

Informed Consent Example from BCASP

Informed Consent

Informed consent is the result of a process of reaching an agreement to work together collaboratively, rather than simply having a consent form signed. In obtaining informed consent, parent and guardians are provided with as much information as a reasonable person would want to know before making a decision or consenting to a psychoeducational assessment or service. Reasonable steps should be taken to ensure that all the appropriate information is conveyed to you in a manner to ensure that you clearly understand what you are consenting to on behalf of your child.

The Purpose and Nature of a Psychoeducational Assessment

The goal of assessment is to investigate specific and new information to better understand and improve the student's current functioning or learning. A psychoeducational assessment gathers information about a student's strengths and weaknesses in various domains [e.g., intelligence ("IQ" tests), achievement, processing, language, and behaviour]. The assessment process is driven by individual student need and can include any of the following: interviews, rating scales, observations, file review, testing, curriculum based measurement, history taking and measurement of response to intervention. The assessment process may require the school psychologist to work with your child in a one to one situation outside the regular classroom, but within regular school hours. At the end of the assessment, a report is written and is shared with the parent or guardian and needed school personnel. You can follow up if there are any questions at that time. The report will become part of the student's confidential file.

The Benefits and Risks to Assessment

Generally, assessment is organized to answer questions about a student's learning or behaviour. It may help school personnel to gain a better understanding of your child's learning strengths and challenges. The assessment may help the School Based Team to develop educational programs including insights into beneficial changes as well as develop new strategies, accommodations and adaptations that may be necessary to improve your child's learning. The assessment may also lead to your child being identified as having special educational needs. Such identification can make it easier for students to access some additional services that may be beneficial.

The contents of the results may lead to your child being identified as meeting British Columbia Ministry of Education criteria as a student with special needs, which may be upsetting for you to hear. For example, one possible outcome a parent or guardian could hear is that their child has a learning disability or an intellectual disability. It is important that any concerns or questions that develop over the assessment period be mentioned to the school psychologist promptly, so they can be alleviated or addressed.

Alternatives to Assessment

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The decision to assess your child could be postponed to another time, and the current educational program or placement maintained. A wait and see strategy can be a reasonable choice as other alternatives to a full assessment are implemented and evaluated. Such a strategy might provide a new and useful information about your child's needs and abilities. However, decisions about the educational program of a student should be made with adequate information so the absence of psychoeducational information may limit the effectiveness if other actions or delay the implementation of appropriate interventions. Since the goal of assessment is to better understand and improve a student's current functioning or learning, then non-action can delay that aspect of the assessment process.

Mutual Responsibilities

The parents and teachers will ensure that the child undergoing the assessment is prepared for any change of routine and is made to feel as comfortable as possible regarding the assessment. The school psychologist will ensure that a written copy of the assessment is given to the school in a timely manner. School personal will be responsible for setting up a meeting to discuss the results with parents, the school psychologist, and the child's teachers.

The Ongoing Right to Refuse or Rescind Consent

Consent is not valid if it occurs under the following conditions: coercion, undue influence, misrepresentation, fraud, or duress. Moreover, having your child participate is voluntary and consent can be withdrawn at any time; the right to refuse consent can be invoked at any point during the assessment process by contacting the school psychologist or school principal.

The Limits to Confidentiality

All documents and the written report relating to the assessment are the property of the XX School District. The information is considered private, confidential and protected by law. Sharing this information with anyone other than authorized employees of the XX School District requires the parent or guardian's written consent. There are limits on this confidentiality and it may be revoked if:

- the student represents an imminent danger to them self or others;
- the student is in need of protection and a report must be filed with the appropriate agency;
- a court orders the disclosure of the records.

Data Storage

The B.C Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act requires XX School District to inform you that some assessment measures use web-based software storage on servers in both Canada and the United States. The school district requires your written consent for your child's information being stored on these servers. The information to be stored is safeguarded and encrypted to ensure security and unauthorized access. The school psychologist may be able to provide alternative assessment arrangements should you choose to not have your child assessed with these particular assessment instruments. Some of your child's information, depending on the assessment measures used, will be subject to the USA Freedom of Information laws, specifically the USA Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) and the Children's Online Privacy Protection Act (COPPA). These laws provide the similar level of protection as

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BC's Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (FOIPPA). Please contact the school psychologist directly if you have concerns related to web based data storage. **Consider adding the following statement if it is true for your district:** *This storage meets the security and privacy requirements of XX School District.*