Educational Assessment and School Accommodations for Children and Adolescents with ADHD

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Educational Connections
Why Is School Important?

• Approximately 1,000 hrs/year in school
  – Max 50 hrs/year with clinicians
• Mixed objective & subjective feedback
  – Generally positive subjective feedback from clinicians
• Social environment
Some Numbers

• 20% of children have some form of learning problem
• Almost 1 million children receive special education for some kind of learning disability
• Many not diagnosed before second grade
Red Flags - Preschoolers

- Late talking
- Difficulty learning and recognizing rhyme
- Pronunciation problems
- Difficulty finding the right word in speech
- Difficulty learning color names
Red Flags – Elementary Years

• Difficulty pronouncing words, reverses or substitute parts of words
• Doesn’t hear fine differences in words; e.g. “pin” for “pen”: confuses order of letters
• Spells a word several different ways; doesn’t recognize the correct version
• Doesn’t recognize words previously learned
• Problems stating thoughts in an organized way
• Difficulty carrying out a sequence of directions
• Poor reading comprehension
Red Flags – Later School Years

- Difficulty remembering what was just read
- Difficulty concentrating when reading or writing
- Unable to tell important information from unimportant details
- Spells poorly; misspelling is not phonetic
- Problems taking notes accurately
- Difficulty organizing and completing written projects
Proportion of the National Student Population with Disabilities: 1976-77 to 2009-10

Proportion of the National Student Population with Disabilities: 2000-01 to 2009-10

### Identification Rate of Students with Disabilities, by State: 2009-10

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>State</th>
<th>Disability Identification Rate (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rhode Island</td>
<td>18.68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Massachusetts</td>
<td>17.80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New York</td>
<td>17.36</td>
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<tr>
<td>Maine</td>
<td>17.25</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wyoming</td>
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<td>New Jersey</td>
<td>16.84</td>
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<td>Pennsylvania</td>
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<td>West Virginia</td>
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<tr>
<td>Indiana</td>
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<tr>
<td>Vermont</td>
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<td>Nebraska</td>
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<td>Illinois</td>
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<td>Wisconsin</td>
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<td>D.C.</td>
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<td>Missouri</td>
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<td>Idaho</td>
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<td>Texas</td>
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Identification Rates of Students with Disabilities, By State 2009-10

9.1% of TX students receive special-ed services

18% of RI students receive special-ed services

Special-Education Population by Disability 2000-01 and 2009-10

Note: The special-education population in 2009-10 was slightly larger in raw numbers than it was in 2000-01, but the proportion of students with disabilities among all students declined from 13.3 percent in 2000-01 to 13.1 percent in 2009-10.

What about ADHD?
ADHD: Elementary School Years

Observations:
• Difficulty sitting still
• Easily overwhelmed by settings
• Easily Bored
• Talks Out in Class

Interventions:
• Preferential Seating
• Silent Signal for Disruptive
• Physical Breaks (send to Office with note)
ADHD: Middle School Years

Observations:
- Teachers Complain about Inattention
- Grades Fall
- Described as Overly Social

Interventions:
- Coach at School (daily check-in)
- Teachers Adapt Output Expectations
- Accommodations for Time Management
ADHD: High School Years

Observations:
- May Cut Classes or School
- Peer Group May Change due to Behavior
- Missing Assignments/Procrastination
- Poor Test Grades
- Substance Use

Interventions:
- Adapt Classes to Meet Abilities
- Provide Coaching on Daily Basis
- Have Notes Provided
- Technology Use for Assignments/Test Reminders
How to Get the Interventions

- District Curriculum Accommodation Plan (D/ICAP)
- Response to Intervention (RTI)
- Section 504 (ADA)
- Special Education (IEP)
Grounding

A
ANTECEDENT

Cognitive
Emotional State
Health
Environment

B
BEHAVIOR

Resistance to Homework
Low Grades
Acting Up
School Refusal

C
CONSEQUENCE

Suspension
Grounding
Detention
Limit Electronics
Evaluate! Evaluate! Evaluate!

Need to document disability to get services
Need to look at cause in order to choose appropriate interventions

Psychotherapy, behavioral interventions and medication won’t help learning disabilities
Resource room won’t help OCD
Parent submits **written** request

Letter addressed to building administrator or Committee on Special Education chairperson:

“I am writing to refer my child ____ for an individual evaluation to determine whether he / she has a disability and would be eligible for special education services. I am concerned because ____.”
What is ICAP?

“Individual Curriculum Accommodation Plan”
ICAP: The Law

- Massachusetts General Laws, Chapter 71 Section 38Q1/2
- Mandate that school districts provide a District Curriculum Accommodation Plan (DCAP)
- Designed to assist principles in ensuring that all effort have been made to meet students’ need in regular education, and avoid unnecessary referrals to special education
ICAP: The Rationale

- Help all students achieve at the highest level possible
- Good and reasonable education practice
- Responding to the individual learning styles of the entire spectrum of students
- Not labeling students as disabled who are not
- Closing the achievement gap
- Leveling the playing field between students with strong advocates and students without them
- Avoiding unnecessary contention between school and parent
- Obeying the law
ICAP: Extra Time

- **Extra time** is the most challenging accommodation
- It is also the most often sought accommodation by parents
- Flexibility in timed testing makes sense when:
  1. It enables a student to more accurately demonstrate his/her learning
  2. Speed is not the skill being assessed
- Extra time may be 10 to 20 minutes on a 45 minute assessment
ICAP & ADHD

- Multi-modal and eclectic instructional repertoire
  - Directions/instructions orally and in writing
  - Active learning experiences (role plays, debates, etc)
- Clear educational pathway
  - Overview of topics for the day
  - Review of previous lectures
- Organizational support for classwork/homework
- Predictable classroom routines
- Adaptive technologies
  - Spell-check, books on tape
- Check for understanding
  - Summaries, interim assessments
ICAP, cont’d

- Seating where s/he learns best.
- Quick breaks after finishing tasks.
- In-class tools to reduce fidgeting.
- Quiet area for test taking and studying.
- Homework notebook teacher/parents can sign off on.
- Key points from the day’s lessons listed on the board.
- Use of own laptop for taking notes during class.
- Class notes shared by another student.
- Checking in with teacher after class to briefly discuss the lesson.

BUT......accountability?
RTI: Response to Intervention

instruction/intervention matched to student needs

and

using learning rate over time

and level of performance

to

inform educational decisions
What do we mean by RTI?

- RTI has two goals: prevent academic problems and determine students with LD.
- 2 or more tiers of increasingly intense interventions.
- Use a problem solving model or standardized treatment protocol for intervention tiers.
- Implementation of a differentiated curriculum with different instructional methods.
- Varied duration, frequency, and time of interventions
- Explicit decision rules for judging learners’ progress.
Tier 2, occurs outside of the time dedicated to core instruction, in groups of 5–8 students, and focuses primarily on providing increased opportunities to practice and learn skills taught in the core.

Tier 3 is more explicit, focuses on remediation of skills, is provided for a longer duration of time (both in overall length of intervention and regularly scheduled minutes of instructional time), and occurs in smaller groups (i.e., groups of 1–3 students);
Percentage of Students

Tier 1:
Foundation Standards-aligned instruction for all students (Benchmark)

Tier 2:
Supplemental interventions for students at some Risk (Strategic)

Tier 3:
Supplemental interventions for students at high risk (Intensive)

5% to 10%
10% to 25%
75% to 85%
80-90%
10-20%
Special Education
The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act

- Students between the ages 3 - 21 with disabilities that adversely affect their education

- 13 specific categories of eligibility

- IEP developed
13 Categories from IDEA

**autism**
deaf-blindness
deafness
developmental delay
emotional disturbance
hearing impairment
intellectual disability
multiple disabilities
orthopedic impairment

**other health impairment (ADHD)**
specific learning disability
speech or language impairment
traumatic brain injury
visual impairment (including blindness)
Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act

• A federal Anti-Discrimination Law.
• Protects ALL people with a disability that impairs one or more major life activity (learning is one).
• Prohibits discrimination in ANY program that receives federal dollars.
• Provides accommodations to remove discriminatory barriers.
• In education, a “504 Plan” removes barriers to learning and opportunities
## IDEA/504 Charts

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Purpose</th>
<th>IDEA</th>
<th>SECTION 504</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PURPOSE</td>
<td>To insure that all children with disabilities have available to them a free education</td>
<td>To prohibit discrimination on the basis of disability in any program receiving federal funds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WHO IS PROTECTED</td>
<td>13 categories of specific disabilities</td>
<td>Much broader, all school-age students with a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits a major life activity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DUTY TO PROVIDE A FREE APPROPRIATE EDUCATION</td>
<td>Requires the district to provide IEPs. “Appropriate education” means a program designed to provide “educational benefits.”</td>
<td>“Appropriate” means education comparable to the education provided to non-handicapped students</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
IDEA/504 CHART

STUDENT NEED

CONSIDERATION OF IDEA

Disability adversely affects educational performance

yes

IDEA eligibility

no

not eligible

CONSIDERATION OF 504

Handicap substantially limits one or more major life activities

no

not eligible

yes

504 Protected
Definitions

• Accommodations (Instructional):
  – adjustments to make sure students have equal access to curriculum and a way to be successful.
  – supports or services provided to help a student across the general curriculum.
Definitions Cont...

• Accommodations (Assessment):
  • A ‘tool’ that provides access – the assessment is not changed
  
  • (Some of us may ‘access’ a building by using the stairs, some of us may ‘access’ that same building by using a ramp – how we enter or ‘gain access’ to the building does not change the building)
Definitions cont...

• Modifications (Instructional):
  – curriculum and/or instruction is changed quite a bit.
  – changes made to the content and performance expectations for students.
Accommodations vs. Modifications

• An Accommodation levels the playing field
  – Example: larger print, extended time

• A Modification changes the playing field
  – Example decrease number of possible answers, out-of-level testing
Examples of Accommodations

- **Presentation**—repeat directions, read aloud, use of larger print
- **Response**—mark in book, use of recording aids, point
- **Setting**—study carrel, special lighting, separate room
- **Timing/Scheduling**—extended time, frequent breaks
Examples of Accommodations

• **Most Common**
  – Small Group administration
  – Read-aloud
  – Extended time

• **Most Effective**
  – Computer Administration
  – Read-aloud
  – Extended time

(NCEO – National Center for Educational Outcomes – www.education.umn.edu/nceo/)
Examples

• A child with delayed reading skills can participate in class discussions about a novel if she’s listened to the audio tape version of the book.

• A child with poor writing and spelling skills may use assistive technology — a tape recorder or word processor — rather than struggle with pencil and paper to do her report about a famous person in history.
Examples cont...

• For a child who’s easily distracted by background noise, an accommodation that might be offered is seating the student away from the window and heater, or close to the teacher for prompting.
Examples cont...

• additional time for work completion,
• readers or recorded materials,
• Calculators
• spell checkers,
• other electronic devices,
• special seating arrangements,
• enlarged text,
• scribes/note takers
• shortened assignments.
Exceptions...

• Cannot read a test to a child if it is a reading comprehension test.
• A spellchecker may be allowed to help a child who’s writing an essay.
• Cannot use spellchecker on spelling test.
• Must take a look at the information that accompanies the assessment to determine appropriateness of specific accommodations
Modification “Truths”

• When modifications are made, kids with disabilities are not expected to master the same academic content as others in the classroom.

• A child who can’t learn the twenty-word spelling list every week may learn only ten words. This results in different standards for mastery — half the number of words as kids without a disability learn weekly.
Modification “Truths”

• A fifth-grade child with a severe math disability who isn’t ready to learn fractions and decimals may still be working on addition and subtraction.

• This means that his instructional level has changed significantly — second-, not fifth-grade instruction — from that of other students in his classroom.
Modification Examples

• Examples of modification include, but are not limited to:
  – to lessen depth or breadth in the information/material covered (e.g. fewer objectives,
  – shortened units or lessons, fewer pages or problems, etc.),
  – materials written at a lower readability level (high-interest, low-ability books).
  – Out-of-grade level materials (third-grade math standards for a seventh grader)
Modification Examples

• Reducing assignments and assessments so a student only needs to complete the easiest problems
• Make assignments easier (crossing out half response choices)
• Provide hints or clues
Accommodations:

• A device, practice, intervention, or procedure that affords equal access to instruction or assessment.
• **Purpose:** to reduce or eliminate the impact of the student’s disability so that he or she can achieve the standard.
• **Key point:** an accommodation does not change content being taught nor reduce learning/achievement expectations.
• **Example:** using a text-to-speech device or an iPad to help a student with a reading disability access grade-level text and respond to questions that demonstrate comprehension.
• Another common accommodation may be extra time to complete an assignment.
Examples of Accommodations

- Reduce rate (untimed tests), volume, complexity
- Use a staged approach
- Present information in different format
- Allow student to produce work in medium that works best for him/her
- Modify grading system
- Modify curriculum
- Use of calculator, word processor etc
Accommodations (cont.)

• Housing
  – Single room
  – Roommate of choice
  – Alternate formats of print materials
  – Auxiliary aids and adaptive equipment
    • FM listening device
    • Tape recorders
    • Text reading software
Examples of Accommodations

- Reduce rate (untimed tests), volume, complexity
- Use a staged approach
- Present information in different format
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Sample Academic Accommodations

- Extended time for test taking
- Reduced distraction testing environment
- Permission to record lectures (smart pen use)
- Use of computers during lectures
- Use of computers for exams
- Use of text readers for exams
- Note takers
Increase in “Other Health Impaired”

Skull and Winkler, 2011

Note: The special-education population in 2009-10 was slightly larger in raw numbers than it was in 2000-01, but the proportion of students with disabilities among all students declined from 13.3 percent in 2000-01 to 13.1 percent in 2009-10.
Getting Services after High School

Typically no IEP in college

  MA is required to pay for needed services until child turns 22, or until graduates from high school

Can still get a 504

  Must establish presence of diagnosis and impact student’s ability to learn

  Many schools have a Student Disabilities Service office to facilitate the process
Assessment of Disability

- Past academic/work history
- Objective medical data, test scores, clinical observations and assessment
- Individuals actions and statements regarding condition
- Legitimacy of the findings and conclusions of the individual’s experts
- Any evidence of achievement without accommodation
• Inclusions of episodic conditions if impairing when active
• An impairment need not be severely restricting to be substantially limiting
• Mitigating measures should not be considered (except glasses)
  – Meds for ADHD cannot eliminate determination
ADHD Documentation

• Establish childhood onset of symptoms (report cards, support services, medication...)
• Use DSM criteria to describe current and childhood symptoms
• Demonstrate the substantial impairment in daily life activities
• Connect Accommodation recommendations to functional limitations
Joey: Problem Solving:
Problem Statement in Behavior

- Joey is off task
- Joey initiates disruptive behavior that violates classroom rules Joey does not complete classroom work
- Non-compliant behavior—does not follow directions and direct requests, i.e., when asked, Joey ignores requests
Joey: Problem Solving Problem Analysis

• Interpretation: Joey exhibits
  – Skills deficits (poor reading fluency, poor decoding) and
  – Performance problems (inattentive, disruptive classroom behavior, non-compliance at school and home).
  – Emotional regulation is adequate
Types of Learning Disabilities

- Dyslexia
- Dysgraphia
- Dyscalculia
- NLD
- Executive Functioning Disorder
  - At least 33% of ADHD have EFD
Legal Background
Why RTI is now being adopted by schools

Congress passed the revised Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEIA) in 2004

• This Federal legislation provides guidelines that schools must follow when identifying children for SPED

• Based on the changes in IDEA 2004, the US Department of Education updated its regulations to state education departments which include:
  – Explicitly ALLOW states to use RTI to identify LD
  – FORBID states from forcing schools to use a ‘discrepancy model’ to identify LD
“Unreasonable” Requests in Higher Ed. (per colleges)

• Reducing the amount of work required in a course
• Extended time for all assignments
• Reduced caseload every term
• Modifying assessments to student preference
• Priority in registration when not connected to a specific disability, related issue
Types of Learning Disabilities

- Dyslexia
- Dysgraphia
- Dyscalculia
- NLD

Executive Functioning Disorder

At least 33% of ADHD have EFD
Executive Functions in School

• In the classroom, the task most frequently impacted by executive function-driven producing difficulties is written expression.
Executive Functions in School

- **What Tommy told me:**

  “My favorite game is rolling marbles. I think it is fun. I just learned it yesterday. It can be pretty hard at times. It can be fun and it’s interesting if you make it challenging. I like making the boxes to roll the marbles into. You probably need to be pretty skilled with eye hand coordination to do it. To get up the ramp you need to roll it really fast.”
Executive Functions in School

- What Tommy wrote for me:
  My favorite game is ... “mabul roling it is fun. I like making the box to role in to. I am pretty good as well. It is really interesting. It is so fun
Interventions for EFD

Scaffolding for organization
Time management w/ teacher for planning
Tasks Broken Down for working memory
After school Checking Time for inhibition
Sheet with Lecture Bullets for attention
CIRCLE MAP
Thinking Skill: Defining in Context & Brainstorming

Main Idea or Concept

Iris, examples, definition

How do you know this?

How do you know this?

How do you know this?

How do you know this?

Iris, examples, definition

Iris, examples, definition

Iris, examples, definition
BUBBLE MAP

Thinking Skill: Describing

Main Idea or Concept

Describing word or phrase (adjective)

Describing word or phrase (adjective)

Describing word or phrase (adjective)

Describing word or phrase (adjective)

Describing word or phrase (adjective)
DOUBLE-BUBBLE MAP

Thinking Skill: Compare/Contrast
BRACE MAP
Thinking Skill: Whole to Part Reasoning

- Whole Object
  - Major Part
    - Sub-Parts
    - Sub-Parts
    - Sub-Parts
  - Major Part
    - Sub-Parts
    - Sub-Parts
    - Sub-Parts
  - Major Part
    - Sub-Parts
    - Sub-Parts
    - Sub-Parts
MULTI-FLOW MAP
Thinking Skill: Comparing/Contrasting

Cause

Event

Cause

Effect

Effect

Cause

Effect

Effect
Recommendations

• Mapthemind.com

• inspiration.com

• Draftbuilders

• Dragon Naturally Speaking v. 11.
FOR A FAIR SELECTION EVERYBODY HAS TO TAKE THE SAME EXAM:
PLEASE CLIMB THAT TREE

Our Education System !!!
If a child can't learn the way we teach, maybe we should teach the way they learn.