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Diagnostic Test Comparison

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**Introduction**

The two tests that Grand Island Northwest School District administers for reading diagnostics are the Woodcock-Johnson IV and the Young Children’s Achievement Test (YCAT). The student tested, will be referred to as Sally, is currently a first grader.

**Assessment**

The first assessment that was administered was the Woodcock-Johnson, at Northwest our School Psychologist usually only administers the standard battery which contains 11 tests. Test 1 through 6 are used for calculating the reading, mathematics, written language, academic skills, academic application and achievement. I administered all of the test but only supplied the reading data. The reading sub-test are letter-word identification, passage comprehension, word attach, oral reading and sentence reading fluency. Curricular clusters in the standard battery was reading, broad reading, basic reading skills and reading fluency. I also gave one test from the extended battery and that was reading recall. The curricular cluster of the reading recall is reading comprehension.

The second test administered was the YCAT is used to measure the achievement levels of preschool, kindergarten, and first-grade children. YCAT asses skills related to general information, reading, math, writing and spoken language. The reading subtest measures the meaning of printed symbols, the alphabet, and conventions of print. Focus on the naming and sounding of alphabetic letters, rhyming, reading words in isolation as well as in context, and reading comprehension. The Writing subtest measures knowledge about writing, the use of writing, the tools of writing, and the child’s ability to copy to write the alphabet, to write her name, and to write elementary spelling words and sentences. Spoken Language subtest contains items that measure a child’s knowledge of spoken language. Knowledge of receptive and expressive vocabulary, syntax, and communication skills. Phonological awareness items are also apart they are closely related to oral language comprehension.

Sally was administered the WOODCOCK-JOHNSON IV TESTS OF ACHIEVEMENT (using grade-level norms) to measure academic skills and earned the following results:

Cluster / Standard Score / Percentile / Classification

BASIC READING SKILLS / 99 / 45%ile / Average

Letter-Word Identification / 98/ 45%ile / Average

Word Attack / 102 / 54%ile/ Average

READING COMPREHENSION / 96 /38%ile / Average

Passage Comprehension / 88 /22%ile / Low Average

Reading Recall / 109 /73%ile / Average

READING FLUENCY / 98 /46%ile / Average

Oral Reading / 103 /58%ile / Average

Sentence Reading Fluency / 96 /39%ile / Average

BROAD WRITTEN LANGUAGE / 97 /43%ile / Average

Spelling / 96 /40%ile / Average

Writing Samples / 102 /56%ile / Average

Sentence Writing Fluency / 93 /31%ile / Average

Sally was also administered the YOUNG CHILDREN’S ACHIEVEMENT TEST (YCAT) to assess academic skills in the areas of early reading, writing and math skills. Sally earned the following results:

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Cluster** | **Standard Score** | **Percentile** | **Age Equiv.** | **YCAT Classification** |
| General Information | 108 | 70th | 7-6 | Avg. |
| Reading | 115 | 84th | 7-11 | Above Avg. |
| Mathematics | 110 | 74th | 7-7 | Below Avg. |
| Writing | 85 | 79th | 7-9 | Below Avg. |
| Spoken Language | 70 | 86th | 8-0 | Above Avg. |
| **EARLY ACHIEVEMENT COMPOSITE** | 116 | 86th | 8-0 | Above Avg. |

**Letter-Word Identification**

This sub-test in the beginning required Sally to identify letters as the test went on, she then read aloud individual words correctly. Sally identified initial items rapidly and accurately but had difficulty applying phoneme-grapheme relationships to latter items.

**Passage Comprehension**

This test measures the ability to use syntactic and semantic cues to identify a missing word in the text. In the beginning of the test the questions were multiple choice format and required her to point to the picture represented by a phase. As the test went Sally had to read a short passage and identify a missing key word that makes sense in the context of the passage. Sally struggled as the pictures were removed. In the initial passages she easily read them and struggled as the reading increased in difficulty.

**Word Attack**

Word Attack measures a person’s ability to apply phonic and structural analysis skills to the pronunciation of unfamiliar printed words. In the beginning of the test Sally had to give the sounds for single letters. As the test went on, she had to read aloud letter combinations that are phonically consistent or are regular patterns in English orthography but are nonsense or low-frequency words. In the beginning of this test Sally identified items rapidly and accurately but had difficulty applying phoneme-grapheme relationship as the test continued.

**Oral Reading**

Sally read aloud sentences that gradually increase in difficulty. Oral Reading is a measure of story reading accuracy and prosody. In the beginning she read the passage easily she had a few repetitions of words as the test went on, she had more mispronunciation of words

**Sentence Reading Fluency**

This measure reading rate and cognitive processing speed. Sally had to read simple sentences silently and quickly mark in the booklet, deciding if the statement is true or false, and then circling Yes or No. This sub-test was timed Sally had three minutes to answer as many in the time limit. She appeared to read sentences at a rate typical for peers.

**Reading Recall**

Sally read a short story silently and then retold as much of the story as she could remember. Reading Recall is a measure of reading comprehension. In the beginning passages she could give almost every detail as the test went on, she could give the name of the character and a few details.

**Spelling**

Sally was required to write words that I said orally to her. The sub-test started with her having to write uppercase and lowercase letter. Then she was required to spell words correctly. Sally spelled initial items easily and accurately; spelling of latter items reflected a need for further skill development.

**Writing Samples**

This measures Sally’s skills in writing responses to a variety of demands. The responses were evaluated for the quality of expression. Item difficulty increases by increasing passage length, the level of vocabulary, and the sophistication of the content. She was not penalized for basic writing skills, such as spelling or punctuation. She had sentences that were simple but adequate.

**Sentence Writing Fluency**

Sentence Wring Fluency measures skill in formulating and writing simple sentences quickly, requiring both reading-writing and cognitive processing speed abilities. The sentences must relate to a given picture and must include a given set of three words. The test had a five-minute time limit. Sally wrote complex and detailed sentences at a slow pace.

**Compare and Contrast**

The YCAT and the Woodcock-Johnson were both fairly easy test to administer. The more I practice with it the more continence I will have when administering the test. The YCAT is great to provide a quick snapshot of a student’s ability. Administering the YCAT takes 25-45 minuets to complete. The score does have to be calculated using the back of the teacher’s manual and took some extra time because I have never used it before. One upside to using the Woodcock-Johnson scores are entered into the computer program and it formulates all the scores for you.

The YCAT is nice for younger students that struggle it give a good overview on what students know and doesn’t take a long time. Another factor I like about the YCAT is that none of the test is timed. When giving the Woodcock-Johnson the time restriction made Sally seem flustered. It showed on the quality of the work. When she didn’t have the pressure of the time, she did awesome. With the Woodcock it’s very long and Sally became very impatient after four tests. We had to take a lot of breaks and go for runs. Normally a school psychologist would give the test over multiple days. The nice thing about both of the test is that they can be given over multiple days.

After giving both of the test I was talking to our school psychologist and she shared that she prefers to give the YCAT to the younger students and uses their MAPs scores. When giving the Woodcock Johnson to young struggling students she can’t get a basal score to continue testing. The YCAT does not need a basal score to be set the test is complete after the student misses three answers in a row.

Woodcock-Johnson gives more of a breakdown on where students are struggling. For example, in the cluster test of reading Sally was average but in passage comprehension she was low average this would be an area that she needs to work at. Both assessments I felt gave good feedback on Sally’s ability. Woodcock-Johnson and the YCAT are both used to determine if a student would be placed in special education.