



Psychological Assessments in the Central Remedial Clinic – a guide for parents and carers

A psychological assessment helps us to learn more about your child's thinking, learning and behaviour.

Parents and carers sometimes have concerns about their child's psychological assessment. We have tried below to answer the questions that our psychologists get asked most frequently before parents and carers bring their child for an assessment.

If you need to know more, please contact us by phoning the main CRC reception at 01-8542200.

What is included in an assessment?

Your child's assessment might include

- Interviews
- Observation
- Testing
- Consultation with other professionals involved in your child's care

The assessment will include pencil and paper tasks, puzzles, drawing, and games. It might cover areas such as

- General intellectual level
- Language
- Memory and learning
- Problem solving
- Planning and organisation
- Fine motor skills
- Visual spatial skills
- Academic skills (reading, maths, spelling and writing).

It might also include an examination of attention, behaviour, social skills, emotions and other factors which may be important to your child's well-being.

Why have an assessment?

A psychological assessment is helpful in identifying your child's strengths and difficulties. It may help us to recommend treatment to help with any behavioural or educational difficulties your child has. By detecting problems, an assessment can be used

- To assist in planning your child's school programme
- To identify needs for resources and special services in school
- To help you access resources in your community

How should I prepare my child?

It is important you talk to your child about what will happen before the assessment. Your child will feel less anxious when s/he knows what to expect. Be sure your child understands that there will be no physical exam, no needles and no medicine.

For younger children, you may wish to emphasize the play part, focusing on puzzles and games.

For older children or teenagers, it is often helpful to describe both games and school-type work, but there are no marks or grades given.

How should I ensure that my child performs his best?

Most psychological assessments for young children are scheduled during the morning or early afternoon when children are at their best. If you receive an appointment that is scheduled at a time when you feel your child will seriously under-perform, please contact our psychology department to discuss this.

If your child has recently been sick, undergone surgery or is experiencing significant difficulties in sleeping, it is important to contact the psychology department as soon as possible before the scheduled appointment to discuss how this might affect his or her performance.

What should I bring on the day of my child's assessment?

If your child wears glasses or a hearing aid, please make sure to bring these to the assessment. For children who are non-verbal or who use a wheelchair, please bring any technological aids that would make them feel more comfortable and enable them to do their best during the assessment.

If possible, bring copies of recent report cards and reports of any previous assessments, such as from another psychologist or therapist. If your child has an Individual Education Plan (IEP) from his or her school, please bring a copy of this as well.

Will I be permitted or required to remain with my child during the assessment?

Parents and carers usually remain with pre-school children during the assessment. They are important in reassuring and helping the child to settle in to the assessment, giving praise when the child is working well and motivating the child to continue if he or she begins to get distracted. Parents and carers know better than anyone how to motivate their own child to do their best.

For older children it is sometimes recommended that the parents and carers do not remain in the room. This is because sometimes children feel self-conscious if their parents and carers are observing them, which can effect performance. It is often useful if the parent and carer stays close by during the assessment in case we need to contact you.

If you have strong feelings as to whether your presence will help or hold back your child's performance, the psychologist will be interested to hear your views.

Are there different kinds of assessments?

Different assessments focus on different things, such as:

- Memory and learning
- Language or academic development
- Behavioural and emotional development

The type of assessment your child will receive will be directly related to the referral letter that the psychologist has received. This referral letter will contain the reason that your child has been referred to the psychology department.

If you are unclear why your child has been referred, it is a good idea to ask the psychologist for the reason behind the assessment when you receive your appointment. He or she will be happy to discuss this with you and to listen to your views.

What if I have concerns about the assessment?

It is common for parents and carers to have some concerns before a psychological assessment. These may include a concern that the results of the assessment will be circulated without your permission, or that you will not receive sufficient feedback on the assessment. It is a good idea to discuss these concerns with the psychologist. The psychologist will be able to answer your questions and to reassure you about the assessment process.

It is the CRC policy that permission is obtained from parents and carers prior to any report being circulated outside of the Clinic.

Within the psychology department, there is a policy that if the child being assessed attends mainstream school, the report is provided to parents and carers and not forwarded to the school. While we recommend that the psychology report is shared with the school principal and school teacher, this is the parents' and carers' decision.

What can I expect after the assessment is completed?

Your psychologist will meet with you for feedback to discuss your child's results. Sometimes feedback is offered on the same day as the assessment, sometimes it takes place at a later date.

In most cases with younger children, feedback sessions are for parents only, but if your child is older, you may wish to include him or her in the discussion. On some occasions, feedback can be given over the phone.

A written report will be completed, outlining the results of the assessment and the recommendations. You will receive a copy of this report, a copy is placed on your child's medical chart and a copy is sent to the person who referred your child in the first place.

With your written permission, copies of the report can be sent to professionals involved with your child such as other therapists, or your child's school. If you have any concerns in the future, we will remain available to you and your child.