Intelligenece Tests

Introduction

While intelligence tests are an integral part of an evaluation on any child with a disability, many parents do not understand what they do or what they measure. The following Parent Teacher Conference Handout explains intelligence tests and allows parents the knowledge of what the scores mean.

Intelligence tests are most helpful (and probably most appropriate) when they are used to determine specific skills, abilities, and knowledge that a child either has or does not have. When such information is combined with other evaluation data, it can be directly applied to school programming. There are a number of skills that intelligence tests attempt to measure. These include:

1. Social judgment
2. Level of thinking
3. Language skills
4. Perceptual organization
5. Processing speed
6. Spatial abilities
7. Common sense
8. Long and short term memory
9. Abstract thinking
10. Motor speed
11. Word knowledge

Many of the above skills are very dependent on experience, training, and intact verbal abilities of the child being tested. However, responses to items concerning perceptual organization, processing speed, and spatial abilities are less dependent on experience and verbal skill and more on hand-eye coordination and reasoning abilities.

Intelligence tests can yield valuable information about a student's ability to process information. In order to learn, every person must take in, make sense of, store, and retrieve information from memory in an efficient and accurate way. Each of us can process certain kinds of information more easily than others. In school, children need certain skills to function effectively such as listening attentively so that other movements, sounds or sights do not distract them. They must be able to understand the words spoken to them. This often requires children to hold multiple pieces of information in memory (e.g. page number, questions to answer) in order to act upon them. For example, they must be able to find the words they need to express themselves and, ultimately, commit these words to paper. This involves another whole series of processing skills such as holding a writing implement, coordinating visual and motor actions, holding information in memory until it can be transferred to paper, transforming sounds into written symbols and understanding syntax, punctuation, and capitalization rules. They also must be able to interpret the nonverbal messages of others, such as a frown, a smile, a shake of the head. Moreover, they must do all of these things quickly and accurately and often in a setting with many distractions.

A thorough interpretation of an intelligence test can yield information about how effectively a child processes and retrieves information. Most individually administered intelligence tests can determine, at least to some degree, a child's ability to attend to task, process information quickly, distinguish relevant from less relevant details, put events in sequence, and retrieve words from memory.

The table below provides the specific range and classification for each IQ score:

List#____IQ Range and Classification

IQ Range	Classification	Percent Included
130 and over	Very Superior	2.2
120-129	Superior	6.7
110-119	High Average	16.1
90-109	Average	50.0
80-89	Low Average	16.1
70-79	Borderline	6.7
69 and below	Intellectual and Developmentally Disabled	2.2