



FORMAL TESTING: TIPS

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Considerations within Selection of Cognitive Assessments

Validity and testability – ensuring the assessment is the most valid

Choose instruments that...

- ❑ Provide a full range of Standard Scores with consideration of the Floor – seek assessments that go below 50
- ❑ Measure both verbal and nonverbal skills with representation of both skills individually – avoid presentation of only full scale scores or presentation of scores that collapse across skills
- ❑ Provide an overall index of ability with relatively current norms

Maximizing the Validity of Assessments & Scores

- ❑ Ensure test scores are indicators of current ability rather than experience with test-taking
 - Test taking is a social skill that must be taught – sitting, turn taking (give and take, accept and relinquish), attending, work then break
- ❑ Use strategies the student utilizes within the classroom and other settings (e.g., visual schedules, visual supports)
- ❑ Test in multiple short sessions
- ❑ Begin with appealing material the student will enjoy or be able to complete
- ❑ Embed reinforcement within the test-taking session
 - Establish a work-reward pattern
 - Reinforce attempts and test-taking behaviors
- ❑ Alternate verbal and nonverbal tasks
- ❑ Alternate harder tasks and items with easier tasks and items (including manipulatives)
- ❑ Let the child set the pace and follow the child – take notes to inform observations
- ❑ Be persistent but don't press failures more than acknowledging successes with behaviors, test-taking skills, or performance when applicable
- ❑ End on a good note prior to the student becoming exhausted or overwhelmed
- ❑ Prepare yourself and the environment
 - Select a calm, quiet, distraction-free location
 - Utilize furniture that fits the child well
 - Ensure materials and procedures are well organized and structured
 - Only have necessary materials within the testing environment
 - Know the test very well and be comfortable taking notes to inform additional observations
- ❑ Do not make the student wait – have materials ready or extra supplies if you foresee the need for time to make notes, transition, or get additional materials

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