Test Vocabulary for Parents

Every three years, your child will be retested by the school to determine if the conditions under which he/she was classified still exist. This Triennial Review will also determine his/her present levels of performance. Many times, the test results will be given to you in several different forms. Also, sometimes your child's teacher will test your child with what are called Standardized Tests to gather performance information against national averages. The following Parent Conference Handout will try to help you understand test vocabulary. In this way, you will better understand the results and the implications for your child's future.

Age Equivalent (*Test symbol would be "AE"*): Some test scores will be presented in what are called AGE EQUIVALENTS. This means that the score will be reflected in years and months i.e. a score of 8-2 would represent an Age Equivalent score of 8 years and 2 months. Further, if your child is 7 years 8 months old and gets an Age Equivalent (AE) score of 8-2 (8 years 2 months) then he/she is performing above his/her age expectancy. If he/she scores 6-1 (6 years 1 month (AE) then he/she is performing below age expectancy.

Grade Equivalent: (*Abbreviation would be "GE"*): Some test scores will be presented as GRADE EQUIVALENTS. This means that the score will be reflected using grade level and months i.e. 10-2 (10th grade, 2nd month). You will want to compare this to your child's present grade level for comparison. Further, if your child's exact grade level is 5th grade 3rd month (5-3) and gets an Grade Equivalent (GE) score of 7-2 (7th grade 2nd month) then he/she is performing above his/her grade expectancy. If he/she scores 4-1 (4th grade 1st month (GE)) then he/she is performing below grade expectancy.

Local Percentile: (Abbreviation would be "LP" or "LPR" (Local Percentile Rank): This is a score that compares your child's performance on a test against every other child his/her age within the school district. See National Percentiles for further explanation of the purposes of percentiles.

Mean: (Test symbol for Mean is "M"): The MEAN is the average. If someone says your child's "Mean score" was 75 it will mean that when all the tests are added up the average score or MEAN was75. Suppose your child gets the following scores on a test: 75, 85, 90, 70. When you add these up (320) and divide by the number of tests (4) the average score or Mean will be 80.

National Percentile: (Abbreviation would be "NP" or "NPR" (National Percentile Rank): This is a score that compares your child's performance on a test against every other child his/her age throughout the country. However, it is very important that you understand that PERCENTILE is not PERCENT. The range for PERCENTILES is 1-99 with the 99th percentile being the highest score possible. A percentile of 50% is right in the middle. For instance, if your child scores at the 65th PERCENTILE nationally, then that will mean that he/she did better that approximately 65% of the children his/her age and only 34% did better than him/her (Since percentile only goes up to 99-65+34=99). If your child scores at the 23rd PERCENTILE nationally then that means that he/she did better than approximately 23% of the students his/her age and 76% did better (23+76=99).

In assessment, percentile ranks are very important because they indicate how well a child did when compared to the norms on a test. Knowing that a child had a percentile rank of 97 on a test would tell you that he is exceptional in this testing area, yet, knowing that he got a percentile rank of 7 would tell you that this is an area of weakness.

Range: If the teacher or psychologist says that the range of your child' scores was from 65-90 that represents his/her lowest score and highest score and that all the other scores fell somewhere in between these 2 scores.

Raw Score: (Test symbol might be "RS"): This normally refers to the number of answers that your child answered correctly on any test. For instance, if your child answers 12 out of 20 questions correctly then his/her RAW SCORE will be 12. In general, raw scores by themselves mean very little. For example, suppose the student in your class got 18 out of 20 correct on the spelling test. The number 18 has no real meaning. What is important is what you do with the 18. For example, most teachers would say the student got 18 out of 20 and turn it into a percentage indicating that the student got 90% (18/20 is 90%) on this test.

Scaled Scores: Many tests used for assessment of children have subtests that comprise the entire test. For each subtest, a student receives a raw score. This raw score is often transformed into a scaled score. Scaled scores are very specific subtest scores. In many cases, scaled scores range from 1 to 19 with a mean of 10. They follow the following classification format:

Scaled Score Table

Scaled Score	Classification
1-3	Developmentally Delay
4-5	Well Below Average
6-7	Low Average
8-12	Average
13-14	High Average
15-26	Superior
17-19	Very Superior

For example, if a student gets only a scaled score of 7 on a Reading subtest but a 13 on a Math subtest, this indicates a much greater strength with respect to math than with reading as compared to the norms of his or her age group.

Standard Score: Some tests report scores in what are referred to as Standard Scores. A Standard Score indicates how far a particular score is from a test's average. While it is not important in this publication to get too technical, we have provided the following table for purposes of a rough comparison:

Standard Score Table

Standard Score	Classification
Less than 70	Delayed **
70-79	Well Below Average or Borderline
80-89	Low Average
90-109	Average
110-119	High Average
120-129	Superior
130 and Higher	Very Superior

** - this would be a very low score and indicate serious impairment in the particular area.

For example, if your child receives a Stand Score on a reading test of 115 then he/she would be in the above average range of performance. If he/she received a Standard Score of 72 on a math test then his/her performance would be very low.

Stanine: Some scores are reflected in what are called STANINES which stands for STANDARD NINE. This means that there will be 9 stanines used to describe your child's performance from 1-9. Therefore a stanine of 1, 2, or 3 is usually at the lower levels of performance, 4, 5, and 6 are more within the average ranges of performance and stanines of 7, 8, or 9 indicate above average ranges of performance.

In conclusion, this publication has provided you with the most commonly used test vocabulary used to describe test results that may be communicated to you by the school. We hope this helps you in better understanding your child's test results.

For more information on this and other special education topics for parents visit: www.napcse.org .