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*Clinical Psychology for Children through Young Adults*

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*Sample and Fictitious*

**PSYCHOLOGICAL EVALUATION  
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NAME: Tommy Tulip      SEX: M      BIRTHDATE: 12/06/2001      AGE: 10 - 5  
SCHOOL: Home school      GRADE: 4.6  
PARENTS: Phil and Lil Tulip

DATE OF EVALUATION: 04/29/2012

**PSYCHOLOGIST:** Gary M. Eisenberg, Ph.D.

**REASON FOR REFERRAL:**

Tommy struggles with focus, reading and following directions. Now home schooled, he was recently placed in the public school but was withdrawn because he felt overwhelmed.

**BACKGROUND:**

Tommy Tulip is the only child of Phil and Lil Tulip. He lives with his parents in Littleton, Colorado. The family recently moved to Colorado from Nebraska where he was happily enrolled in the Midlands Christian School. Hoping to transfer to Boca Raton Christian School, the child took the placement test. However there he scored only a 4%ile. Administrators described him as very distracted. After that he was placed in Meadowland Elementary School, a public school, where he received very low grades. Teachers said he was very well behaved but often "in his own world." The child described that he was shocked by others' behaviors including the fact that they were talking in school. He seemed to just be overwhelmed with the busyiness in the classroom. He did not complete his seat work.

Tommy Tulip was born by cesarean section and at 10 pounds. Early health was considered excellent. By age 1-1/2 to 2 he would mumble, thereby speaking to mother only. Walking occurred at age 10 months.

Speech improved in kindergarten, but he did experience stuttering in third grade. Also in third grade teachers noted that he had difficulty paying attention.

Outside of the classroom such as in public the youngster is thought to be somewhat restless and fidgety. He does not like the mall and thinks shopping is a waste of his time. Tommy might be somewhat slow with his fine motor coordination. He was late in tying his shoes and seems somewhat weak in using a knife. He prefers to write in cursive.

In the home schooling process the youngster struggles with reading comprehension. He often inserts words that are not there. Sometimes he skips words. Phonics were satisfactory. He is fidgety when he completes homework. Therefore, mother must sit with him. For instance, it might take one hour to complete five sentences. He struggles in following through on multistep directions. Mr. and Mrs. Tulip hope to discontinue home schooling this coming academic year and enroll him in a public or private school.

**OBSERVATIONS:**

Tommy Tulip exhibited a positive attitude throughout testing. He was not always inhibited by difficult items but did not always exert maximum effort either. One could describe this child as happy and perhaps even happy go lucky. Generally, he worked in a sluggish manner. It even took him a long time to set up preferred activities in the psychologist's office, such as Legos. Throughout testing he was fidgety and distractible.

This child was able to read very fluidly with good diction. However, during reading he would often lose focus and look around. He was easily distracted. Any reading comprehension problems appeared more due to distractibility than reading issues themselves.

**TESTS ADMINISTERED:**

- Wechsler Intelligence Scale for Children, Fourth Edition (WISC-IV)
- Woodcock-Johnson III, Tests Of Cognitive Ability (NU - Normative Update, Version 3.0)
- Woodcock-Johnson III, Tests Of Achievement (NU - Normative Update, Version 3.0)
- Continuous Performance Test (IVA) – Revised
- Sentence Completion Test
- Child Symptom Inventory – 4
- Sensory Processing Observation Checklist
- Millon Pre-Adolescent Clinical Inventory (MPACI)

**TEST RESULTS:**

**Composite Scores Summary**

Scale	Composite Score	Percentile Rank
Verbal Comprehension (VCI)	95	37
Perceptual Reasoning (PRI)	102	55
Working Memory (WMI)	102	55
Processing Speed (PSI)	100	50
<b>Full Scale (FSIQ)</b>	99	47

**Verbal Comprehension Subtest Score Summary**

Subtest	Scaled Score	Percentile Rank
Similarities	8	25
Vocabulary	9	37
Comprehension	10	50

**Perceptual Reasoning Subtest Score Summary**

Subtests	Scaled Score	Percentile Rank
Block Design	10	50
Picture Concepts	10	50
Matrix Reasoning	11	63

**Working Memory Subtest Score Summary**

Subtests	Scaled Score	Percentile Rank
Digit Span	10	50
Letter-Number Sequencing	11	63

**Processing Speed Subtest Scores Summary**

Subtests	Scaled Score	Percentile Rank
Coding (CD)	10	50
Symbol Search (SS)	10	50

<b>WOODCOCK JOHNSON - III TEST OF ACHIEVEMENT (NU)</b>			
<b>Subtest</b>	<b>Grade Equiv.</b>	<b>Std. Score</b>	<b>%ile</b>
<b>BROAD READING</b>	<b>4.8</b>	<b>102</b>	<b>55</b>
<b>BROAD MATH</b>	<b>6.1</b>	<b>115</b>	<b>84</b>
<b>BASIC READING SKILLS</b>	<b>5.4</b>	<b>105</b>	<b>64</b>
<b>MATH CALC SKILLS</b>	<b>5.8</b>	<b>114</b>	<b>83</b>
<b>ACADEMIC SKILLS</b>	<b>5.5</b>	<b>109</b>	<b>72</b>
<b>ACADEMIC APPS</b>	<b>5.3</b>	<b>105</b>	<b>64</b>
<b>BRIEF READING</b>	<b>5.0</b>	<b>104</b>	<b>59</b>
<b>BRIEF MATH</b>	<b>6.5</b>	<b>116</b>	<b>86</b>
<b>BRIEF WRITING</b>	<b>4.6</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>50</b>
Letter-Word Identification	<b>5.1</b>	<b>104</b>	<b>61</b>
Reading Fluency	<b>4.2</b>	<b>97</b>	<b>43</b>
Story Recall	<b>6.1</b>	<b>106</b>	<b>65</b>
Calculation	<b>6.4</b>	<b>120</b>	<b>90</b>

Math Fluency	4.7	101	52
Spelling	5.1	103	58
Passage Comprehension	4.8	101	53
Applied Problems	6.6	111	78
Writing Samples	3.9	96	41
Word Attack	6.0	106	66
Picture Vocabulary	4.1	98	44
Oral Comprehension	4.4	99	46
Story Recall – Delayed	K.5	76	6

<b>WOODCOCK JOHNSON - III TESTS OF COGNITIVE ABILITIES (NU)</b>			
<b>Subtest</b>	<b>Grade Equiv.</b>	<b>Std. Score</b>	<b>%ile</b>
<b>L-T RETRIEVAL (Glr)</b>	3.8	96	39
<b>PROCESS SPEED</b>	3.2	84	14
<b>PHONEMIC AWARE</b>	3.3	95	36
<b>ORAL EXPRESSION</b>	4.6	100	50
<b>BRIEF ACHIEVEMENT</b>	5.5	107	68
<b>DELAYED RECALL</b>	3.3	97	41
Visual-Auditory Learning	4.8	101	52
Sound Blending	K.1	71	3
Visual Matching	3.3	86	18
Incomplete Words	>18.0	126	96
Retrieval Fluency	2.8	88	21
Decision Speed	3.1	87	19
Visual-Auditory Learning - Delayed	7.8	107	68

## **DISCUSSION OF TEST RESULTS:**

Wechsler defined intelligence as “the aggregate or global capacity of the individual to act purposefully, to think rationally, and to deal effectively with his environment.” Currently it is assumed to be a measure of potential, not actual achievement, the latter of which is affected by such factors as motivation and ability to process information. Although I.Q. test scores may vary a few points in time, the general level or “range” does not generally vary as achievement test scores do.

Tommy was administered ten subtests of the Wechsler Intelligence Scale for Children – Fourth Edition (WISC-IV) from which his composite scores are derived. The Full Scale IQ (FSIQ) is derived from a combination of ten subtest scores and is considered the most representative estimate of global intellectual functioning. Tommy’s general cognitive ability is within the Average range of intellectual functioning, as measured by the FSIQ. His overall thinking and reasoning abilities exceed those of approximately 47% of children his age (FSIQ = 99; 95% confidence interval = 94-104). His ability to think with words is comparable to his ability to reason without the use of words. Both Tommy's verbal and nonverbal reasoning abilities are in the Average range. He performed slightly better on nonverbal than on verbal reasoning tasks, but there is no significant meaningful difference between Tommy's ability to reason with and without the use of words.

Tommy’s verbal reasoning abilities as measured by the Verbal Comprehension Index are in the Average range and above those of approximately 37% of his peers (VCI = 95; 95% confidence interval = 89-102). The Verbal Comprehension Index is designed to measure verbal reasoning and concept formation. Tommy performed comparably on the verbal subtests contributing to the VCI, suggesting that these verbal cognitive abilities are similarly developed.

Tommy’s nonverbal reasoning abilities as measured by the Perceptual Reasoning Index are in the Average range and above those of approximately 55% of his peers (PRI = 102; 95% confidence interval = 94-109). The Perceptual Reasoning Index is designed to measure fluid reasoning in the perceptual domain with tasks that assess nonverbal concept formation, visual perception and organization, simultaneous processing, visual-motor coordination, learning, and the ability to separate figure and ground in visual stimuli. Tommy performed comparably on the perceptual reasoning subtests contributing to the PRI, suggesting that his visual-spatial reasoning and perceptual-organizational skills are similarly developed.

Tommy's ability in processing simple or routine visual material without making errors is in the Average range when compared to his peers. He performed better than approximately 50% of his peers on the processing speed tasks (Processing Speed Index = 100; 95% confidence interval 91-109).

The Woodcock-Johnson III, Tests of Cognitive Ability using the Normative Update series yields three scores: Grade Equivalent, Percentile, and Standard Score. The latter is on the same mathematical scale as the I.Q. and hence is directly comparable to it as "expectation." Since Tommy received a Full Scale I.Q. of 99, one would use this as the hallmark with which to compare the WJ Standard Scores (SS). The Woodcock-Johnson III, Tests of Achievement using the Normative Update was administered to rate actual academic skills as they stand currently.

Four tests of reading achievement were administered: Letter-Word Identification, Reading Fluency, Passage Comprehension and Word Attack. Letter-Word Identification measures isolated sight vocabulary, the ability to quickly recognize letters and words by sight. Passage Comprehension

measures comprehension of contextual information. The test requires a subject to read a phrase, sentence, or short paragraph, to understand the main idea of the written material, and then to supply a missing word to complete the passage. Word Attack measures isolated phonics skills, or the ability to apply sound-symbol relationships and to analyze words by their sound-symbol patterns. The subject is required to read isolated, phonically consistent nonsense words or relatively low frequency words. Nonsense words are consistent with standard English sound-symbol patterns and virtually all phonemes in the English language are represented. In Reading Fluency, the student quickly reads simple sentences and decides if they are true or false.

The Broad Reading cluster score fell exactly on grade level and commensurate with his IQ. Reading speed was very slightly slow and consistent with the aforementioned observations.

Three tests of math achievement were administered: Calculation, Applied Problems and Math Fluency. Calculation measures the ability to perform mathematical calculations fundamental to more complex mathematical reasoning and problem solving. Applied Problems measures skill in analyzing and solving practical problems in mathematics. This test requires subjects to comprehend the nature of the problem, recognize relevant information, identify and perform necessary calculations and sometimes include distracting information. Math Fluency requires students to solve simple addition, subtraction, and multiplication facts quickly. It is a timed test, similar to a school's "mad minute" math test. Scores relate to processing and math skills.

The Broad Math cluster score rated his math skills almost two grade levels above placement. This is clearly an area of strength.

Writing was measured by the Spelling and Writing Samples subtests. Spelling was rated exactly on grade level. His writing was terse but solid. Sentence mechanics were adequate. The Writing Samples subtest allows the student to creatively complete sentence stems. His score must be considered average.

The Woodcock Johnson III, Test of Cognitive Ability using the Normative Update was administered to check learning disabilities. Here, auditory, visual, memory function, logic and reasoning are evaluated on the same three statistical scales as the WJA.

Auditory processing was measured by the Sound Blending and Incomplete Words subtests. Auditory processing is the ability to analyze and synthesize auditory stimuli. Auditory processing involves the perception of patterns among sounds. Sometimes called "phonological awareness" auditory processing plays an important role in acquiring reading and spelling skills. Deficiencies in auditory processing can negatively impact language development and comprehension of one's native language.

Summarized on the Phonemic Awareness cluster score, we see very slight weaknesses in auditory processing. This might be related to the language delay and unclear language discussed during his toddlerhood. If there is any reading problem at all, it might be the ability to take slightly longer to recognize syllable sounds.

Dovetailing with auditory processing is listening comprehension. This was measured by the Story Recall and Oral Comprehension subtests. In Story Recall, the youngster must listen to a story and then recall the elements of that story as close to verbatim as possible. Both receptive and expressive language skills are required. Hence linguistic competency, listening comprehension, and language

development are measured. Oral Comprehension asks the student to listen to a long sentence and complete it with a single word that makes sense. There are limited correct choices.

As shown on the Oral Expression cluster score, listening comprehension was adequate.

Long-term memory was measured by the Visual-Auditory Learning subtest and the Story Recall exam. The former measures factual memory and includes visual prompts. The latter is for oral memory only. Here the child has to remember stories spoken on a previous occasion. Note that his long-term memory for oral information was significantly lower than his long-term memory for visual information. Hence, Tommy is a stronger visual learner.

Processing speed was evaluated via the Visual Matching, Decision Speed and Retrieval Fluency subtests. Visual Matching measures the ability to quickly identify and circle the two identical numerals in a row of six. In the Retrieval Fluency subtest, the individual is given one minute to name as many items (e.g., animals) as possible. This test measures the fluency of retrieval from stored knowledge, or how quickly one can “pull out” information from memory. In computer language, it is analogous to the RAM relative to the hard drive. Decision Speed is a timed test that requires the subject to examine a row of pictures and point out the two that are most conceptually similar. The task is designed to measure the speed of processing simple concepts. It is used in this test battery as part of the processing speed evaluation.

Processing speed is the ability to perform automatic cognitive tasks and affects the ease of acquisition of new material. This low Processing Speed score indicates cognitive inefficiency or “sluggishness.” He may be overwhelmed by complex events and materials.

This is very common with ADHD students. The low Processing Speed cluster score indicates that indeed Tommy is a sluggish worker.

This child was described as distractible, both at home and in the office. Hence, he was evaluated for ADHD. To this end, parents completed the Child Symptom Inventory – 4. It was clinically significant in the area of ADHD including difficulty paying close attention to details. Parents were also concerned about distractibility, fidgetiness and interrupting others. There is some mild argumentativeness. Occasionally he is touchy. He does like to crack his neck.

Tommy was very open during the interview and sentence completion portion of this evaluation. He admitted defying his mother should he believe that she is incorrect. It is at these times that he may ignore her discipline. At times there are some power struggles over schoolwork, especially since Tommy is home schooled. Home and test observations also suggest that the youngster gets anxious when school items become difficult. His initial reaction is to cease working, but he can then turn around and be disappointed with himself. This is likely to have happened in his unsuccessful school enrollment. His means of coping was merely to quit. Sometimes Tommy focuses too much on the negative.

To check for sensory issues, the Sensory Processing Observation Checklist was administered. There are mild proprioceptive dysfunctions including holding the pencil too hard and roughhousing too roughly. Sometimes he is overwhelmed with too much information on the paper.

Completing the evaluation on the ADHD was the Continuous Performance Test (IVA) – Revised. The Continuous Performance Test (IVA) is a fine, objective measure of focus and concentration.

The student's hand is on the mouse while the computer-based instructions change in a manner that requires sustained focus. This is a 20 minute computerized exam where the student must "click on" a stated target whereby inhibiting his responses to others. Continuous Performance Test (IVA) scores are expected to average 100, whereby 85 or below is considered below average. The youngster received a full-scale attention quotient of 78. This score is considered supportive of ADHD as a diagnosis. In addition, the mouse ratings of his physical fidgetiness were severe. Hence, both scales of the CPT did suggest the ADHD diagnosis.

### **SUMMARY:**

Tommy Tulip is a 10-year-old fourth grader currently being home schooled. Successful and comfortable in his earlier school, Tommy reports feeling overwhelmed when he was recently transferred to a public school in Colorado. He simply did not complete his work as a response.

Psychoeducational testing indicates an IQ in the average range. Achievement scores in reading are commensurate with his IQ and fall exactly on grade level. The youngster can get very distractible during reading and therefore fail to comprehend.

The final conclusion of this evaluation is that there are no academic impediments to his ability to read on grade level. Processing tests do show the slightest of deficits in auditory processing. There are obvious strengths in visual processing and long term visual memory. In short, Tommy is a visual learner. Processing tests measuring learning disabilities demonstrated nothing that met this criterion. He does have rather slow processing speed, meaning that he is a sluggish worker, but he seems to complete all tasks slowly. This is likely related to distractibility and ADHD.

History, observations and testing all clearly and consistently point to a diagnosis of Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (Inattentive Type). This explains his disorganization, fidgetiness and distractibility. Yet complicating the ADHD is what must be described as a laissez-faire or manana attitude. Tommy's response to frustration is to avoid or cease working. He then gets very down on himself when he errs.

### **DIAGNOSIS:**

DSM-IV: Axis I: Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (Inattentive Type)

### **RECOMMENDATIONS:**

1. The following nonpharmacological techniques for handling hyperactive behavior were suggested:
  - A. Give the youngster a way to channel his fidgets ... such as allowing him to play with an eraser or a squeeze ball.
  - B. Placing tennis balls on the opposite corners of his chairs to allow subtle rocking in class.
  - C. The importance of good diet was recommended, both in terms of increased protein and less carbohydrates.
  - D. Exercise as a means to channel his needs for hyperactivity also is recommended. In-home exercise equipment, such as a stationary bicycle, was recommended.
  - E. Three kinds of diet that have shown some recent utility with ADHD were recommended including the gluten free/casein free diet and the elimination diet.

2. Should nonpharmacological treatment of ADHD fail, this psychologist would strongly recommend the use of psychostimulant medication. To this end parents are referred to their pediatrician.
3. Basic disciplinary and boundary setting procedures were discussed. This child still needs very clear expectations and firmness. A reward system, often called a token economy, was described to the parents. Tommy could be rewarded with an array of reinforcers called a "menu" at the end of the week.
4. The following are the standard approaches to ADHD in the school system:
  - A) Eye contact prior to instruction giving.
  - B) Brief and specific directions – not multiple tasks.
  - C) Have the child repeat the instructions in his own words.
  - D) Whenever possible, use visual cues.
  - E) Emphasize the relationship between behavior and consequences, e.g. unfinished homework results in poor grades.
  - F) Reduce distractions during homework time (e.g. use a large uncluttered desk area with no distractions on the walls in front).
5. It is probable that Tommy's suspension of seat work at Meadowland Elementary is in part due to his feeling overwhelmed. However, in part he copes by shutting down. It is hoped that a smaller student-teacher ratio and a quieter school setting will help Tommy be more successful in the classroom next year. Parents should also not allow Tommy to engage in whining or excuses as to why schoolwork was not completed. Tommy is completely capable of all academic work.

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