



# Position Statement

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## SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGISTS' INVOLVEMENT IN THE ROLE OF ASSESSMENT

The National Association of School Psychologists (NASP) recognizes that school psychologists are experts in assessment. *Assessment* is defined as the process of gathering information from a variety of sources, using a variety of methods that best address the reason for evaluation, and is contrasted with *testing*, which is limited to administration and scoring of tests. Application of the knowledge and skills of school psychologists in assessment can help ensure that all children and youth receive needed services. School psychologists can provide local and state education agencies with information about tests and assessment methods that can be used within the context of scientifically-based practice and can be linked to prevention and intervention. Further, school psychologists select methods that ensure fair and nonbiased assessment. NASP, therefore, endorses assessment practices that are tailored to the needs of the individual student in the context of a comprehensive delivery system that facilitates educational progress for all children.

NASP recognizes that school psychologists:

- Have specialized training and skills in areas of psychological and educational assessment
- Should select and use assessments and interventions that are scientifically based
- Play an important role in multidisciplinary team decision-making
- Select assessment methods that include multiple sources of information, multiple procedures, and multiple settings in order to yield a comprehensive understanding of a student's characteristics that are relevant to learning and emotional well-being
- Work with parents, teachers, administrators, and, where appropriate, students in a collaborative context when making decisions
- Are particularly sensitive to the high stakes decisions made on the basis of testing and assessment
- Utilize longitudinal assessment to evaluate and document progress or responses to interventions
- Use assessment information to guide intervention strategies

NASP endorses assessment practices that are:

- Scientifically based
- Multidimensional and based on the needs of the student
- Relevant to a variety of scientifically-based interventions
- Inclusive of an examination of family and educational systems, and home environments, in addition to the student
- Initiated by efforts to resolve the problem through early intervention

- Nondiscriminatory in terms of ethnicity, gender, native language, family or socioeconomic status
- Comprehensive and address the educational, cognitive, and mental health needs of the student
- Not limited to any single methodology or theoretical framework
- Technically appropriate and used for the purposes for which they were developed and/or validated
- Conducted so that ethical standards are maintained
- Used only by qualified personnel

In conclusion, NASP supports scientifically-based assessment procedures that meet the needs of children and youth. School psychologists apply their expertise to evaluate student performance and program effectiveness, understanding that assessment and evaluation should not be limited to a single instrument or measure, but instead be comprehensive. All approaches to assessment are used in ways consistent with their scientific base, recognizing the uniqueness of each student and the referral question(s).

These approaches include but are not limited to techniques such as norm- and performance-based assessments; functional assessment; standardized measures of intelligence, cognitive processing, and academics; curriculum-based assessment; psychological, personality, and other social-emotional measures; behavior rating scales; ecological assessment; portfolio review; etc. NASP endorses continual professional development as a means for school psychologists to stay current on assessment methodologies. Finally, school psychology researchers are encouraged to examine a variety of assessment methodologies to meet the needs of children and youth.

## RESOURCES

- Graham, J. R., & Naglieri, J. A. (Eds.). (2002). *Handbook of Psychology, Volume 10, Assessment Psychology*. New York: Wiley.
- Sattler, J. M. (2001). *Assessment of Children* (4th ed.). San Diego: Jerome Sattler Publisher.
- Thomas, A., & Grimes, J. (Eds.). (2002). *Best Practices in School Psychology IV*. Bethesda, MD: National Association of School Psychologists.

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