

Specific Learning Disabilities Information Sheet Information Processing Assessment Tools

Note: In response to multiple requests from the field, the SLD Assessment Advisory Committee developed the following information sheet to assist evaluation teams in making information-processing decisions.

Some standardized evaluation instruments used in special education evaluations for a suspected learning disability may help establish a pattern of information processing conditions and may support information gathered from observations, interviews, and/or checklists. It is always important to gather information from more than one source to document a pattern of information processing difficulty. The SLD Assessment Advisory developed the following list of instruments that may be helpful for local evaluation teams. The listed instruments may be used in their entirety or may be used by examining selective subtests and scales that specifically assess the information-processing component that the team is documenting. Since subtest scores are typically not as reliable or valid as scale/cluster/factor scores, caution in their interpretation is critical. For example, a single subtest score would be insufficient evidence for documenting an information processing condition; supplementary documentation through observation and other sources would also be necessary.

Interpretation of specific scores related to information processing components should follow the guideline of “average” falling between +/-1 standard deviations from the mean of the test used. The more such a score deviates from this range, the more likely an information processing condition exists. Many students have weaknesses in information processing; however, an assessment for SLD requires documentation that the information processing condition significantly impacts learning. Obtained scores from standardized measures can be recorded on the IP Standardized Test Grid (SLD Companion Manual, p. 6-27) and on the IP Assessment Interpretation worksheet (SLD Companion Manual, 6-29) to assist evaluation teams in integrating all evaluation information.

Most testing companies have a Level of Qualification System in place limiting access to certain types of tests, and in order to administer any of the tests on the following list, specific training and education are required. In the case of the Psychological Corporation, the levels are listed as A, B, and C level tests and may be labeled differently in other testing companies. However, the general requirements are similar.

For all tests: An individual must show verification or certification by an agency recognized by the Psychological Corporation to require training and expertise in a relevant area of assessment consistent with the expectations outlined in the *1985 Standards for Educational and Psychological Testing* for access to the instruments.

For B Level Tests: Verification of a Master's level degree in Psychology or Education or the equivalent in a related field with relevant training in assessment or verification of membership in, or certification by a professional organization recognized by the Psychological Corporation to require training and experience in a relevant area of assessment consistent with the expectations outlined in the *1985 Standards for Educational and Psychological Testing*.

For Level C Tests: Verification of a Ph.D. level degree in Psychology or Education or the equivalent in a related field with relevant training in assessment or verification of licensure or certification by an agency recognized by the Psychological Corporation to require training and experience in a relevant area of assessment consistent with the expectations outlined in *1985 Standards for Educational and Psychological Testing*.

The Psychological Corporation 2003 Catalogue (p. 92)

Evaluation Tools for IP

C Level Tests require advanced degrees and specific assessment training. See information above.

California Verbal Learning Test – Children's Version (1994). The Psychological Corporation

Age: 5-16.

IP area(s): Storage, Retrieval

Task: Recall a list after interference task. Free recall and cued recall, immediate and delayed

Time to administer: 15-20 minutes, plus 20 minute delay

Children's Memory Scale (1997). The Psychological Corporation

Age: 5-16.

IP area(s): Acquisition, Storage, Retrieval

Task: Verbal and visual immediate and delayed memory, both recall and recognition. Learning scale as well

Time to administer: 20-25 minutes, plus 30 minutes later, delayed 5-10 minutes

Weschler Memory Scale (1997). The Psychological Corporation

Age: 16-adult

IP area(s): Acquisition, Storage, Retrieval

Task: Verbal and visual immediate and delayed memory, both recall and recognition. Learning scale as well

Time to administer: 20-25 minutes, plus 30 minutes later, delayed 5-10 minutes

****Weschler Intelligence Scale for Children PI (1999). The Psychological Corporation**

Age: 6-16.11

IP area(s): All

Task: Additional Processing subtests

Time to administer: Standard administration time for the WISC plus additional tests administered

Differential Abilities Scales (1990). The Psychological Corporation

Age: 2.6-17.11

IP area(s): Acquisition, Storage, Retrieval

Task: Subtests that are helpful in diagnosis of PI: visual immediate and delayed memory, auditory memory immediate, speed of information processing.

Time to administer: full cognitive battery 45-65 minutes (achievement scales 15-25 minutes)

NEPSY (Neuropsychological Assessment) (1997). The Psychological Corporation

Age: 3-12

IP area(s): Storage, Acquisition, Organization, Retrieval, Manipulation

Task: attention/executive functioning, phonological processing, visuo/spatial processing, memory and learning

Time to administer: core assessment 45-65 minutes depending on age, Full battery 1-2 hours depending on age

Wide Range Assessment of Memory and Learning (WRAML) (1990). The Psychological Corporation

Age: 5-17

IP area(s): Storage, Acquisition, Retrieval

Task: verbal and visual memory and learning

Time to administer: 45-60 minutes

Cognitive Assessment System (CAS) (1997) Riverside Publishing Company

Age: 5-17

IP area(s): Organization, Manipulation, Acquisition

Task: Based on PASS Theory (Planning, Attention, Simultaneous Processing and Sequential Processing)

Time to administer: 45 minutes for standard administration

Woodcock Johnson III – Tests of Cognitive Abilities (2001). Riverside Publishing Company

Age: 3-100

IP area(s): Storage, Acquisition, Organization, Retrieval, Expression, Manipulation

Task: Clusters/Factors which would identify IP include working memory, cognitive efficiency, phonemic awareness, thinking ability, auditory processing, processing speed, attention, short and long term memory, executive processes, visual spatial thinking and cognitive fluency
Time to administer: 45-50 for standard battery, full extended battery 90 Minutes

Test of Memory and Learning (TOMAL) (1994). AGS Publishing

Age: 5-19

IP area(s): Storage, Acquisition, Retrieval

Task: Evaluates general and specific memory functions, verbal and nonverbal, immediate and delayed, attention, etc.

Time to administer: 45 minutes

Delis-Kaplan Executive Function System (2001) The Psychological Corporation

Age: 8-adult

IP area(s): Organization, Manipulation, Expression

Task: executive functioning: flexibility of thinking, inhibition, problem solving, planning, impulse control, concept formation, abstract thinking, and creativity in verbal and spatial modalities

Time to administer: Nine stand alone tests, 90 minutes if all are administered

B Level Tests These instruments can be administered by trained licensed special education professionals.

Process Assessment of the Learner (PAL): Test Battery for Reading and Writing (2000). The Psychological Corporation

Age: Grades K-6

IP area(s): Acquisition, Expression, Manipulation

Task: Phonological processing, orthographic coding, rapid automatized naming, integration of skills

Time to administer: 30-60 minutes for complete battery

Comprehensive Test of Phonological Processing (1999) ProEd

Age: 5-24

IP area(s): Storage, Acquisition, Expression, Retrieval,

Task: Phonological awareness and memory, rapid naming

Time to administer: 30 minutes

Learning Disabilities Diagnostic Inventory (1998) ProEd

Age: 8-17

IP area(s): All (A comprehensive set of 15 tests)

Task: Aids in the identification of intrinsic processing disorders and learning disabilities

Time to administer: 10-20 minutes

Test of Phonological Awareness (1994). ProEd

Age: Grades K-2

IP area(s): Acquisition

Task: Awareness of individual sounds in words

Time to administer: 20 minutes

SCAN-C Test for Auditory Processing Disorders in Children – Revised (1999). The Psychological Corporation

Age: 5-11

IP area(s): Acquisition

Task: identify auditory processing difficulties

Time to administer: 30 minutes

Behavior Rating Inventory of Executive Function (BRIEF) (2000). Psychological Assessment Resources, Inc

Age: 5-18

IP area(s): Retrieval, Organization, Storage

Task: Parent and Teacher questionnaire, which includes two validity scales: evaluates working memory, plan/organize/organization of materials, initiate, monitor, inhibit, and shift

Time to administer: 10–15 minutes

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