

Community Child & Adolescent Mental Health Service Project

Dept. of Child & Adolescent Psychiatry, NIMHANS and Dept. of Women & Child Development, Govt. of Karnataka

Assessment Tool for Specific Learning Disability (Age 7 to 17)

A. Basic Information

Date:

Name of Child:

Sex:

Age:

Name/ Location of School:

Class Child is studying in (currently):

PHC Catchment Area:

B. Observation & Child's Self-Report/ Teacher's Report

	Child's Self-Report & Your Observation	Teacher's Report/ Observation
I. Reading Disability (Dyslexia)		
1. Slow reading rate/ phonetic reading		
2. Long hesitations, omissions		
3. Substitutions & addition of words		
4. Guessing at words		
5. Inability to recall/ draw conclusions from what was read		
II. Writing Disability (Dysgraphia)		
6. Excessive erasures		
7. Mixed upper case and lower case letters		
8. Inconsistent form and size of letters, or unfinished letters/ letter reversal		
9. Misuse of lines and margins		
10. Spelling mistakes		
11. Poor legibility		
III. Mathematical Disability (Dyscalculia)		
12. Does not recognize numerical symbols		
13. Does not understand mathematical terms or signs.		
14. Difficulty in carrying out standard arithmetic operations.		
15. Does not understand concept of arithmetic operations.		

School Attendance:

Changes in School/ Medium of Instruction:

Presence of ADHD:

C. Service Provider's Summary & Management Plan

	Class Appropriate	Below	Not Sure
Reading			
Writing			
Mathematics			

Guidance Notes

1. How the Screening Tool is Organized

- The Screening tool has 4 parts to it:
 - A. Basic Information (Child's name/ age/ sex/ school name etc)
 - B. Observation/ Child's Self-Report and Teacher's Report of SLD symptoms
 - C. Service Provider's Summary

- The Observation/ Child's Self-Report and Teacher's Report of SLD symptoms is organized into 3 domains:
 - I. Reading Disability (Dyslexia)
 - II. Writing Disability (Dysgraphia)
 - III. Mathematical Disability (Discalculia)

- Each domain contains between 4 and 6 items; the items represent key symptoms of the domain of specific learning disability.

2. Who to Administer the Tool To

- To be administered to school children identified/ referred by teachers with:
 - Poor academic performance, including failure in one or more subjects.
 - Specific problems in one or more of the domains i.e. reading, writing (in one or more languages) or mathematics.
 - Problems only in academics but not in other areas of social and cognitive development. (Ask the teacher whether the child is able to adequately perform tasks other than academic ones—whether the child can comprehend/ do other tasks age-appropriately. If yes, then administer SLD screening tool. If no, then administer developmental disability tool).
 - School refusal/ poor school attendance issues.

- To be administered to children ages 7 to 18.

3. How to Administer the Tool

- Introduce yourself to the child.
- Ensure privacy (use a space that is relatively quiet/ away from other people).
- Explain to the child the context of the referral and what you are going to do: "Your teachers and health team like the one I belong to wish to ensure your well-being. Your teacher has asked me to assist him/her and you in understanding you and your potential and any problems you might have—some of them pertain to academics. I am going to be spending about 20 minutes with you...and I will ask you to do a few tasks. If you are unable to do them or find them difficult, just tell me so and do not worry about it...this is not a test."
- Assure confidentiality/ provide reassurance: "Before we begin, I just want to tell you that what you share with me will not be shared or conveyed to anyone else. And in case we some parts of it need to be discussed with your teacher or your family, I will do so along with you...many children have academic problems and there are special ways to help some of these problems."
- To check for Reading Disability symptoms:
 - Ask the child which language the child is comfortable in (English/ Kannada/ Hindi/ Other). Usually this will be the medium of instruction at the school.

- Present the short passage (Passage A for children aged 7 to 12 and Passage B for children above 12 yrs) and ask the child to read it to you.
 - If an older child struggles with reading passage B, then ask him/her to try reading passage A instead.
 - While the child reads, record your observations as per the symptom check list provided.
 - Ensure that you provide a relaxed atmosphere; encourage the child and do not correct errors. Gently assist the child from time to time to enable child to finish task.
 - Check your observations by asking the child a few additional questions as necessary (For example: “I see that you find it difficult to read longer words”. Or “Can you summarize for me what you just read?”)
- To check for Writing Disability symptoms:
 - Ask the child which language the child is comfortable in (English/ Kannada/ Hindi/ Other). Usually this will be the medium of instruction at the school.
 - Ask the child to write 3 to 4 sentences about himself/herself.
 - If the child finds it difficult to think of what to write, dictate a few simple sentences to the child and ask the child to write them.
 - Look at what the child has written/ is writing and record your observations as per the symptom check list provided.
 - Ensure that you provide a relaxed atmosphere; encourage the child and do not correct for errors. If the child is getting anxious, you can stop.
 - Check your observations by asking the child a few additional questions as necessary (For example: “Do you find it difficult to write and keep pace when the teacher dictates notes?” Or “Do you find that you often make mistakes while writing and need to use the eraser all the time?”)
- To check for Mathematical Disability symptoms:
 - Write a few numbers (2 digit, then 3 digit, then 4-digit numbers) and ask the child to read the number. (Does the child recognize numerical symbols?)
 - Give some simple arithmetical calculations—higher numbers for older children and lower numbers for younger children.
 - Ask child to identify the sign you have put on the paper (+, -, X...) (Does the child identify mathematical signs?)
 - Then ask child to do the calculation as necessary. (Is the child able to perform arithmetical operations?)
 - Give simple logical/ arithmetic problem—such as: you have 100 apples, you ate 10 and gave away 20...how many are left? (Does child understand concept of arithmetic operations?)
 - Record your observations as per the symptom check list provided.
- List Teacher’s observation/ report on the child’s abilities in each domain. (Ask teacher to say ‘yes’, ‘no’ or ‘Not sure’).

4. Administering SLD Screening in Conjunction with Emotional-Behavioural Issues Screening Tool

- Many SLD children have associated emotional and behaviour problems--most commonly anxiety and depression-related issues but other behaviour problems such as ADHD may also be present.
- Therefore, all SLD children should be administered the Emotional-Behavioural Issues Screening Tool.

5. How to Interpret the Answers

6. Response to Child