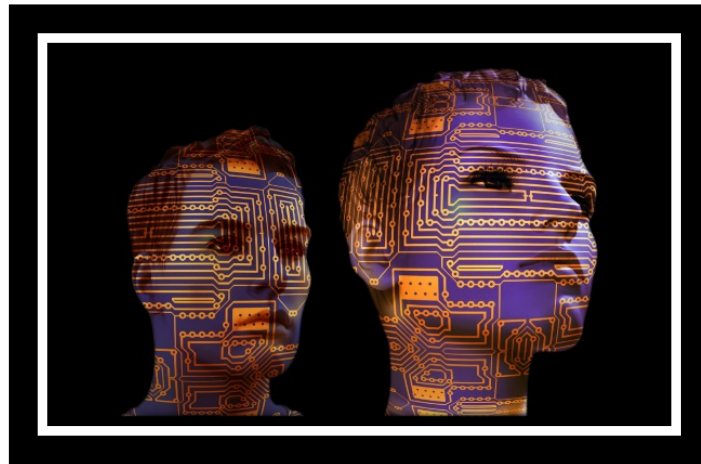


# IQ Testing of Kids

***Q: Is there any value in having a child's IQ tested***



A: In 2008 I was working with a 6 year old boy from the northwest of Tasmania. On his first visit his mother had told me that the school's psychologist had previously tested his IQ and he had scored 46. Now, 46 is considered subnormal on any scale and this boy certainly did not appear to have such a low level of intelligence, and he certainly did not demonstrate this with me in the therapy.

In our third session the boy's mother told me that the psychologist had just retested him, for whatever reason, and was most perplexed because, apparently, "Intelligence cannot be improved upon to such a degree."

This is not the only time I have had children's performance in such tests radically improve and do so in such a short period of time. Personally, I can't help but laugh out loud at such things. It's obvious to me that IQ tests are a flawed concept and, that if a child struggles in school then they are also going to struggle with such tests, for exactly the same reason they struggle in school; and that has nothing at all to do with intelligence.

Dorothy Gronwall, Neuropsychologist (and someone I knew personally and had a very high regard for) said,

*“Most test batteries use a complex intelligence test such as the WAIS-R, but these are given in order to calculate IQs. On the contrary, it is totally invalid to deduce IQs from someone who has presented with cognitive problems, since this is likely to result in a greater than normal scatter of scores on the individual parts of the test. Combining all these individual scores to get a composite IQ is meaningless, and can actually be very misleading.”*

And we need to be very clear that kids who struggle in school most certainly have cognitive problems, but also, that those cognitive problems are actually the result of an issue in how sensory information is processed and utilised.

To me intelligence, as a function, is how well we can divide the world we perceive into slices (concepts) and the speed and dexterity at which we form relationships between those concepts. Since many, many kids who struggle demonstrate some limitation in how they are connecting the dots and making sense of their world, it stands to reason that they can appear to have an issue with intelligence. And it is right here, right now, at this point that we need to accept that what appears to be going on with these kids is just that, an appearance. Underneath the surface of what we are observing, the reality is always very different. If we think of a prism and how it produces a rainbow of colours from white light, then we can perhaps begin to understand that the core of human performance is always expressing itself in a multitude of different ways; and that it doesn't matter what we are doing at any point in time, it is all arising from the exact same core, and just appears to be different because of where it is being expressed.

In the early days of working with kids, I remember a couple of boys who I initially had the thought that they were a little slow on the uptake. However, in their second sessions they came back as entirely different kids; and it's not just in the appearance of intelligence that this transformation occurs. These days I know that what I have before me in our first session is always a diamond in the rough, and that I can only wait and see what is revealed through the work we will be doing.



So the short answer to IQ testing in kids is this: don't bother. Go with what your experience of the child is and don't get caught up in the idea that these tests will reveal anything at all about why your child is struggling, even with conditions that have historically said to be an 'intellectual disability' or have one associated with them. It's far better to get them evaluated by someone who actually understands that core of human performance and who can, not only reveal why they are struggling but can also correct this; because, ultimately, it's all about how sensory information is processed and integrated and not about anything else.



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*Occupational Therapist*

