

Neuropsychological and Psychological Evaluations of Children in the time of Covid-19

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What Are Psychologists and Neuropsychologists?

- ▶ **Psychologists** have doctoral degrees (Ph.D., Ed.D, or Psy.D.) in clinical, counseling, school, or professional psychology
- ▶ **Neuropsychologists** are licensed psychologists specializing in the area of brain-behavior relationships.
 - ▶ A qualified neuropsychologist has undergone specialized education and intensive training in the clinical neurosciences, including the relationship between behavioral functioning and neuroanatomy, neuropathology, neurology, and neurophysiology.
 - ▶ Many are board certified.

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Neuropsychological vs. Psychological Assessment

Psychological assessment

- An evaluation by a psychologist to ascertain the behavioral, intellectual and emotional functioning.

Neuropsychological assessment

- A complete assessment of the cognitive processes. This cognitive evaluation is based on the theory that the etiology of a disorder will be understood better if the neurodevelopmental pathway is evaluated. This testing is performed by neuropsychologists who are trained in brain function and activity. Most helpful when there is risk of brain impairment.

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Psychological Assessment for Autism:

Developmental History

- Essential to diagnosis

Rating Scales from parents/caregivers and teachers

- Adaptive behavior (daily living skills)
- General emotional/behavioral rating scales
- Autism specific behavior rating scales

Structured Behavioral Observation:

- Autism Diagnostic Observation Schedule-2 (ADOS-2)
- TELE-ASD-PEDS
- Other Behavioral Observations

Cognitive/Intellectual Testing

- Assess for cognitive strengths and weaknesses common in ASD

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Changes due to Covid 19 Pandemic:

Developmental History

- Done by telehealth

Rating Scales from parents/caregivers and teachers

- No change
- We mail for parents to complete at home
- Or completed in the office while child is being tested

Structured Behavioral Observation:

- Autism Diagnostic Observation Schedule-2 (ADOS-2)
- In the office masked and with PPE if necessary
- Modified and we use additional behavior ratings
- TELE-ASD-PEDS
- Telehealth based assessment for toddlers only

Cognitive/Intellectual Testing

- Performed in the office, masked and with PPE if necessary

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Changes due to Covid 19 Pandemic

Neuropsychological Evaluations

- Initial intake and history taking is by telehealth
- More limited testing sessions in the office (one 2-3 hour session rather than two sessions)
- Parent feedback by telehealth

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