



COMPREHENSIVE DIAGNOSIS
AND EVALUATION
OF CHILD & ADULT ATTENTION,
LEARNING, AND MEMORY DISORDERS
(ON-SITE EVALUATIONS AVAILABLE)

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Learning Disability & ADHD Update

Release of The Wechsler Scale of Preschool and Primary Scale of Intelligence - Fourth Edition



In October of 2012, Pearson Publishers released the long awaited new version of the Wechsler Preschool and Primary Scale of Intelligence-Fourth Edition (WPPSI-IV). The prior edition, the WPPSI-III, was released over ten years ago, and the WPPSI-IV clearly represents a sea change in terms of the issues, domains, and thinking that has characterized the assessment

of cognitive functioning over the last decade.

In addition to retaining ten subtests from the WPPSI-III, including Information, Similarities, Vocabulary, Comprehension, Receptive Vocabulary, Picture Naming, Block Design, Object Assembly, Matrix Reasoning and Picture Concepts, the WPPSI-IV has added five new subtests. These include Picture Memory, Zoo Locations for children ages 2.6-7.7, and Bug Search, Cancellation, and Animal Coding for children aged 4.0-7.7. With respect to the subtests that were retained, a complete updating of item content as well as scoring and administration was done.

In keeping with more recent thinking about the essential nature of cognitive functioning, the WPPSI-IV has added a new index entitled Fluid Reasoning, which includes the subtests of Matrix Reasoning and Picture Concepts. These tasks require the ability to think in an inductive and deductive manner, focusing skills on making sense of fluid and ambiguous data, rather than showing the ability to demonstrate more crystallized knowledge, such as factual information or rote skills.

The Working Memory section of the WPPSI-IV, incorporates the two new subtests of Picture Memory and Zoo Locations, and is novel in that both these subtests utilize proactive interference in order to elicit memory abilities.

(Release of The Wechsler... cont'd. on pg. 2)

Attention and Memory Enhancement Techniques

In addition to treating attention and memory difficulties through the utilization of medication, strategies to increase the significance and organization of information can also be quite useful.

Providing enriched meaning or increasing the salience of information to be recalled, is a central feature of all good memory enhancement techniques, and can be utilized and implemented in a wide variety of circumstances.

For example, grouping items to be recalled into semantic categories, such as paper products, meat, fruit, vegetables etc., is a technique that enhances the encoding and retrieval of data.

In addition, chunking information into meaningful clusters, such as the grouping letters or numbers together (for example, remembering telephone numbers by clustering the first three and last four numbers together), so as

to reduce the number of units of information that will later be recalled, is also quite helpful.

Associating visual images with items to be retrieved is also quite useful to enhance the recall of information one intends to remember. This is also called visual tagging, and an example of this would be to visualize an image of a bank logo next to a rack of clothing as a method of remembering to go to the bank and then the dry cleaners. A similar tactic would be to

(ATTENTION AND..... cont'd. on pg. 2)



(RELEASE OF THE WECHSLER... cont'd. from pg. 1)



The Verbal Comprehension Index includes various configurations for determining Verbal IQ for varying ages, utilizing Receptive

Vocabulary and Information for children aged 2.6-3.11, and Information and Similarities for children aged 4.0-7.7. Vocabulary and Comprehension are retained as alternative subtests that may be substituted for core tasks that for one reason or another may be difficult or impossible to complete.

With respect to Perceptual Reasoning, Block Design and Object Assembly are the core subtests, and with regard to Processing Speed, Bug Search and Cancellation are the

(ATTENTION AND... cont'd. from pg. 1)



imagine a visual route through your house or neighborhood, and at various locations an item of information to be recalled would be associated with that specific spot, image or location.

Finding a similarity or contrast between information that is being encoded, and previously learned information is also quite helpful in terms of enhancing and refining memory retrieval.

Creating an acronym or acrostic (starting the first letter of each word in a sentence with items to be recalled) is also a very useful memory enhancement strategy, that can be utilized at any time and with a wide variety of memory tasks.

Rhyming or visualizing information to be recalled is another technique that enhances recall, as it enriches the meaning of the data to be encoded and retrieved.

two tasks that are used to assess skills level with regard to this domain.

The inclusion of validity scales for essential comparison groups are one of the highlights of the WPPSI-IV. This includes demographic data and standard scores for intellectual disabled and gifted populations, English language learners, children who show developmental risk factors and preliteracy concerns, ADHD and disruptive behavior, and children with expressive and mixed receptive-expressive language difficulties. Comparison scores for children with Autistic Spectrum disorders are also provided.

As with any instrument that purports to evaluate children who are at such a vulnerable age in terms of the rate and maturational phases of their development, the WIPPSI-

Reconstructing the sequence of events leading up to a situation in which an item was misplaced or when a piece of information was imparted, can also be helpful in cueing memory retrieval.

Systematically going through the alphabet until the word or piece of information that is to be recalled can be identified, is also quite useful in terms of aiding the memory retrieval process.

Breaking down tasks into smaller steps, as well as allowing for distributed practice or spaced rehearsal is also quite important to promote successful encoding of information to be remembered. Therefore, instead of studying for an hour, and then taking a twenty minute break, studying for fifteen or twenty minutes, and then taking a five to ten minute break is a technique that improves the retention of learned information.

Utilization of a digital tape recorder, as a separate device (sold in any office supply store) or as an application on a smartphone is particularly helpful, as individual messages

IV is more sensitive to the fluctuations and rapid gains that are frequently seen in the protocols of this population. Research on item selection and the use of manipulatives, such as an ink dauber vs. the utilization of a writing implement to record responses, not only represents an improvement in terms of ease of use, but actually translates to a more accurate and valid representation of a child's intellectual functioning. With such a difficult population to assess, these additions and modifications are a welcome addition to the task of providing parents and teachers with useful information about a child's functioning.

On-site assessments as well as evaluations for those seeking extra time on the SAT, GRE, LSAT, etc. are done on a regular basis.

can be retrieved and replayed quite quickly and easily.

Various calendar applications are also quite useful in order to provide a way of scheduling appointments, remember medication or to perform various household tasks. These applications are available for various Android and Apple digital devices (tablets and smartphones), and voice instructions can also be used to input information to be stored.

Finally, leaving strategically placed notes or graphic organizers to help remember information that needs to be prioritized, is also quite helpful in terms of targeting tasks that need to be performed.

Dr. Howard is also available to assess other neuropsychological disorders, such as Alzheimer's Disease, Head Trauma, M.S., and Stroke. He also does testing to evaluate emotional and behavioral disorders, and career and vocational issues.