Neuropsychological Evaluation: What to Expect and How to Prepare

As part of the transplant journey, your child will undergo a neuropsychological evaluation. In this handout, you will learn what to expect from the evaluation and how to prepare for it.

WHAT IS A NEUROPSYCHOLOGICAL EVALUATION?

A neuropsychological evaluation (also called a neuropsych eval) is a comprehensive test that gives an understanding of your child’s intellectual, emotional, social and behavioral functioning.

A neuropsych eval typically involves a day of tests, tasks and interviews with your child. It also includes information from medical and academic records and questionnaires filled out by parents and teachers.

HOW IS THIS DIFFERENT FROM THE TESTING MY CHILD DOES AT SCHOOL?

Tests in school usually measure how well your child is doing with school materials and methods. The neuropsych evals is much broader and evaluates your child’s:

- Learning and behavior patterns
- Intellectual strengths and weaknesses
- Emotional development
- What you and the care team can expect of your child at each stage of life

With the results of the neuropsych eval, the psychology assessment center can often make recommendations for strategies to help your child succeed in both life and school.

HOW DOES A CHILD UNDERGOING A TRANSPLANT BENEFIT FROM A NEUROPSYCH EVAL?

Children waiting to undergo or who have undergone an organ transplant have a higher risk of cognitive difficulties (problems with thinking and memory skills). This is because their life-threatening illness has a big impact on their lives.

The childhood years can be a challenging time for any child with a chronic illness as they work to develop independence and a sense of competence (thorough understanding about a certain subject). These can be challenged by the demands of their medical condition.

DOES INSURANCE COVER THE NEUROPSYCH EVAL?

Usually. The Psychology Assessment Center (PAC) will confirm coverage before your child’s visit.

WHO DOES THE EVAL?

Neuropsychologists who specialize in working with children will do the neuropsych eval. A neuropsychologist studies how the brain and nervous system affect a person’s behavior and thinking skills.

HOW DO I SIGN UP MY CHILD FOR A NEUROPSYCH EVAL?

The PAC will call you to schedule a neuropsych eval. Eval dates are usually scheduled about 4 months out.

More info on how to prepare on the back! >>>
WHERE DOES THE NEUROPSYCH EVAL HAPPEN?
Testing takes place at the MGH Psychology Assessment Center.

MGH Psychology Assessment Center
One Bowdoin Square, 7th floor
Boston, MA 02114
Phone: 617-726-3647

WHAT SHOULD I BRING TO THE NEUROPSYCH EVAL?
- Snacks or lunch for your child
- School records, including previous school testing, 504 plans or IEPs

What if I cannot get copies of my child’s school records?
Do not worry if you cannot get copies of your child’s school records. The care team will ask you to sign a release form that allows them to contact the school directly.

HOW CAN I PREPARE MY CHILD FOR THEIR NEUROPSYCH EVAL?
Here are tips on how to prepare your child for their neuropsych eval:
- Tell your child there are no injections or vaccines.
- Describe the testing activities. Testing includes lots of different activities, like patterns or puzzles. Some activities might be fun for your child. Other activities might be boring or frustrating at times.

WHERE DOES THE NEUROPSYCH EVAL HAPPEN?
No, you will not be in the room with your child during testing. When you arrive, you will fill out a few forms and questionnaires. The care team will also briefly interview you. The interview usually takes about 30 minutes. Once these things are done, you may leave the building if you wish. The care team will contact you when your child’s neuropsych eval is finished.

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