

Types of evaluations or assessments to determine if your child needs mental health support:

(Emergency) Psychiatric evaluation

This is needed when:

- A child/adolescent verbalizes suicidal/homicidal ideations with a plan and means to act, situations of self-harm, signs of psychosis, confusion, uncontrolled mania, and hallucinations or delusions
- A child/adolescent is showing serious emotional or behavioral problems
- To determine if symptoms have a physiological cause
- Medication is being considered as a treatment option

Who is it conducted by?

- In an ER – Licensed Clinical Social Worker/Counselor, Psychiatrist, Mental Health Clinician
- Child and Adolescent Psychiatrist

Important things to know about the psychiatric evaluation

- A psychiatric evaluation is specific. It focuses on mental illnesses, such as depression, anxiety, and psychotic disorders.
- Can be used to rule out potential of harm to self and others.
- A psychiatrist has specialized knowledge of medications for mental health problems and can give prescriptions if necessary
- Usually in ER - If needed, laboratory studies such as blood tests, x-rays or physical examination are ordered to rule out physical health problems as a cause of symptoms

Psychological evaluation

This is needed when:

- A child/adolescent is showing serious emotional or behavioral problems - used to diagnose a variety of mental health conditions or illnesses that impact memory, thought processes, and behaviors.
- A child's diagnosis is unclear or needs clarification

Who conducts this mental health assessment?

- Clinical Psychologist

What should I know about the psychological evaluation?

- A psychologist has specialized knowledge of children's mental health problems and treatment
- One-on-one testing with the child in office setting (i.e., intellectual, personality, information processing, memory and/or attention testing)

- Possible observation of the child's behavior at school

Psychoeducational evaluation

When is this needed?

- A child is having difficulty learning
- Eligibility for special education is being considered

Who conducts this evaluation?

- School, clinical or educational psychologist

What are the important things I should know about a psychoeducational evaluation?

- These professionals have specialized knowledge of how children learn and classroom interventions
- One-on-one testing with the child (i.e., intellectual, achievement, speech and language, information processing, attention and/or personality testing)
- Observation of the child's behavior in class
- A truly comprehensive evaluation takes at least 5-6 hours, often more.
- **Generally, this is not covered by insurance.**

Developmental evaluation

When is this needed?

- A young child (birth to 7 years) is not showing age appropriate skills or is not meeting developmental milestones
- Eligibility for special education is being considered

Who is this conducted by?

- Usually by a team that could include a psychologist, physician, speech/language pathologist, physical therapist, occupational therapist or nurse

What are the important things to know about the development evaluation?

- These professionals have specialized knowledge of child development
- One-on-one testing with the child (i.e., motor skills, communication, pre-academic skills, adaptive functioning)
- Observation of the child's behavior in the office and/or school

Neuropsychological evaluation

Why might my child need this?

- Child is experiencing problems with memory, attention, problem-solving and/or visual-motor functioning; used to determine the presence, nature, and severity of cognitive dysfunction.
- Child has a medical condition that may affect brain functioning (e.g., brain tumor, brain injury, cancer, epilepsy, etc.)

What mental health professional conducts this assessment?

- Neuropsychologist

What should I know about this evaluation?

- A neuropsychologist has specialized knowledge of brain functioning
- One-on-one testing with the child (e.g., intellectual, achievement, speech and language, information processing, attention, visual-motor and/or personality testing)

Psychosexual evaluation

This evaluation may be needed if:

- Sexual abuse perpetration is alleged or suspected
- Information is needed regarding child's risk of re-offending, need for supervision and/or treatment recommendations

Who conducts this evaluation?

- Clinical psychologist, usually with specialized training in sex offender management

What are important things you should know about this evaluation?

- This psychologist has specialized knowledge of sexual development and issues related to sexual abuse perpetration
- Interviews with caregiver and child focus more on a child's sexual development, sexual attitudes, sexual interests, and sexual behaviors
- One-on-one testing with the child (i.e., personality testing)

ADHD testing

[ADHD](#) testing is usually conducted through surveys with caregivers and teachers.

ADHD testing is typically needed when:

- Several symptoms present before age 12
- Symptoms are present in multiple settings (home, school, work)
- Symptoms interfere with or reduce daily functioning
- Symptoms are not better explained by another mental health condition

Who is the test conducted by?

- May be conducted by Primary Care Physicians, Psychologist, or Psychiatrist

What are important things to know about ADHD testing?

- This may be done in conjunction with other testing or as "stand-alone" testing when ADHD is suspected.

Individualized Education Plan testing (IEP)

When is this needed?

- A Child Study referral has been made to the child's school with concerns regarding educational performance

Who conducts this?

- Usually conducted by personnel from the child's school district.

What should I know about IEP testing?

- Actual testing completed may vary, based on the referral and the need.
- Can include psychological (IQ) testing, social history, educational testing, speech and language evaluation, and/or occupational therapy evaluation.
- After testing is completed, a meeting is held to determine whether child is eligible to receive special education services. If so, then an IEP is developed.