

## Being Referred to a District Psychologist Parent Information

### **General Information**

Students are referred to the district psychologist when teachers observe a student experiencing academic, or emotional/behavioural challenges.

Prior to this referral, schools have already completed academic assessments and observations. These results provide useful information for program planning, but may not be all of the information needed to address your child's learning needs or emotional/behavioural challenges.

### **Referral**

When referring a student, the school follows a specific referral process. This process starts with the classroom teacher seeking to identify your child's strengths and areas of challenge. This process may include observations, conversations and the use of a variety of strategies. Teachers usually consult with colleagues regarding strategies that may assist your child.

When current differentiation strategies and accommodations are not effectively addressing your child's needs, the classroom teacher requests a meeting with the school learning support team to seek further expertise. The learning support team includes the school administrator, the learning support teacher, the classroom teacher and possibly other support personnel. You may also be asked to attend a meeting to review the information on your child and to develop an action plan. The learning support and/or classroom teacher may further assess your child's needs and monitor your child's progress.

In some instances, even with significant modifications to your child's program, your child may continue to experience academic or emotional/behavioural challenges. The school may then request the involvement of the school district psychologist.

A referral to a psychologist only proceeds with the parent/legal guardian's written consent for a psychological assessment. Your consent for this assessment can be withdrawn, in writing, at any time.

Once the request for a psychological assessment is formalized, the teacher and/or learning support teacher discusses next steps and implications for educational programming.

### **What is involved in a Psychological Assessment?**

Assessment involves a variety of procedures including an interview with school staff, an interview with the student and/or observation of the student within their school environment. The specific assessment procedures that are used depend on the nature of your child's learning and/or emotional needs described by you and the teachers. In the assessment process, a focus is placed on determining your child's strengths and areas of need that are related to academic and/or social/emotional abilities.

In most instances, the psychologist administers an intellectual assessment for your child. This assesses cognitive abilities and includes areas such as thinking skills, memory, auditory and visual learning. A psychologist might also perform an assessment that includes areas that examine emotional and behavioural development. In addition an assessment may be administered by the school learning support teacher to assess academics. These assessments provide information to the

school that assist in providing an appropriate educational program to your child. Prior to assessing your child, the psychologist will talk to you about your child and will explain the process and possible results from the assessments.

The assessment process requires anywhere between one or two hours to several weeks to complete, depending on the age and needs of your child.

Once completed, the results of the assessments are explained to you and a copy of the report is provided. The assessment results are used by the school team to inform programming to best meet your child's needs.

On occasion, it may be necessary to refer your child for further assessments outside of the school due to complex learning or emotional difficulties.

### **How Can You Prepare Your Child for the Assessment Process?**

It is important to prepare your child for the psychological assessment to ensure that they feel comfortable. Each child is unique. You are in the best position to know what helps your child feel most comfortable and relaxed. Generally, a child who is well rested and relaxed performs at their best. Every effort will be made to ensure that the assessment process is an enjoyable experience for your child.

### **Where are the assessment results stored?**

The information collected as part of the assessment process is placed in your child's Student Record. This information remains in the file and is only released outside the division with your written consent (e.g. if your child moves to a school outside of the school division).

