

Measuring Cognitive Ability

Wechsler Preschool and Primary Scale of Intelligence – Third Edition (WPPSI-III)

The following information is to assist you to understand the process of the test that your child is undertaking.

THE WPPSI - III

The Wechsler Preschool and Primary Scale of Intelligence – Third Edition (WPPSI-III) is the tool Psychologists often use to measure different aspects of your child's cognitive ability, for ages 2 years 6 months through to 7 years 3 months. This test consists of seven core tests, plus additional optional ones.

The Psychologist's role

The psychologist's goal is to help your child perform to the best of his/her cognitive ability. Your child will be provided with the best opportunity for success. However, children with special needs may perform poorly on the test for reasons other than low cognitive ability. For example, a child's behaviour may interfere with their performance on the test.

In some situations where a child is finding it difficult to stay on task, the psychologist may temporarily suspend a task and present it when the child appears more engaged. This will not alter the administration or scoring of the test.

There are standard administration guidelines that all Psychologist's follow

Practice items are included for most of the subtests, if no response or an incorrect response is given on these items, the assessor will provide the correct response to help the child understand the task. These practice items are not scored. On the items that don't include practice items, feedback is given on the first few items to make sure the child understands the task.

Prompts and repetition of instructions will be given to remind the child of the task, or in the case of them being distracted to bring them back to the task at hand.

The examiner may stop administering a subtest if the child meets the 'discontinuation rule'. This rule is met if the child consecutively scores '0' on a specified number of items.

On one of the Verbal subtests a single cue is given for the first 9 items, for the next set of items a second cue is provided if an incorrect response is given to the first cue.

Querying a child's response is designed to clarify the child's knowledge on the particular item, so as not to underestimate their ability. This is within testing guidelines.

Children are never penalised for improper grammar or poor pronunciation, although the assessor does need to be able to understand the word/s spoken.

Children are awarded appropriate credit for self-correction. If they change a correct response to an incorrect response, they are scored on their last response.

There are no time restrictions for responses, with the exception of three of the subtests, namely Block Design, Coding and Symbol Search (the latter is an optional sub-test,) which are timed tests.

For the child whose fine motor skills are delayed, if they have no pencil control or unable to draw any recognisable shape, the Coding and Symbol Search subtests may be omitted.

While parents of young children are encouraged to remain in the testing room, it is requested that you refrain from assisting your child, by prompting, repeating or re-wording any of the questions. This may affect the validity of your child's score.

