

## EDUCATIONAL ASSESSMENT

When a child struggles with learning, there may be a variety of reasons, but they often fall into one or more of these categories:

**Physical** (attention deficit disorder, visual/hearing impairment, speech impairment, motor coordination difficulty, developmental issues, allergies, asthma, physical disabilities, epilepsy, Tourettes, Aspergers, etc.)

**Educational** (learning disability, low or high intellectual ability, learning style, test anxiety, etc.)

**Psychological** (general anxiety, depression, motivation)

Sometimes the area of assessment can be narrowed by process of elimination. Sometimes a wholistic approach is necessary. Parents should understand that all of the above fields contain "experts" who tend to view all problems through the lens of their particular training and experience.

### TO HAVE A CHILD ASSESSED

#### 1. If there is a physical component:

Begin with your doctor/hospital/insurance program. Many hospitals have a team approach. Your insurance will probably cover costs of physical tests, which includes testing for the neurological condition Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder, but not educational tests. There is often a 3-6 month wait for this type of assessment, especially in the spring, but the reports are usually quite complete and helpful.

**Children's Hospitals - Psychological Services**

St. Paul 651-220-6753, Mpls. 612-813-8455, [www.childrensmn.org](http://www.childrensmn.org)

**Hennepin County - Pediatric Clinic**

612-873-2435, [www.hcmc.org](http://www.hcmc.org)

**Park Nicollet-Alexander Center**

952-993-2498, [www.parknicollet.com](http://www.parknicollet.com)

**Fairview-University Medical Center - Psychiatry Intake**

612-273-8710, [www.fairview-university.fairview.org](http://www.fairview-university.fairview.org)

**University of Minnesota – Division of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry**

612-273-8710 (psychiatry intake)

#### 2. If there is a complicated academic learning issue:

**Academic Tutoring and Testing** ( 952-591-9437, [www.acatutor.com](http://www.acatutor.com), Engler)

**LDA (Learning Disabilities Association)** - 952-922-8374, [www.ldaminnesota.org](http://www.ldaminnesota.org))

**Groves Academy** (952-920-6377, [www.grovesacademy.org](http://www.grovesacademy.org))

**Fraser Community Services** (612-331-9413, [www.fraser.org](http://www.fraser.org))

**Loring Family Clinic** (612-872-9072, [www.calm.us](http://www.calm.us), formerly CALM clinic)

These agencies do an excellent job of educational assessment. They write helpful reports with suggested next steps, and can watch for ADD, anxiety and depression, but are not equipped to diagnose or treat serious physical or psychological conditions. There are many good private psychologists qualified to give the WISC (academic ability) and Woodcock-Johnson (achievement) tests most helpful for the school. If you know someone, would like some names from the school (call a counselor at any campus) or have a phone directory handy, all are options for a perhaps less costly assessment. (This is the best option for giftedness assessment.)

### **3. If there are significant psychological, emotional or behavioral issues:**

The Fairview-University Medical Center has a psychiatry clinic tied to the University of Minnesota, which can address psychological issues, as well as educational, behavioral and attentional ones. Other hospitals (Children's Mpls and St. Paul, Park Nicollet) also have a team which can bring a wholistic approach to significant school issues.

There are a number of private psychologists who specialize in working with school-aged children in complicated educational/behavior situations. The school counselors can suggest others.

### **4. If you want to pursue testing through the public schools:**

As taxpayers, if you feel your child has academic needs, you have a right to request educational testing from the public schools. This assessment would be provided through Minneapolis Public Schools. The primary purpose of such assessment (according to the public schools) is to find out if your child qualifies for public school special education service, which requires that the student currently be struggling significantly in his or her class. To begin a public school assessment, you would contact Harriet Glick at 612-668-4149 (Mpls), who could answer your questions and explain the process. Harriet will speak with teachers and look at your child's file before determining if an assessment is warranted.

If your child does qualify for assessment, and then for service, direct service would not be provided at Minnehaha Academy; your child would need to be transported either by you or by Minneapolis school bus to the nearest public school for service.

This assessment process, which involves meetings and paperwork, can be time-consuming, but test results are as valuable as private agencies in determining a student's academic strengths and weaknesses.

The Director of Special Academic Needs is the overall manager for special education services at Minnehaha Academy, but counselors on each campus coordinate actual times and places for assessment and/or service.

**If you would like further information on any of the above or have other questions about assessment, please call Director of Special Academic Needs, Elaine Ekstedt, at 612-721-3359 ext 2207 or send an email to [ekstedt@minnehahaacademy.net](mailto:ekstedt@minnehahaacademy.net). The best time to reach her directly by phone is between 8:00 and 10 am.**