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PSYCHOLOGICAL SERVICES
ANYTOWN, ANystate 99999

PSYCHO-EDUCATIONAL EVALUATION

Name:	Jim Sample	Date of Evaluation:	01-11-2010
School:	Anytown Elementary	Date of Birth:	02-11-2002
Grade:	2	Chronological Age:	7 years 11 months
School Psychologist:	Amy Tester, Ed.S.	Date of Report:	01-18-2010

REASON FOR REFERRAL:

The Student Assistance Team referred Jim for a comprehensive psychoeducational evaluation to determine why he has not responded to the reading interventions provided as part of his regular instructional program. The team would like to be able to identify additional targeted instructional recommendations as a result of the evaluation.

RELEVANT BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

Jim is in second grade at Any Elementary School. His language appears appropriate for his age. He uses complete sentences to describe his experiences and chooses words that convey his ideas. During math activities, he frequently raises his hand to answer the teacher's questions. When working with small groups of classmates on math, he assumes a leadership role. However, Jim does not display the same enthusiasm for reading. During reading activities, his teacher frequently reminds him to lift up his head from his desk and to turn to the appropriate page in his book. His teacher is concerned that his reading skills are lower than the skills of the majority of his classmates. She has observed that Jim struggles to name high frequency words. He attempts to use segmentation and blending to name unfamiliar words and he reads fewer words correctly within a minute than the other children in his second-grade class.

In an effort to improve his reading, his teacher and the reading specialist provided supplemental instruction focused on segmentation and blending of simple consonant-vowel-consonant words. Jim demonstrated minimal improvements in number of words read correctly based on these interventions. The Student Assistance Team reviewed Jim's progress and decided to request additional assessment of Jim's reading skills.

The school psychologist, as a member of the Student Assistance Team, administered several subtests from the Process Assessment of the Learner-Second Edition. The subtests provided information about Jim's skills on auditory and visual components of reading and about his ability to name aloud stimuli quickly and accurately.

The results on the subtests *Pseudoword Decoding*, *Syllables*, *Phonemes*, *Rimes*, *Receptive Coding*, *RAN-Letters*, *RAN-Words*, and *RAN-Digits* indicated he struggled to segment spoken words into syllables and into phonemes. He performed significantly below expectations in naming the portion of the syllable that is left (e.g., *end*) when the initial phoneme (e.g., *b*) or phonemes (e.g., *bl*) of the syllable is/are omitted. In using phonological decoding skills to read nonsense words, he named simple consonant-vowel-consonant words with short vowel sounds. He did well on tasks that required him to name quickly and accurately letters and letter groups and single-digit and double-digit numbers. He named few words quickly and accurately.

Based on this information, the members of the Student Assistance Team requested a comprehensive psychoeducational evaluation in an effort to identify targeted interventions to improve Jim's achievement of reading skills.

TESTS ADMINISTERED:

Differential Ability Scales–Second Edition
Wechsler Individual Achievement Test–Third Edition

RESULTS:

The examiner administered several tests to evaluate Jim's cognitive ability and academic achievement. The Differential Ability Scales–Second Edition assessed Jim's ability to receive, perceive, process, and remember information. The Wechsler Individual Achievement Test–Third Edition assessed his achievement of skills in oral language, reading, written expression, and mathematics.

Ability: On the Differential Ability Scales–Second Edition, Jim earned a standard score of 97 for General Conceptual Ability. This score is within the Average range and equals or exceeds the scores of approximately 42% of children his age in the standardization sample. This indicates his general ability to perform complex mental processing involving conceptualization and transformation of information is developmentally appropriate. His performance was comparable on tasks that measured spatial reasoning and acquired verbal concepts and knowledge.

His verbal abilities (standard score = 102) are within the Average range and equal to or better than those of approximately 55% of his same-age peers in the standardization sample. Jim performed within the Average range on tasks that required complex visual-spatial processing (Spatial Ability standard score = 102). His score was equal to or better than the scores of approximately 55% of others his age in the standardization sample.

In contrast, he performed within the Below Average range on tasks that measured nonverbal reasoning (standard score = 89). This score equaled or exceeded the scores of approximately 23% of others his age in the standardization sample. The 13-point difference between verbal and nonverbal reasoning and between spatial and nonverbal reasoning is statistically significant. A difference of this magnitude occurred in 10-15 percent of children Jim's age in the standardization sample. Given that the identified difference is not especially unusual, we will need other confirmatory evidence before we can conclude that Jim's nonverbal reasoning abilities are a weakness relative to his verbal and visual-spatial abilities.

Jim’s performance was consistent on the two subtests that assessed verbal ability. He was able to define words presented orally by the examiner (Word Definitions T-Score = 52) and to identify the common concept linking three words (Verbal Similarities T-Score = 50). His performance also was consistent on the two subtests that assessed visual-spatial ability. He performed within the Average range on a task that measured his ability to recall briefly exposed abstract designs by drawing them with pencil and paper (Recall of Designs T-Score = 51). His performance was also within the Average range on a task that measured his ability to use blocks to construct patterns demonstrated by the examiner or presented in a picture (Pattern Construction T-Score = 52).

On the two subtests assessing nonverbal reasoning, his performance was comparable. His ability to perceive and apply relationships among abstract figures (Matrices T-Score = 43) and to perceive sequential patterns (Sequential and Quantitative Reasoning T-Score = 44) was at the low end of the average range. The items for both tasks are presented visually with little verbal instruction. Nevertheless, verbal mediation of the problems will often help the child come to a correct solution.

Differential Ability Scales–Second Edition (DAS-II)			
Composite/Cluster/Core Subtest	Standard Score (Mean=100)	T-Score (Mean= 50)	Percentile Rank
General Conceptual Ability	97		42
<i>Verbal Ability</i>	102		55
Word Definitions		52	58
Verbal Similarities		50	50
<i>Nonverbal Reasoning Ability</i>	89		23
Matrices		43	24
Sequential and Quantitative Reasoning		44	27
<i>Spatial Ability</i>	102		55
Recall of Designs		51	54
Pattern Construction		52	58

Diagnostic Assessment: To further assess Jim’s abilities to receive, perceive, process, and remember information, the school psychologist administered several diagnostic subtests from the DAS-II. The results indicate Jim’s ability to process information that is being held within short-term memory is within the Average range (Working Memory standard score = 93). His performance was better on the subtest Recall of Digits Backward (T-score = 52) than on Recall

of Sequential Order (T-score = 40). Both tasks required Jim to listen to a list of verbally presented words and/or numbers. He was required to hold the list in short-term memory while working on the list and re-ordering the words/numbers. Recall of Digits Backward is entirely verbal. On the Recall of Sequential Order subtest, the examiner presents lists of body parts verbally. The child must encode the oral information and store it in short-term memory. Then, the child must mentally manipulate the encoded information to present the body parts in a specific order. The ordering of the information requires the child to visualize the body parts in order from head to toe.

Differential Ability Scales-Second Edition (DAS-II)			
<i>Cluster/Diagnostic Subtest</i>	Standard Score (Mean=100)	T-Score (Mean= 50)	Percentile Rank
<i>Working Memory</i>	93		32
Recall of Sequential Order		40	16
Recall of Digits Backward		52	58
<i>Processing Speed</i>	89		23
Speed of Information Processing		51	54
Rapid Naming		38	12
Other Diagnostic Subtests			
Recall of Objects – Immediate		40	16
Recall of Objects – Delayed		41	18
Recall of Digits Forward		53	62
Recognition of Pictures		54	66
Phonological Processing		51	54

Jim's ability to process information with relative speed is within the Below Average range (Processing Speed standard score = 89). His performance was better on Speed of Information Processing (T-score = 51) than on Rapid Naming (T-score = 38). On Speed of Information Processing, Jim was required to make brief marks with a pencil on a test booklet. This task assessed his ability to make visual, quantitative comparisons and is entirely nonverbal. On the Rapid Naming subtest, Jim was asked to retrieve names of colors and animals as quickly as possible. The tasks on this subtest require integration of visual and verbal processing. Jim performed better when the task required him to perform simple mental operations such as naming the colors OR naming the animals. His performance was relatively weaker on a more

complex task which required him to look at the color AND the animal and assign a name to both in order. He struggled with this task which required him to switch attention and mental set.

Jim's performance was variable on other diagnostic subtests. His scores were within the Below Average range on Recall of Objects - Immediate (T-Score = 40) and Recall of Objects - Delayed (T-Score = 41). These tasks measure visual-verbal memory. Successful performance requires verbal encoding, rehearsal and retrieval strategies as well as visualization of an array of pictures.

His performance was within the Average range on Recall of Digits Forward (T-Score = 53), a measure of short-term auditory sequential recall. Also within the Average range was his ability to remember and recognize visual images (Recognition of Pictures T-Score = 54). This subtest measures short-term visual recognition rather than visual recall and requires detailed discrimination.

Jim's score on the Phonological Processing subtest was within the Average range (T-Score = 51). Analysis of the tasks on this subtest indicates Jim did well on rhyming. He also did well on blending syllables (e.g., Mon-day) and phonemes (e.g., o-n). He performed below average in deletion (e.g., say Mon-day without Mon). This may reflect a weakness in analytic skill that indicates if he has an "ear" for sounds within words. He struggled to name phonemes and segments of words he heard. Segmentation of orally presented words is a fundamental skill needed for spelling.

Summary: In processing information, Jim responded effectively when tasks were presented verbally and when the tasks required a verbal response. He was able to hold verbal information in short-term memory and to repeat or transform the information. He also responded effectively when tasks were presented visually and when he was asked to recall the written information or organize visual information and objects in space. In comparison, he struggled with tasks that required integration of visual and verbal processing.

This probably impacts his performance on reading tasks which require him to link the visual (orthographic) word form to the oral (phonological) word form. This weakness in visual-verbal processing also impacts his ability to spell words where he is required to translate spoken words into printed words. In addition to the weakness in linking the phonological and orthographic word forms, Jim has difficulty coordinating all working memory components. He struggled to switch mental set to look at colors and animals, to assign a name to the color and the animal, and to say the name of the color followed by the name of the animal.

Academic Achievement: The Wechsler Individual Achievement Test-Third Edition was administered to assess Jim's achievement of skills in oral language, reading, writing, and mathematics. Consistent with teacher observations, Jim performed better on mathematics subtests than on reading and writing subtests. His standard score of 100 for mathematics was within the Average range and equaled or exceeded the scores of approximately 50% of others his age in the standardization sample. He performed within the average range in solving written mathematics problems (Numerical Operations standard score = 105) and on items that assessed his ability to reason mathematically when problems were presented with verbal and visual

prompts (Mathematics Problem Solving standard score = 98). His written mathematics fluency is within the average range (Mathematics Fluency standard score = 107).

Wechsler Individual Achievement Test–Third Edition			
Composite/Subtests	Standard Score (Mean=100)	Percentile Rank	Abil/Ach Disc. Sig?
Oral Language	96	39	N
Listening Comprehension	100	50	
Oral Expression	95	37	
Basic Reading	76	5	Y
Word Reading	63	1	
Pseudoword Decoding	80	9	
Reading Comprehension and Fluency	73	4	Y
Reading Comprehension†	90	25	
Oral Reading Fluency†	63	1	
Written Expression	81	10	Y
Spelling	78	7	
Sentence Composition	80	9	
Mathematics	102	55	N
Numerical Operations	105	63	
Mathematics Problem Solving	98	45	
Mathematics Fluency	107	68	N

† Score for Reading Comprehension and for Oral Reading Fluency is based on grade 1 item set.

Jim performed below expectations on reading subtests. He earned a standard score of 73 for Reading Comprehension and Fluency. Within the Below Average range, this score equals or exceeds the scores of approximately 4% of others his age. He performed within the Average range in responding to questions that assessed literal and inferential comprehension. It should be noted that his score for the Reading Comprehension subtest was based on an item set typically used with students in Grade 1. Jim was able to name enough words at this level and this allowed

him to respond effectively to comprehension questions. He was unable to respond effectively to comprehension questions based on the grade 2 item set. His score was 63 for Oral Reading Fluency. This score is within the Low range and better than the scores of approximately 1% of others his age. Like Reading Comprehension, the score for Oral Reading Fluency was based on a below-grade level item set. Even with lowered readability demands, Jim struggled to name words fluently (standard score = 65) and accurately (standard score = 72).

His score of 76 for Basic Reading is within the Below Average range and better than the scores of approximately 5% of others his age in the standardization sample. His best performance in Basic Reading was on Pseudoword Decoding (standard score = 80) which required him to pronounce nonsense words that are phonetically regular. Although his score was below average on this task, he was able to sound out unfamiliar letter combinations, following regular rules of phonemic analysis, and he blended the segments to name the words. His score was lower on Word Reading (standard score = 71) which required him to name real words in isolation.

Jim's score for Written Expression (standard score = 81) was within the Below Average range. His performance was consistent on Spelling (standard score = 78) and on Sentence Composition (standard score = 80).

SUMMARY:

Jim is a seven-year-eleven-month-old student in the second grade at Anytown Elementary School. He is learning mathematics skills at the expected rate, but is performing significantly below grade level expectations in reading. Following interventions in the classroom, the Student Assistance Team referred Jim for a comprehensive psychoeducational evaluation. The results indicate Jim is capable of learning at the expected rate. He earned a General Conceptual Ability Index of 97 on the Differential Ability Scales–Second Edition. His achievement in mathematics is consistent with his General Conceptual Ability. On the Wechsler Individual Achievement Test–Second Edition, he scored within the Average range for mathematics. His scores for reading and written expression are substantially lower than would be expected given his average conceptual ability.

Jim's achievement in reading and writing is affected by weaknesses at the acquisition phase of learning. In collecting information, he demonstrated weaknesses in auditory-visual attention and in switching mental set. He struggled to allocate attention on tasks that require the integration of phonological and orthographic processes. Switching attention or mental set is an essential component of word identification. Jim is unable to name words fluently. Therefore, when reading words, he must segment and blend the sounds in most words. This focus on visual analysis and synthesis leaves him with less time and mental energy for the complex task of understanding what he reads. This adversely affects his achievement in reading and writing and appears to contribute to a specific learning disability in these areas.

The Individualized Education Program Committee will make decisions regarding Jim's eligibility and need for direct specialized instruction. Regardless of the setting, instruction for Jim must focus on improving his basic skills in reading and writing. In providing instruction, his teachers will consider his ability to perform effectively when tasks are presented either verbally

or visually and his lowered performance on tasks that require integration of verbal-visual processing.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

To improve reading and spelling, provide explicit instruction on translating printed words into spoken words (see e.g., Berninger, *Process Assessment of the Learner: Talking Letters*). Ask Jim to look at a sheet with letters and pictures that begin with each letter. The teacher points to the letter, names the letter and asks Jim to repeat this. Then the teacher names the picture and makes the sound at the beginning of the picture. Use this strategy to teach Jim to sound out words and to listen for the sounds in dictated words.

Use the Looking Game to focus his attention on each letter in a word by sweeping your finger under the word from left to right. Cover up the word with a blank card and ask him to spell the word. If he does not spell the word correctly, show the word and point out the letters he missed. For example, bat, nap, jet, kid, cot, but.

(see Berninger, 1998, *Guides for intervention: Reading Writing*).

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