spell. First, using questionnaires information is gathered from parents and teachers to understand the nature of the child's struggles. Then, tests are given to identify strengths and weaknesses that lead to a diagnosis and a comprehensive plan for intervention. Conclusions and recommendations are developed and reported.

An evaluation is important for three reasons:

1. Diagnosis

An effective evaluation identifies the likely source of the problem. It rules out other common causes of reading difficulties and determines if the student profile of strengths and weaknesses fit the definition of specific learning disability or dyslexia

CAUTION: The diagnosis of dyslexia is made on the basis of the data available. A poor reader may appear to "fit the profile" of dyslexia. However, if the learner responds quickly to appropriate intervention, the source of the reading problem is more likely related to earlier educational opportunity or maturational tempo problems that have limited the child's ability to learn from the default curriculum. The learner's response to intervention provides valuable information necessary to support or reject the diagnosis of specific learning disability or dyslexia.

2. Formulate Intervention

An effective evaluation will be used by a professional to develop a customized intervention. Students who have a specific learning disability in reading (dyslexia) need a specialized approach to reading instruction to make progress. It is crucial that this specialized instruction begin at the student's current level of reading skill development, rather than at the student's grade level. An effective evaluation helps parents and teachers see which specific skills are weak and where reading and spelling instruction should begin.

3. Documentation and Reporting

An effective evaluation results in specific documents that clearly explain how best to understand the child's struggles and how to help through intervention. Documentation is also essential to obtaining appropriate special provisions and educational adjustments.

What should be assessed?

In addition to general development, educational history, cognitive ability, strengths and hereditary information it is more important to focus an evaluation on all essential components of the reading process

They are:

- Oral language skills and vocabulary
- Phonological awareness, phonological memory, and rapid naming
- Word reading, decoding, reading rate and fluency
- Spelling and encoding
- Reading comprehension
- Working memory

The following 6 components are considered for comprehensive literacy development.

- Phonemic Awareness.
- Phonics Instruction.
- Vocabulary.
- Fluency.
- Comprehension.
- Writing.

What to Expect from Literacy Care

Assessment, Evaluation and Reporting takes place over two appointments:

First Appointment: History and background are collected and assessment with the child is undertaken. Parents and child attend this consultation. The entire process takes between 90 and 120 minutes

Second Appointment: Only parents attend this appointment. The diagnostic report and intervention plan are presented for parent's consideration

There will be very few unanswered questions at the end of the Assessment process. Management options and a proposed plan will be fully documented for you at the second appointment. Information about remedial action, participation of other professionals, achievement outcomes, length of treatment, liaison with school, report writing and fees will all be included in the documentation.

Please give at least 24 hours notice if you cannot keep your appointment.