



A Guide for Parents and Students

ASSESSMENT

April 2016

Source: Learning For All, Ontario Ministry of Education, 2013

Purposes of Assessment

Classroom Assessment is an on-going process!

The primary purpose of assessment is to improve student learning and functioning within classroom and school environments. Assessment may therefore:

- Specify and verify a student's strengths and needs;
- Determine particular interventions that may be necessary for the student to gain access to opportunities for achieving desired outcomes. Assessment may also help to inform decisions about programs suitable to a student's learning needs.

Psycho-Educational Assessment

- Teachers often refer students who are exhibiting difficulties at school for a psychological assessment. The most common reasons for referring students for a psychological assessment are that they are having difficulty acquiring age-appropriate academic skills, or controlling their behaviour.
- The purpose of a psychological assessment is to determine a learning profile of the student. The learning profile is a description of strengths and needs. With this understanding, Psychological Services staff can make recommendations to the school staff and parents about ways to help the child. Recommendations often include teaching and learning strategies, curriculum areas to reinforce, language and learning skills to teach, and behaviours to target for change.
- The Ministry of Education has set out requirements for conducting psychological assessments within school boards in its [Policy/Program Memorandum No. 59](#)

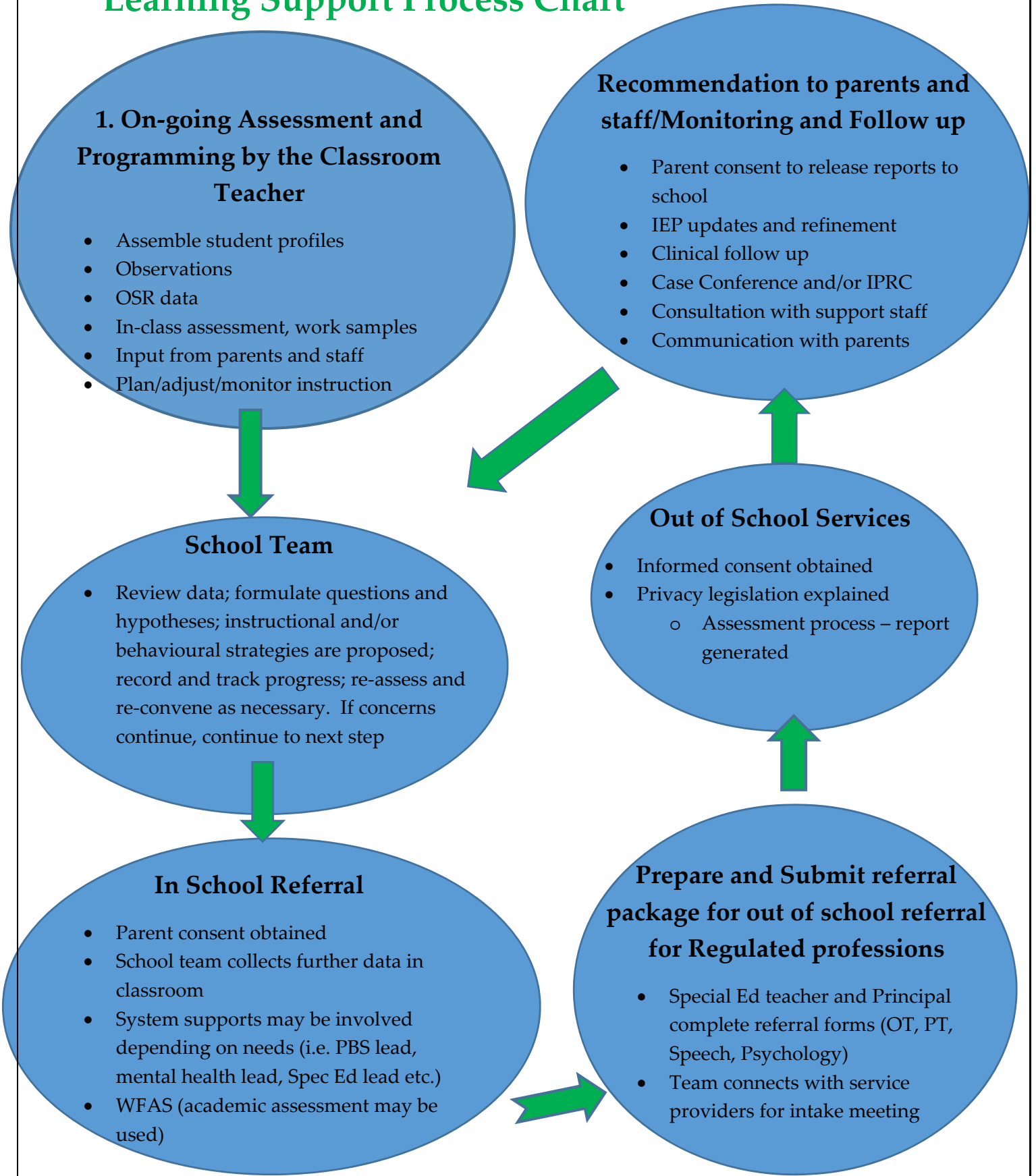
Sources of information for a psychological assessment include:

1. A review of the student's educational history from the Ontario Student Record (OSR);
2. A review of the student's developmental history, provided by parent/guardian;
3. The teacher's description of the student's difficulty;
4. The parents' or guardians' understanding of the student's difficulty;
5. Test of intellectual or cognitive ability
6. Tests of specific processes, such as visual-perceptual skills, auditory skills, and memory;
7. Tests of academic achievement;
8. Tests of social and emotional functioning;
9. Measures of personality and self-esteem;
10. Discussion with the student on his or her perspective on the problem
11. Behavioural rating forms completed by the child's teacher and parent(s) to examine for behavioural, attentional or emotional difficulties.

Speech-Language Assessment

- Speech-Language assessments are completed by Speech-Language Pathologists. They are members of the College of Audiologists and Speech-Language Pathologists of Ontario and are regulated health professionals.
- Referrals for assessment are made by the school team when questions and concerns arise about student speech and language skills. Speech-Language Pathologists develop programs to help remediate and build articulation and/or language skills.
- Programming may occur within the regular classroom or, where indicated, might be carried out by Speech-Language Assistants under the direction of the Speech-Language Pathologist.

Learning Support Process Chart



Key Terms

Adaptive: Adaptive behaviour includes the age-appropriate behaviours necessary for people to live independently and to function safely and appropriately in daily life. It can be thought of as a sort of "practical intelligence." It is usually measured by scales that identify how well a person manages within his or her own environment.

Cognitive: All the mental activities linked to thinking, knowing, and remembering. A term which refers to reasoning or intellectual capacity.

Criterion Referenced: A test that is designed to measure that a person has reached a pre-determined level of performance or competence. Example: EQAO tests.

Diagnostic: In general, diagnostic is a term used when one is using information to clarify characteristics about a person. In education, informal diagnostic testing occurs when a teacher is using information obtained during in-class testing to determine a student's learning needs. For regulated health professionals (i.e., medical doctors, psychologists) diagnostic refers to the process of identifying a condition, disorder or disease from its signs and symptoms. This leads to a medical diagnosis. When a qualified professional diagnoses a child, he or she looks at the signs or symptoms the child displays, such as various behaviours, ways of communicating, or thoughts that a child may have.

Norm Referenced: A test that has been given to a very large group or groups of people. A score obtained by one person taking the test can be compared to scores from the "norming group". This allows test administrators to make statements about how a person's abilities (or achievement, or behaviour, etc.) compare to those of people who are of similar ages/ grades. Ex. CCAT; Most Psycho-educational and Speech-Language tests.

Profiles: The classroom teacher is responsible for meeting the learning needs of his or her students. Effective instruction begins with an understanding of the needs of the learners. The teacher needs to know about both the needs of the entire class as a group, and the needs of individual students. If a child is demonstrating difficulties in school, it is important to identify the causes and take appropriate steps to alleviate them. This can lead to informal diagnostic testing.

Standardized: Tests that are made to be given and scored in a consistent and objective way. In order to compare one person's performance on a test to another person's performance on a test, it is important that people take the test under the same conditions, and that the same scoring procedure is applied in every case. Example: EQAO; CCAT; Psychoeducational and Speech-Language tests.