

## 5. EDUCATIONAL AND OTHER ASSESSMENTS

### *Purpose of the Standard*

*To provide details of the board's assessment policies and procedures to the ministry and to make parents aware of the types of assessment tools used by the school board, the ways in which assessments are obtained by IPRC's, and the ways in which assessments are used.*

### **Speech and Language Assessments**

#### Qualifications

All speech and language pathologists hired by the board are required to have obtained a Master's degree and are registered with the College of Audiologists and Speech-Language Pathologists of Ontario. They are governed by the Regulated Health Professions Act 1993.

#### Waiting Lists

Individual schools may keep informal waiting lists. These are reviewed and prioritized regularly through the in-school review committee. Informed consent is required for assessments by the speech and language pathologists. Once received, an assessment is to be acted on within 30 days.

#### Types of Assessment Tools

Included is a chart summarizing the types of assessment used to gather information around a child's strengths and needs in the speech/language area.

### **Psychoeducational Assessments**

#### Qualifications

The Psychology Department is staffed by Psychoeducational Consultants who hold a master's or doctoral level degree and may be members of the College of Psychologists of Ontario.

#### Waiting Lists

Waiting lists for psychological assessment are managed at the school level through the ISRC. It is difficult, if not impossible, to estimate the "average" waiting time for a psychoeducational assessment to be completed because the school is constantly prioritizing and re-prioritizing its waitlist, depending on the relative needs of the students on the waitlist. However, a wait of a year or more can happen if the student's needs are considered relatively moderate, OR a child may be seen immediately if, for example, they move into the school from out of the region or enter Kindergarten and present with severe learning needs. Each school manages its own waiting list and two types of waitlists of referrals are usually generated... first, the "live" referral waitlist is the list of children whose parents have already signed consent for the assessment and an actual referral (i.e., paperwork) has been initiated and completed by the school and a psychology file has been opened by the Psychoeducational Consultant. Informed consent is required and once received, an assessment is to be acted on within 30 days. (see Instructions for Ensuring Informed Consent - included)

Schools also keep a second waitlist, a "ghost" waitlist which is a list of students who require assessment (as determined through discussions at the school's In-School Review Committee/ISRC), but for whom the formal parent consent and formal referral process have not yet been initiated. Students on both the "live" and the "ghost" waitlists can be re-prioritized at the direction of the school's ISRC, depending on the needs of the individual students.

#### Types of Assessment Tools

A psychoeducational assessment may involve the gathering and integration of background information about the student and the administration of psychological and/or educational tests. The procedure could include assessment of a variety of skills which are considered necessary or important for being successful at school, including learning (cognitive) abilities, academic achievement, learning style and, if appropriate, more specific areas such as attention, visual-spatial skills, memory and/or social-emotional/behavioural adjustment. The specific tests used are determined by the Psychoeducational Consultant at the time of testing, based on his/her professional judgement and the needs of the student.

#### Parental Consent for Speech/Language and/or Psychoeducational Assessments

Prior to an assessment being initiated, the school will have obtained written parental consent for the assessment. Further, before the Psychoeducational Consultant or Speech/Language Pathologist begins the assessment he/she will contact the parent to ensure that informed consent has been obtained and to explain the assessment process further and answer any parent questions, as well as to gain background health/developmental information, etc., about the student. The Peel District School Board requires informed consent for psychological and speech and language services. The operating procedure Special Education Support Services 2 delineates the requirements for obtaining parental consent prior to conducting an assessment, an explanation of how results of assessments are communicated to parents, protocols for sharing information with staff and outside agencies and an explanation of how the privacy of information is protected. (parental consent and SEPS 2 are included)

#### Communication of Results

Parents are informed at the time of initial contact by the Psychoeducational Consultant and/or Speech and Language Pathologist that, at the conclusion of the assessment process, the parent will be invited to come into the school to meet with the Psychoeducational Consultant and/or Speech and Language Pathologist and school personnel so that the assessment results may be explained in detail and so that the parent will have an opportunity to ask any questions that they may have at that time. The parents are also informed that, at the time of the parent interview, they will receive a copy of the assessment report. The parent is also strongly encouraged to contact the Psychoeducational Consultant and/or Speech and Language Pathologist should they have any further questions at a later date

#### Protocols for the Sharing of Information

With the written consent of the parents, and at their request, the Psychoeducational and or Speech and Language Assessment report will be or other boards of education. (see Instructions for Ensuring Informed Consent - included)

### Protection of Privacy

The information gathered by the Psychoeducational Consultant and the Speech and Language Pathologists is confidential. The copy housed in the OSR is protected in the school setting so that no-one, except school personnel directly involved with the student, may view the OSR without written parental consent. Psychology files are housed at each Field Office in a hanging pendaflex file together with the Social Work and Speech and Language files, if such exist. These files are kept in secure, lockable filing cabinets in a secure section of the Field Office. A summary of each Psychoeducational Assessment report is recorded in the electronic Student Information System of the Peel Board; these, too, are secure files such that only appropriate school personnel may obtain access to this information.

### Teacher Assessment

A variety of assessment tools are used by teachers on an ongoing basis. Teacher assessment is a continuous process and therefore specific consent is not required. In the support document "Guide to Educational Assessment" a chart outlines the standardized achievement tests recommended for teacher use. ( guide is included)

### Regional Testing Program

Each spring the Peel District School Board conducts a region-wide standardized testing program. The Canadian Test of Cognitive Abilities (CCAT) and the Canadian Achievement Test (CAT) are administered. The results are used primarily for program planning, however; the results may also be used to identify students who require more individualized assessments or as part of the data used for purposes of identification and placement by IPRC's. (additional information is included The Regional Testing Program)

### Assessment of ESL/ESD Students

For ESL/ESD students who have been in the board fewer than four years and who have demonstrated possible exceptional needs, the operating procedure Special Education Support Services 7 outlines the process of observation and assessment to be followed. (SEPS 7 is included.)

### Inclusions

1. A description of assessments used by IPRC's from the board's "Criteria for Identification and Placement of Exceptional Students" which is available to parents as indicated on the Parent Fact Sheet "Getting to Know Special Education Programs and Services".
2. Speech Language Pathology Guideline for the Use of Assessment Sources for Special Education Criteria
3. Speech Language Pathology Examples of Assessment Sources for Special Education Criteria
4. Instructions for Ensuring Informed Consent for the Release of Confidential Information
5. Consent to the Release of Confidential Information
6. Special Education Support Services 2: Psychological Services/Speech and Language Pathology Services and Related Reports

7. Parental Consent for Speech/Language Assessment/Service
8. Parental Consent for Psychoeducational Assessment/Service
9. A Guide to Educational Assessments for IPRCs
10. The Regional Testing Program
11. Special Education Support Services 7: Assessment of ESL/ESD Students with Possible Exceptional Needs
12. Parent Brochure: "If your child needs support in school then..."