

What to Expect From an Assessment

A plain-language map of the assessment journey

This handout provides an overview of the typical assessment process. An assessment can look somewhat different depending on the age of the person being assessed and the setting, such as a school versus a private practice. Use this handout as a framework, and confirm with the examiner what their process looks like.

1 Deciding on your assessment path

Choose a public or private route, and weigh other options. Ask about waitlists and the total time from start to finish. For private assessments, check insurance coverage and likely costs; many clinics offer a free consultation.

2 Getting ready for your first appointment

Gather documents such as past reports or report cards, and review and sign the consent forms.

3 The clinical interview

The clinician asks about current concerns and background, including home, school, medical history, and any mental health symptoms. They may also seek input from someone who knows the person well, such as a parent, partner, or teacher.

4 The testing sessions

Testing involves standardized tasks across one or more sessions, such as solving puzzles or explaining what words mean, depending on what is being assessed. You, or your child, simply need to try your best.

5 Going over the results

The findings are usually reviewed with the clinician at a feedback meeting, with you and/or a parent depending on age. This is your best chance to understand the results and ask about any diagnoses, recommendations, and next steps.

6 Reading the report

The written report is often shared after the feedback meeting, though timing varies. Check that the details are accurate and flag any corrections needed.

7 What comes after

A report is a starting point, not an endpoint. Depending on the findings, next steps may include therapy or medication, accommodations at school or work, or other supports decided with the professionals involved.

Start here

Read the full guide, plus plain-language explainers for scores, diagnoses, and next steps, at reportdecoder.com



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