

What happens after my child's assessment has been completed?

The psychology staff who completed the assessment will meet with you to go over the results of the assessment, and answer any further questions that you have. He/she can also meet with your child to share the results with them. We also meet with your child's teacher and any other relevant staff, to discuss the results and to develop recommendations designed to provide a more effective program for your child. The results and recommendations are then written up in a formal report.

Where does the report go?

The original report is retained in your child's confidential psychology file. One copy of the report goes into your child's Ontario School Record (OSR) to assist educators in developing an effective educational plan. A copy also goes into Central Special Services Files at the Catholic Education Centre. Access to these files is restricted to only those staff who are involved with your child's educational program. If you wish, a copy of our report will be sent to you.

Is my child's information shared with anyone else?

Information from a psychological assessment is shared only with those Dufferin-Peel staff members who are involved with your child's educational program. We will not release information about your child to anyone outside the Board, without your written permission.

Psychological Assessment

Psychology staff are available to meet with teachers, principals, and parents regarding any students who are experiencing academic, behavioral, social, or emotional problems. In a typical school year, over 2,000 students within our school board are referred for psychological services. A few meetings and some discussion may be all that is required to find ways to help some students. In other situations, it may be helpful to obtain more information from a full psychological assessment, and this process is described in the following sections.

How to contact us

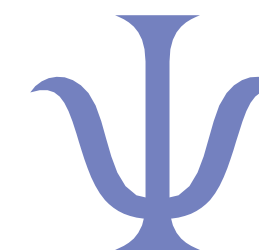
A member of the psychology staff is assigned to each school and may be contacted through the school or the board's Psychology Department.

For further information, contact:

Dufferin-Peel Catholic District School Board
Chief Psychologist
40 Matheson Boulevard West
Mississauga, ON L5R 1C5
Tel: 905-890-0708 ext. 4330
Toll Free: 1-800-387-9501
Email: Debra.Lean@dpcdsb.org
Website: www.dpcdsb.org/psych

PARENT GUIDE

Psychological Assessment: Frequently Asked Questions



Why has my child been referred for a psychological assessment?

Typically, your child's teacher has been in contact with you to discuss your child's particular needs. To provide the best program for your child, his/her teacher may have tried different teaching strategies and approaches. If these strategies are not producing the desired results, a parent, or the teacher may request a psychological assessment through the school principal. A psychological assessment helps you and the teacher better understand your child's learning styles, academic skills, behaviour patterns, or emotional development. This information can be used to develop additional strategies to help your child reach his/her potential.

Who will assess my child?

All members of our psychology staff have specialized post graduate training in child and adolescent development, learning processes, emotional development, and psychological health. Each of our staff are assigned to work in several schools, and are able to develop positive working relationships with each school staff. Our goal is to work together with teachers, parents, and other members of the school special services team (e.g., special education resource teacher, speech and language pathologist, social worker, etc.) to help students in their schools.

What is involved in a psychological assessment?

Once your child has been referred for a psychological assessment, the psychology staff member will contact you to discuss the nature of the assessment, the implications, the steps involved, and the follow-up. After we obtain your verbal consent, you are then sent a referral and consent form to sign for your written permission.

Once we have received your permission to proceed, information is gathered from many sources including:

- discussions with teachers, parents, and special services staff
- information from other professionals outside of the school Board who the family feels will have relevant information, is obtained with written parental permission
- observation of the student in the classroom with their peers
- discussion with the student regarding areas of strengths and difficulties
- observations made during the assessment process regarding the student's approach to a variety of tasks, and problem solving styles
- administration of a number of tests which may include: measures of intellectual ability, information processing skills, attention and concentration, evaluation of reading, writing and mathematics skills, learning styles, and emotional and behavioural development.

The psychological assessment is done with your child on an individual basis. Before giving any test, we take the time to get to know your child, and to explain why we are meeting with them. It has been our experience that most students find the assessment interesting and enjoyable.

How do I prepare my child for the assessment?

The first step is for both you and your child to have a positive attitude toward the assessment. Children usually enjoy the testing as the tasks are interesting and challenging, and the child has the undivided attention of an adult, who provides a great deal of support and encouragement. Even after the assessment has been completed, many students ask if they can come back and continue the testing process. Parental support in the process is very important. Parents can explain the need for testing by saying something like:

"You know that we have been talking about your problems with reading, Mr. Smith from the psychology department, will begin working with you to find out what will help you to learn to read better."

or

"The nice thing about doing this assessment, is that there is nothing you have to study or prepare for. It is not like a test at school; it won't go on your report card. These measures give information that helps teachers understand the best ways to help students learn."

Will my child feel singled out?

Students do not usually feel singled out. Psychology staff are seen as part of the school staff, and are visible in the school. In every classroom there are a number of students who leave the class for parts of their program, for a variety of different reasons.

How long does a psychological assessment take?

Students are usually seen over several sessions to avoid fatigue and to allow for optimal performance. The assessment process is individualized and allows for opportunity to meet the specific needs of each child. For example, if a child is distracted or not motivated, the examiner can change tasks or stop the assessment for the day. Since we are working in several schools, the time to complete an assessment may vary. Before we begin to work with a student, we need three to four hours to talk with teachers, parents, review previous reports, look at samples of the student's work, and to observe the students in the classroom. A variety of tests are administered, and this can take up to ten hours. It will then take another 10-12 hours to score the tests, to provide feedback to parents, the student, and school staff who work directly with your child and write a report. Since we are working with several students simultaneously, it can take from two to four weeks before all phases of the assessment are complete. If you would like more specific information, please contact the psychology staff person assigned to your child's school.