

## What are the benefits of working with Psychological Services?

Our staff members have years of special training and education to help them identify a child's specific strengths and needs related to learning, emotions and behaviour. We can help identify problems and challenges such as learning disabilities, developmental delays, levels of intelligence, anxiety, depression or serious behavioural problems. Once we better understand the challenges your child or teen is facing, we can make recommendations to help your child cope with school. We also can give you tips on dealing with behaviour problems or supporting your child. Any child or teenager who is having difficulties can benefit from our services.

## What are the risks?

- When most children complete the assessment, they find parts of it challenging and interesting. A small number of children, however, become very anxious or distressed when completing the activities. We are well trained in helping children deal with this type of upset, and we will stop the testing until your child is able to continue. Please let us know about any concerns you have before testing begins.
- The assessment may lead to changes for you and your child. For example, we may find that your child or teenager has problems you did not expect. Knowing this information will help your child in the long run, but it can be upsetting at first for you and your child. It also may lead to some changes in your child's or teen's educational program.
- If we find your child has a problem such as difficulty paying attention, a learning disability, depression or low intellectual ability, a special education program may be needed. This could mean a change in timetable, or having to spend some time working with a different teacher. Far less often, it could mean a change of school. Or, we could find that your child does not qualify for special education programming according to the rules set by the Ministry of Education. In that case, you would have to find other resources for your child.

## Are there other ways to help my child?

Parents sometimes ask if there are other ways to get help for their child, without using the school board's Psychological Services. You could choose to talk to your child's or teen's teacher, or ask for a teacher assessment only. Teachers are trained to measure children's academic (learning) skills, and to help them with their courses. Psychological Services staff members, however, have the specialized training to identify what is causing your child's problems.

If you would rather receive services from someone who does not work for the school board, you could work with a private psychologist or other practitioner. You would have to pay any costs involved, however. If you do have a private assessment done, please have the results sent to the school board, so that we can use the information to design a program for your child.



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# Psychological Services for Students

## Information for Parents and Guardians



EDUCATING FOR SUCCESS!

Sometimes, when a student is having difficulty in school, referral to Psychological Services at the Kawartha Pine Ridge District School Board may be helpful. Psychological Services may help teachers and other staff understand your child or teenager better, and help develop a program that best meets your child's needs.

This brochure answers questions parents ask most often about working with Psychological Services. Please read it before signing the consent form. It's important that you understand as much as possible about Psychological Services before you give permission for us to work with your child or teen.

### **Why did the school refer my child to Psychological Services?**

By now, you probably have spoken with school staff about your child. The school would like to know more about the challenges your child is facing, and what is causing them. School staff members who work with your child want expert advice to help plan the best possible educational program, so that your child can learn and be successful. Psychological Services also can offer ideas and tips on how you can help support your child's learning at home.

### **Who will be seeing my child?**

Psychological Services staff members are all highly trained professionals who care about children and youth. Each one has a Master's Degree or a Doctorate in education or psychology. The psychological assessment (testing) of your child will be completed or supervised by a registered member of the College of Psychologists of Ontario.

### **Why do you need my permission?**

Ontario law states that a responsible person must give "informed consent" for any kind of psychological service, before it begins. "Informed consent" means you must understand the type of psychological service your child will receive, the expected benefits and risks, any possible side effects, other action you could take, and any consequences that would be likely if your child did not receive the psychological service.

This brochure provides the information you need. Please read it carefully. If there is anything you don't understand, or if you have other questions, please ask us before you sign the white consent form.

### **How old do you have to be to give consent?**

For students up to 17 years of age, the parent or guardian must give written permission for their child to receive the psychological testing. In these cases, we take the time to speak with the student as well, to explain what the testing will include and to answer any questions.

Students who are 18 years of age or older may sign the consent form, if they are able to understand what will be taking place and give their informed consent. If there is any doubt that the student is able to understand and give permission, we will ask the parent or guardian to give written consent as well.

### **Can I change my mind after giving permission?**

Yes, you can change your mind and take away consent. If you do change your mind, just call the principal or the Psychological Services staff member working with your child.

### **What kind of services will my child receive?**

When you give your consent for Psychological Services to work with your child or teen, the type of service will depend on your child's needs. We may:

- watch how your child acts and works with others at school
- speak with you, others who care for your child or school staff
- complete an assessment (detailed testing) of your child
- make recommendations to school staff on how best to meet your child's strengths and needs.

The attached, white consent form describes what services will be provided specifically for your child. We also may speak with you further about any benefits or risks of receiving the service.

### **What is a psychological assessment?**

Once we have received your permission, we will begin to collect information about your child or teen from you, your child's teachers and your child. We may do this through interviews, by looking at your child's school record, by watching your child in the classroom, and by asking you, your child and the teachers to fill out questionnaires.

When we complete an assessment, we follow several steps:

- 1.** We will meet with your child individually. Your child will complete psychological tests that measure things such as:

- academic skills, such as reading, writing and math
- intelligence
- ability to pay attention and memory
- "adaptive" skills (how well children can help themselves adjust to new situations)
- emotional well-being (your child's mood, anxiety or sadness, for example)
- behaviour

Your child may not be given all of these tests. The tests will depend on your child's needs and the reasons for being referred to Psychological Services.

2. If your child has worked with other school board specialists, such as a speech and language pathologist or school board counsellor, we may review any reports they have completed as well.

3. If needed, we may ask your permission to contact others who have worked with your child, such as your family doctor, the Children's Aid Society, or other professionals. We may review any other psychological assessments that have been done in the past.

4. We will review and "interpret" all the information we have collected. This means we will reach conclusions based on the results of your child's testing. We will then meet with you and with school staff to discuss the results, and give recommendations to help your child.

5. We will prepare a written report that describes the results of the assessment and our recommendations. We will give you a copy of the report, and keep another copy in Psychological Services' files for at least 10 years after the student leaves school.

6. A copy of the report likely will be put in your child's Ontario Student Record (OSR) at school. Teachers and members of school staff who will be working with your child or teen will be able to read the report. Once the report is in the OSR, only the principal can remove it. You can ask the principal, in writing, to consider removing the report at any time.