

# What to Expect: Psychology Assessments

## What assessments do Speld Qld psychologists do?

The type of assessment you are booking will be discussed during the initial booking phone call. No two people are the same, so psychologists may use different tools depending on the individual needs of our clients.

At Speld Qld, our services focus on supporting people's learning rather than completing specific applications for other services. However, you can provide our reports to any other services that you may be working with. Speld Qld psychologists offer the following types of assessments:

### Psychoeducational Assessments



- Identify cognitive and academic strengths and weaknesses.
- Are used to diagnose Specific Learning Disorder (e.g., with impairment in reading, written expression, and/or mathematics), if appropriate. This includes dyslexia and dyscalculia.
- The report will provide:
  - Information on strengths and weaknesses.
  - Evidence-based recommendations to support learning.

### Cognitive / IQ Assessments



- Identify cognitive strengths and weaknesses.
- The report will provide:
  - Information on strengths and weaknesses.
  - Recommendations to support learning.

### ADHD Assessments



- Explore whether someone may be presenting with Attention Deficit / Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD).
- Psychologists cannot prescribe medication and will recommend you engage with a paediatrician or psychiatrist to discuss medication.
- The report will provide:
  - Information on strengths and challenges.
  - Recommendations to support learning.
  - Recommendations for alternative supports or further investigation if needed.

### School Readiness/Early Years Assessments



- Help investigate some school readiness or early learning skills.
- Evaluate cognitive and academic skills, developmental milestones, and behaviour.
- The report will provide:
  - Information on strengths and weaknesses.
  - Recommendations for parents and educators to support children's early learning and developmental needs.

To find out more information about Speld Qld assessments and services, please call us to speak to one of our advisors or visit the website below.

## What happens during a Speld Qld assessment?

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### Before Booking

- Complete the appropriate assessment intake form on our [website](#).
- You will be contacted to discuss your query in more detail, the assessment process, the costs involved, and booking in the assessment.

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### Before your Appointment

- A background questionnaire will be sent to you to complete. This helps the psychologist prepare for the assessment. There will also be a consent form and an optional questionnaire for you to pass onto a teacher and/or tutor to complete.
- Send through any other previous assessment reports (e.g., psychology, speech language, hearing tests), school reports, work samples, or other information you may have to [speld@speld.org.au](mailto:speld@speld.org.au). These documents help the psychologist write a more accurate report and recommendations.
- You may be contacted to discuss the assessment and any other information to help prepare for the assessment.
- If your assessment is online, the psychologist will send you a telehealth video link before your appointment. Check your audio and video settings before your appointment and let the psychologist know if there are any problems.

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### On the day

- Arrive 15 minutes before your appointment time.
- The psychologist will meet you in the waiting room at the time of your appointment.
- If your appointment is online, follow the link sent by your psychologist at the time of the appointment.

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### Initial Interview

- The psychologist will have an initial interview with you to gather further information and explain what the assessment session will look like.
- This typically takes 5 – 15 minutes.

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### Assessment

- The assessment session can often take 2-4 hours.
- The psychologist will offer breaks during the assessment as needed.
- Bring water and snacks to have during the assessment breaks.
- Different assessment tools will be used depending on what assessment is booked. See below for more information.

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### After the Assessment

- On the day, the psychologist may speak to you about the assessment session and gather additional information. They will also discuss when the assessment report will likely be completed.
- A report with the findings and recommendations will be provided to you within 6 weeks of the assessment. Recommendations include relevant supports, resources, strategies, and accommodations. The psychologist will let you know if there will be any delays.
- A feedback session will be offered when the report is finalised. Feedback can be provided via phone or video call. You can invite other people to join this feedback session (e.g., teacher). Any requests for extra feedback sessions (e.g., with school) can be discussed with the psychologist and may incur an extra fee.

### What assessment tools are used?

Speld Qld psychologists will use a range of tools and information as part of their assessment including standardised assessments, direct observations, background history, information from different people, and previous reports. The specific assessment tools used will depend on the assessment you have booked. These may include:

#### IQ/Cognitive Assessment

- This assessment will provide a snapshot of intellectual ability across various domains. These scores are compared to same-aged people (age norms) to determine if a person is performing at, behind or above the expected level.
- The WISC-V (or WAIS-IV for adults) is most commonly used and measures verbal comprehension, visual-spatial reasoning, fluid reasoning, working memory and processing speed.
- Other assessments may include: Woodcock Johnson-IV Tests of Cognitive Abilities or UNIT-2 (nonverbal cognitive assessment).

#### Academic Achievement Assessment

- This assessment measures reading, written expression, spelling, and maths skills. These scores are compared to same-aged people (age norms) to determine if a person is performing at, behind or ahead of the expected level.
- Assessments may include: WIAT-III, Woodcock Johnson-IV Tests of Achievement, or other similar tools.
- Other tools may include: CTOPP-2 (phonological processing), YARC (reading comprehension), TILLS (integrated language and literacy), TOWRE (word reading efficiency), or OWLS-2 (Oral and Written Language Scales).

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## Questionnaires

- Sometimes questionnaires may be included as part of or in addition to the assessment. The psychologist will discuss these with you.
- Questionnaires may include: Conners 4 Rating Scales (attention and behaviour questionnaire), Conners Early Childhood, or ABAS-3 (adaptive behaviour questionnaire).

## Observations

- The psychologist will make observations during the assessments to inform their report and recommendations.

## Interview

- The psychologist may need to complete a more in depth interview to gather additional information. For example, when completing an ADHD assessment, the psychologist may use a structured clinical interview called the DIVA.

## Background information and reports from parents, teachers, and specialists

- Psychologists use information from various sources to help understand the concerns and inform the outcome of the assessment and the recommendations.



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## Frequently Asked Questions

### What happens if we are sick on the day of the assessment?

Call Speld Qld as soon as possible so that we can reschedule your appointment.

### What happens if the psychologist is sick on the day of the assessment?

Speld Qld will let you know as soon as possible and reschedule or reassign your appointment to a different psychologist, if appropriate.

### What happens if the assessment is unable to be completed on the day?

There can be a range of reasons why an assessment may not be able to be completed, such as illness, engagement, or social-emotional responses (e.g., high anxiety). If this happens, the psychologist will speak with you about what the most appropriate next steps will be. This could include taking a break, a trusted person (e.g., parent) sitting in, rescheduling to another day, or shortening the assessment. If the assessment is shortened, the psychologist can still provide a report and recommendations based on the information gathered.

### What can the assessments diagnose?

Speld Qld uses the DSM-5-TR diagnostic criteria (Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders) when investigating possible diagnoses. Not everyone assessed will receive a diagnosis. If a diagnosis is not provided, the report will provide information about strengths and challenges, along with recommendations for alternative supports or further investigation if needed.

Psychoeducational assessments can be used to diagnose a Specific Learning Disorder. Someone can have a Specific Learning Disorder with impairment in reading, written expression, or mathematics. There are also specific patterns of difficulties that are often referred to as Dyslexia or Dyscalculia. There are specific criteria that need to be met (based on the DSM-5-TR), which means not everyone who experiences difficulties with literacy or numeracy meets criteria for a Specific Learning Disorder. However, recommendations will always be provided to support areas of strength and areas of difficulty.

Intellectual Developmental Disorder (Intellectual Disability) can be investigated when a cognitive/IQ assessment is completed. The psychologist will discuss this with you and additional questionnaires (e.g., adaptive behaviour questionnaires) may need to be completed.

ADHD assessments can provide a diagnosis of Attention Deficit / Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), if appropriate. ADHD can be specified as being predominantly inattentive presentation, predominantly hyperactive/impulsive presentation, or combined presentation. Psychologists cannot prescribe medication and will recommend engaging with a paediatrician or psychiatrist to discuss medication. Not everyone will meet criteria for ADHD. In some cases, further investigation by a medical practitioner or other health service may be needed. If ADHD is not diagnosed, you will still receive feedback on identified strengths and challenges, and recommendations for alternative supports or further investigation if needed.

At Speld Qld our assessments do not provide diagnoses of other mental or neurodevelopmental disorders (e.g., Generalised Anxiety Disorder, Autism Spectrum Disorder, Developmental Coordination Disorder). If symptoms associated with other disorders are indicated, the psychologist will give recommendations to investigate these further with the relevant health professional.

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