

Introduction

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If your child is struggling in school, you need to find out why. If you are concerned about your child's learning, academic progress, social skills, or behavior, a comprehensive assessment will identify the nature of his problems and help you develop a plan.

If your child has a disability, you need objective information about his strengths, weaknesses, and needs before making decisions about his educational program. You will find this information in the tests and assessments completed on your child.

If you are like most people, you have questions about tests. How do tests measure skills? What do the test scores mean? Should you request specific tests?



All About Tests and Assessments

You will find answers to many of your questions in *Wrightslaw: All About Tests and Assessments*. Some answers may surprise you.

“My third grader struggles to read. His grades have dropped. The school is threatening to retain him. Does he have a learning disability?”

“When the school tested my child with an intelligence test, he earned an IQ score of 65 (1st percentile). His team says that he cannot learn to read. Is this true?”

“My 18-year-old has autism and Down syndrome. She reads at the second grade level. Are there tests that can be used to assess a child with severe intellectual disabilities?”

“What are the legal requirements for the transition assessment process?”

“My child’s written work is full of spelling errors. I don’t know if her problems are due to a learning disability or lack of teaching. Can I request that the school evaluate her?”

“My child was tested on two tests and earned different scores. Which test should we rely on?”

What is in This Book?

In *Wrightslaw: All About Tests and Assessments*, you will learn how to prepare for an assessment and what a comprehensive assessment should include.

You will learn how to request an evaluation by the school and how to provide parental consent. You will learn the steps to determine if a child is eligible for special education services.

You will find charts of tests and skills. The charts list tests to evaluate specific problems, the skills your child needs in these areas, and shows which tests measure these skills.

We introduce you to test terms because you need to be familiar with these terms. Our goal is to demystify tests and assessments and make them less intimidating.

As you read these questions and answers, you may feel like you are having a conversation with Pete, Pam, and Melissa. When you read a question that captures your interest, you wonder what advice we will give.

You will learn two important realities about tests and assessments. First, a test may not measure what it appears to measure. Second, a test may not measure your child’s skills comprehensively.

You will learn that your child’s test scores do not tell the whole story. Small differences between tests can result in large differences in scores.

How the Book is Organized

The questions and scenarios in *Wrightslaw: All About Tests and Assessment* are organized by topic into fifteen chapters. The book includes more than 200 questions and answers, including these:

- How are neuropsychological evaluations different from psycho-educational evaluations? Who does these assessments? (Chapter 1 – So Your Think Your Child Needs an Evaluation?)
- A school psychologist evaluated my child. The evaluation report did not include any recommendations. Shouldn't an evaluation include recommendations? (Chapter 2 – Evaluations by the School)
- What is a stanine? What is a standard deviation? Can I use age- and grade-equivalent scores to measure my child's progress? (Chapter 3 – Making Sense of Your Child's Test Scores)
- My daughter has autism and weak oral language skills. Can we get an accurate picture of her intelligence? (Chapter 4 – Intellectual Evaluations and IQ Testing)
- My son is in the first grade. He struggles to read. How can his scores on the Standardized Reading Inventory, Second Edition, be in the average range? (Chapter 6 – Reading Assessments)
- My child struggles with writing and spelling. What should an assessment of written language include? (Chapter 7 – Writing and Spelling Assessments)
- What role does working memory play in difficulties with math? (Chapter 8 – Mathematics and Math Assessments)
- My first grader's speech is difficult to understand. Is he too young to be tested? (Chapter 9 – Speech and Language Assessments)
- My son is bright but he has always struggled to learn in school. Should I have him evaluated for a learning disability? (Chapter 10 – Evaluations for Learning Disabilities and Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorders (ADHD))
- An audiologist advised us that our daughter has a mild-to-moderate hearing loss. Should we be concerned? (Chapter 11 – Assessments of Hearing, Vision, and Motor Skills)
- My daughter has difficulty remembering and following directions. Her doctor says she needs to be tested for an auditory processing disorder. What do I need to know? (Chapter 12 – Auditory, Visual, Visual-Motor, and Sensory Processing Assessments)
- What does a behavior specialist look for when conducting a Functional Behavior Assessment (FBA)? (Chapter 13 – Adaptive Behavior and Functional Behavior Assessments)
- What tests should be included in my child's transition assessment? (Chapter 14 – Transition Assessments)
- Since few tests are available to measure the skills of ELLs, can an evaluator use tests that were standardized on English-speaking children? (Chapter 15 – Assessing English Language Learners (ELLs))

Wrightslaw: All About Tests and Assessment includes recommended resources, a glossary of assessment terms, a master table of tests

All About Tests and Assessments

with test name, age range, type of test, author, publisher, publisher website, and a comprehensive index.

Who Should Read This Book?

If you are a parent, you need to be an effective advocate for your child. To be an effective advocate, you must become an expert on your child and how he learns.

You need to learn about psychological and academic tests, their strengths and weaknesses, and what different tests measure. Depending on your child's difficulties, you may need to learn about speech-language, physical and occupational therapy, processing, adaptive behavior, and/or functional behavior assessments.

You also need to learn how to use test scores to monitor your child's progress or regression.

If are a teacher or a related service provider, you may receive confusing information about your students' test results. You need to learn how to find accurate, reliable information about the tests and assessments used with your students.

If you teach special education, school psychology, school administration, or education law courses, your students need to know how to find answers to their questions about what the law requires of them.

If you are an attorney or advocate who represents children with disabilities, you need to have a copy of *Wrightslaw: All About Tests and Assessments* on your desk and in your briefcase.

How to Use This Book

At the end of each chapter are endnotes. The endnotes are the authority we relied upon in our answers. When you take this book to school meetings (and we hope you will), you will know the law, regulation, article, or publication that supports each answer.

Federal laws and regulations are the minimum standards that public schools must comply with. Compliance with the law is not optional.

Updates: New editions of tests are published often. The legal requirements for evaluations may change in the future. Updates will be published here: www.wrightslaw.com/bks/aat/updates.htm

What This Book is Not About

Wrightslaw: All About Tests and Assessments is a book of frequently asked questions, not an encyclopedia of every question a parent, teacher, or advocate may have. The book is not primarily about eligibility or how to measure your child's educational progress. We expect to publish books on those topics in the future.

Are You Ready?

It's time to learn about tests and assessments. Grab your pen or highlighter and turn this page.