

## Common Grammar Questions

I often get three recurring questions from adoptive parents regarding their maddeningly difficult children, regarding a neuropsychological (NP) examination. What to do, other than move the rest of the family to a remote tropical island? Well, an NP exam should be strongly considered, prior to booking a flight bound for the South Pacific island of Ilupu.

1) **“What exactly is a neuropsychological examination?”**

A neuropsychological (NP) is a battery of aptitude tests geared at assessing a child’s overall brain function. Think of an NP evaluation as having a youngster go through a set of mental gymnastics. Most “tests” within the battery contain a decided game-like aura which children enjoy!

The specific tests within the battery vary widely. Some ask a child to focus on audio-taped vignettes and listen for certain words or sounds. Another test uses a computer to flash different stimuli on a screen which the youngster must attend to. In other instances, a kiddo is asked to remember a list of words. Or, the child must use colored blocks to construct a specific geometric figure.

The bottom line is that each test is geared at “tapping into” the status quo of a particular region of a youngster’s brain, to see whether irregularities exist or not. For brain regions showing dysfunction, a treatment strategy is prescribed. And prepare to wrap your arms around the notion that your child’s behavior is not due to your parenting, your marriage, or the price of peas in Peru.

2) **“How does a neuropsychologic evaluation differ from a standard psychological evaluation?”**

The standard psychological evaluation generally provides an IQ test, an academic skills test, along with other measures which shed light on a youngster’s emotional function (e.g., whether anxiety or depression is present). An NP evaluation provides all of this, in addition to information about the child’s actual brain function.

3) **“How do I know if my child needs a neuropsychologic evaluation?”**

Actually, there are several answers to this one—all of them valid. Perhaps you can identify with any of the below.

- a) “My youngster seems to be stuck, in terms of his progress, despite receiving high quality attachment therapy.”
- b) “My child seems very complex. I wonder about whether fetal alcohol exposure and/or possible brain compromise exists. And if so, how is that driving her behavior?”
- c) “I need better ‘handles’ regarding my child. What is going on with him?! I don’t know what diagnoses exist. Sometimes I think we’re just treating symptoms.”

**d) “My spouse and I are so frustrated and feel hopeless regarding our child. We need some fresh ideas, and perspective.”**

**It really is not overkill to report that, for many parents, an NP evaluation provides a new lease on life for them, their family, and their high-maintenance child.**

**Plus, an NP exam is cheaper than airfare to Ilupu.**