

What is the Diagnosis Assessment Criteria for Gifted/LD?



Currently, when a child is assessed within the Vancouver School Board (VSB), or by a private educational psychologist, standard practice is to use the Wechsler Intelligence Scale for Children (WISC-IV) to determine the child's Intelligence Quotient (IQ). The WISC-IV has four composite areas: Verbal Comprehension Index, Perceptual Reasoning Index, Working Memory Index, Processing Speed Index and Full Scale IQ.

In the past, the WISC-III was used. The WISC-III has up to thirteen sub-test scores divided into Verbal and Performance sections. The combination of these two scores gives what is referred to as the Full-Scale score.

For children who are Gifted/LD it is very important to look at the sub-test scores on either of the WISC editions. What each of these sub-tests intends to measure can be complicated to understand. Unusually high or low scores need to be explored through further assessment. It is only when there are two consistent subtest results on measures that purport to measure the same factor that there is a valid basis for interpretation. A scatter on sub-test scores indicates a need for further assessment and hypothesis testing.

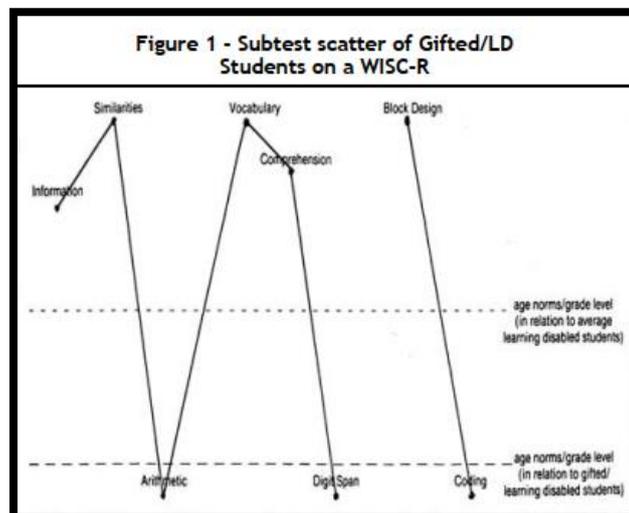
When your child is assessed, a follow-up meeting will be arranged between your family and the school psychologist. Make sure you have a full opportunity to understand what the results of the assessment mean.

When considering placement in programs for students who are gifted, it is important to recognize that the IQ scores might be affected by the learning problem and/or stress.

It is important "to place extra weight on the child's performance in areas unaffected by the disability ... Cut-off scores for entrance into programs for gifted learners should be dropped ten points to take into account depression of scores due to disabilities. In practice, it is rare that giftedness is identified only through IQ scores." (Brody & Mills 1998). It is much more important to recognize how the child expresses their area of passion.

Summary of clues for identification of children who are Gifted/LD when looking at WISC scores

1. Greater scatter (peaks and valleys) on sub-tests.
2. High scores on similarities (one of the sub-tests of the WISC)
3. Low scores on digit span, coding and arithmetic (three sub-tests)



It is likely that your child would also complete academic assessment measures at this time to obtain a more complete picture of their skills. These diagnostic tests are easier to compare to school-related tasks such as reading. It is possible that low spelling scores, difficulties with reading speed, sequencing or with phonics will turn up on the academic assessment. Comparing reading comprehension scores to reading speed scores or listening vocabulary to reading vocabulary can be enlightening and provide clues to the solution we are seeking. It is possible that dips indicating a learning problem will not show up on the WISC-R.

References:

Corinne Bees, recently retired, was a special education teacher who designed and taught a program called the "GOLD" Program. The program, at Prince of Wales Secondary School in Vancouver, B.C., is for students who are Gifted with Learning Difficulties (Gifted/LD).

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