



ANDORRA PEDIATRICS

8945 Ridge Avenue
Suite 3 - 4 - 5
Philadelphia, PA 19128
215-483-8558
andorrapediatrics.com

When to Consider A Psychological Evaluation for Your Child

Parents are usually the first to recognize that their child has a problem with emotions or behavior. Parents' growing concerns combined with the observations of others, such as teachers and family members, may result in the realization that a child can benefit from evaluation and treatment.

The following are a few signs that may indicate that a psychological evaluation may be useful:

Younger Children

- marked decline in school performance
- poor grades in school despite trying very hard
- a lot of worry or anxiety, as shown by regular refusal to go to school, go to sleep, or take part in activities that are normal for the child's age
- hyperactivity, fidgeting, constant movement beyond regular playing
- persistent nightmares
- disobedience or aggression that lasts longer than 6 months and provocative opposition to authority figures
- frequent, unexplainable temper tantrums

Preadolescents and Adolescents

- marked change in school performance
- abuse of alcohol or drugs
- inability to cope with problems and daily activities
- marked changes in sleeping or eating habits
- many complaints of physical ailments
- aggressive or nonaggressive consistent violation of rights of others; opposition to authority, truancy, thefts, vandalism
- intense fear of becoming obese with no relationship to actual body weight
- depression shown by sustained, prolonged, negative mood and attitude, often accompanied by poor appetite, difficulty sleeping, or thoughts of death
- frequent outbursts of anger.

What Is Psychological & Scholastic IQ Testing?

We usually recommend a "psychological and scholastic IQ testing" for children experiencing difficulties in school performance. This testing will help pinpoint your child's areas of strength and weakness. In Pa., public schools are required by law to offer this testing when a parent makes the request.

The private schools and Catholic schools are not required to perform this testing under this law. In these cases, if you make the request and your child's school is not able to perform the testing, you can make the request from the public school your child would have attended in your area. If you pay school taxes, then the public school is required to perform the testing even though your child does not attend that school.

Please ask us for a prescription requesting "Psychological & Scholastic IQ Testing." We will date the prescription and parents can present it to their child's principal or counselor. The law states the testing must be done within 45 school days. Please obtain a copy of the final report for us to review.

What Is Psychological Counseling?

Psychological counseling refers to a variety of techniques and methods used to help children and adolescents who are experiencing difficulties with emotion and behavior. Although there are different types of psychotherapy, each relies on communication as the basic tool for bringing about change in a person's feelings and behavior.

Psychological counseling is often used in combination with other treatments, such as medication, behavior management, or work with the school.

Psychological counseling may involve an individual child, group, or family. For children and adolescents, playing, drawing, building, and pretending, as well as talking, are important ways of sharing feelings and resolving problems.

As part of the initial assessment, a mental health professional will determine the need for psychological counseling. This decision will be based upon such things as the child's current problems, history, level of development, ability to cooperate in treatment, and what interventions are most likely to help.

The relationship that develops between the therapist and the child is very important. The child or adolescent must feel comfortable, safe, and understood. This type of trusting environment makes it much easier for the child to express his or her thoughts and feelings and to benefit from the therapy.

Psychological counseling helps children and adolescents in a variety of ways. They receive emotional support, resolve conflicts with people, understand feelings and problems, and try out new solutions to old problems. Goals for therapy may be specific (change in behavior, improved relations with friends) or more general (less anxiety, better self-esteem). The length of therapy depends on the complexity and severity of problems.

Parents should ask the following questions:

- Why is psychotherapy being recommended?
- What are some of the results I can expect to see?
- How long will my child be involved in therapy?
- How frequently will the therapist or doctor want to see my child?
- Will the therapist or doctor be meeting with just my child or the entire family?
- How will we be informed about our child's progress and how can we help?
- How soon can we expect to see some changes?

The therapist or doctor providing the psychotherapy will be able to answer your questions and concerns.

Developed by the American Academy of Child & Adolescent Psychiatry

This information should not be used as substitute for the medical care and advice of your child's physician. Health related topics found on the Andorra Pediatrics web site should not be used for diagnosing purposes or be substituted for medical advice. As with any new or ongoing treatment, always consult your professional healthcare provider before making any changes in treatment or beginning any new treatment. If you have any questions or concerns, please call our office.