

WHAT EVALUATION TESTING RESULTS MEAN

AT A GLANCE:

- Testing results are presented statistically.
- Understanding the vocabulary of tests is important to understanding evaluation results.
- Your child's test scores are only one part of the evaluation result.

Once your child goes through the **evaluation process**, you'll get a report that explains what the testing showed. There are a number of terms used to report on test results and how tests are scored. Being familiar with these terms can help you better understand what the results mean.

THE IMPORTANCE OF STATISTICS:

Statistics is the science of using math to make sense of and interpret large amounts of information. Statistics help evaluators:

- **Organize and present data** in ways that are easier to understand. The information can be used to make graphs and charts that show patterns.
- **Describe data** in ways that help you see how your child fits into a larger group of people.
- **Draw conclusions from data** to get an idea of how best to support your child.

TESTING TERMS TO KNOW:

A number of different terms are used to talk about test results. Knowing what these terms mean is a good start to understanding what your child needs.

1. Norm-referenced: A norm-referenced test compares your child's scores to the scores of other kids the same age. The "norm group" is a large, random group of kids who have taken the same test.

Their scores are used to determine what's typical for the age group. For example, on one test, the Wechsler Intelligence Scale for Children (WISC), the average scores 100.

2. Test reliability: A reliable test is one that would provide the same results every time. That means if your child took the test a few times, the scores would be roughly the same. Longer tests tend to be more reliable than short ones.

For example, the score on a test with fewer questions is more likely to be affected by your child not paying attention to one of the questions. That's because each question is worth more on a shorter test.

If your child missed one answer on a spelling test of five words, his grade would be 80 percent. If he missed one e word out of twenty, his grade would be 95 percent.

3. Standard score: Most educational tests have standard scores based on a scale that makes the average score 100. But the average always falls within a range. There's wiggle room (sometimes referred to as "standard error") in test scores to account for possible mistakes.

So, an average score is actually a range of numbers. For example, if an average score is 100 and the standard error is 15, that means the average is really anywhere between 85 and 115.