

Typical Psychology Assessment Outcomes

- ❖ Profile of Strengths & Weaknesses: All psychology assessments provide an understanding of student strengths and weaknesses. A psychology assessment helps with program planning, by working with the student's areas of strength, and tailoring supports to target areas of need.
- ❖ Psychological assessments do not only involve tests, but a combination of observation, background information, interviews, and assessment. We determine how well students are functioning in a number of skill areas including:
 - Social-emotional
 - Executive function
 - Attention
 - Cognitive - thinking and reasoning
 - Learning and Memory
 - Visual-Motor Integration
 - Literacy
 - Numeracy
- ❖ It is important to note that while not all psychology assessments result in a formal diagnosis, many do. Some psychology assessments may result in more than one diagnosis. Whatever the outcome, a psychology assessment can help parents and educators understand a student better by providing a better understanding of the presenting problem(s), providing possible explanations for the problem behavior(s). This leads to effective program planning and tailoring supports to target areas of need. Their unique profile of strengths and weaknesses is also shared with the student allowing them to better understand their learning profile, and to understand how to self-advocate for their needs, thus improving self-esteem and emotional/mental well-being.
- ❖ As well, not all psychological assessments are able to recommend that the student be referred to an Identification, Placement and Review Committee for possible identification as an exceptional student. Some common outcomes including diagnoses and categories of exceptionality are listed below.
- ❖ Learning Disability: Learning Disabilities are neurological disorders affecting the way a student takes in, understands, remembers or expresses information which then significantly affects a student's achievement in one or more areas of reading, writing or mathematics. Typically students with this profile show evidence of at least broad average ability. Learning Disabilities can also impact a student's social interaction, behaviour and emotional well-being.

- ❖ **Intellectual Disability:** This diagnosis is characterized by both slow intellectual development, and limited functional independence skills (communication, social, daily living, community, personal care) relative to a student's chronological age. Students with this diagnosis typically follow an alternative and significantly modified academic curriculum. Students with Intellectual Disabilities are also at higher risk for emotional and behaviour difficulties.
- ❖ **Mental Health and Behaviour outcomes:** Psychology assessments can investigate and show evidence of anxiety, depression, impulsive behaviours, inattention, and aggressive behaviours. At times these difficulties may result in a formal diagnosis. Even if a formal diagnosis is not given, the psychological assessment will provide specific recommendations to help the student, their family, and the school deal with any mental health or behavioral challenges. Recognizing that the number of students with such challenges are increasing and the importance of early intervention, the Dufferin-Peel Psychology Department created a *Mental Health Psychology Team* focusing specifically on students with Mental Health difficulties.
- ❖ **Autism Spectrum Disorder:** This diagnosis is characterized by ongoing difficulties in social communication, interpersonal relationships, nonverbal communication, as well as well as restricted repetitive patterns of behavior, interest or activities, such as stereotyped movements, areas of intense interest, sensory sensitivities, and difficulties with changes to routines. Recognizing the increase in Autism in the general populations and the importance of early intervention, the Dufferin-Peel Psychology Department created a *Psychology Autism Consultation Service (PACS)* team focusing specifically on diagnostic issues related to Autism. Students diagnosed with ASD are at much higher risk of additional mental health and behaviour challenges.
- ❖ **Gifted:** A profile that does not result in a diagnosis but is characterized by an advanced level of intellectual ability, strong aptitude in particular academic and non-academic areas (not always reflected in high grades), and a need for differentiated programming and learning experiences.



Source: As per Ministry of Education Category and Definition - Jan. 1999 and DPCDSB expanded description

For further information, contact the current psychological consultant at your child's school, or Dr. Debra Lean, Chief Psychologist, at 905-890-0708, x24330.

