

What Is The WPPSI and What Does it Measure?

The Wechsler Preschool and Primary Scale of Intelligence, or WPPSI, is often used as part of an entrance process for students.

Similar to the WISC assessment and other intelligence indexes, the WPPSI assessment examines skills and abilities, rather than grade-level knowledge. The WPPSI is not a test with a defined curriculum for which a child can study. The WPPSI measures progress in areas such as how to think and problem-solve, thinking processes, and decision-making skills.

The WPPSI score summary is divided into five main areas:

1. **Full Scale IQ (FSIQ)** – most reliable and representative of general intellectual functioning. (Information, Vocabulary, Word Reasoning)
2. **Verbal IQ (VIQ)** – acquired knowledge, verbal reasoning and comprehension, and attention to verbal stimuli
3. **Performance IQ (PIQ)** – fluid reasoning, spatial processing, attentiveness to detail, and visual-motor integration (Block Design, Matrix Reasoning, Picture Concepts)
4. **Processing Speed (PSQ)** – ability to quickly and correctly scan, sequence, and discriminate simple visual information
5. **Global Language (GLC)** – expressive and receptive language abilities

Here's a look at what the subtests assess:

Five Subtests in the first band (Ages 2:6 to 3:11) Assess

Receptive Vocabulary measures an individual's ability to identify correct responses to spoken words, for instance, at a picture that represents the word spoken by the examiner. Here's one subtest in which prior word knowledge does play a role.

Information measures general cultural knowledge, long-term memory, and acquired facts. Here's another subtest that challenges students to remember what has been taught previously in school.

Block Design measures an individual's ability to analyze and synthesize an abstract design and reproduce that design from colored plastic blocks. Spatial visualization and analysis, simultaneous processing, visual-motor coordination, dexterity, and nonverbal concept formation are involved. The students use logic and reasoning to successfully complete the items.

Object Assembly measures an individual's ability to analyze and synthesize an abstract design and reproduce that design from colored plastic blocks. Spatial visualization and analysis, simultaneous processing, visual-motor coordination, dexterity, and nonverbal concept

formation are involved. The students use logic and reasoning to successfully complete the items.

Picture Naming assesses an individual's ability to name pictorial stimuli. The student's task is to separate essential and nonessential parts from the whole. It is necessary to observe each item closely and concentrate on picture detail. Students must name or indicate the missing part by saying the name of the part or by pointing to it.

14 Subtests in the second band (Ages 4:0 to 7:3) Assess

Block Design measures an individual's ability to analyze and synthesize an abstract design and reproduce that design from colored plastic blocks. Spatial visualization and analysis, simultaneous processing, visual-motor coordination, dexterity, and nonverbal concept formation are involved. The students use logic and reasoning to successfully complete the items.

Similarities measures logical thinking, verbal concept formation and verbal abstract reasoning. Two similar but different objects or concepts are presented, and the student is asked to tell how they are alike or different.

Picture Concepts measures categorical, abstract reasoning and the items here increase in difficulty. Students are asked to look at two (or three) rows of pictured objects and indicate (by pointing) the single picture from each row that shares a characteristic in common with the single picture(s) from the other row(s).

Coding measures visual-motor dexterity, associative nonverbal learning, and nonverbal short-term memory. Fine motor dexterity, speed, accuracy and ability to manipulate a pencil contribute to task success; perceptual organization is also important.

Vocabulary measures the students' verbal fluency and concept formation, word knowledge, and word usage. Here's one subtest in which prior knowledge does play a role.

Matrix Reasoning measures visual processing and abstract, spatial perception and may be influenced by concentration, attention, and persistence.

Comprehension is not just ordinary reading comprehension; this subtest measures the students' common-sense social knowledge, practical judgment in social situations, and level of social maturation, along with the extent of development of their moral conscience.

Symbol Search requires the student to determine whether a target symbol appears among the symbols shown in a search group. Memory is not a primary requirement for success on this task; perception and recognition are the two prime requirements, in addition to speed, accuracy, attention, and concentration. The symbols are geometric forms, rather than familiar letters or numbers.

Picture Completion measures a student's ability to recognize familiar items and to identify missing parts. The student's task is to separate essential and nonessential parts from the whole. It is necessary to observe each item closely and concentrate on picture detail. Students must name or indicate the missing part by saying the name of the part or by pointing to it.

Information measures general cultural knowledge, long-term memory, and acquired facts. Here's another subtest that challenges students to remember what has been taught previously in school.

Word Reasoning measures verbal abstract reasoning requiring analogical and categorical thinking, as well as verbal concept formation and expression.

Receptive Vocabulary measures an individual's ability to identify correct responses to spoken words, for instance, at a picture that represents the word spoken by the examiner. Here's one subtest in which prior word knowledge does play a role.

Object Assembly measures an individual's ability to analyze and synthesize an abstract design and reproduce that design from colored plastic blocks. Spatial visualization and analysis, simultaneous processing, visual-motor coordination, dexterity, and nonverbal concept formation are involved. The students use logic and reasoning to successfully complete the items.

Picture Naming assessing an individual's ability to name pictorial stimuli. The student's task is to separate essential and nonessential parts from the whole. It is necessary to observe each item closely and concentrate on picture detail. Students must name or indicate the missing part by saying the name of the part or by pointing to it.

Common Questions/Answers

What should I tell my child in preparation for the evaluation?

Avoid the word "test" or "games". A better approach is to tell your child that he/she will be taking part in some activities which will help you make a decision about a good school for next year. Your child should expect to perform a number of different activities. The student should be prepared to follow directions and not approach the tasks as self-directed play.

Can my child study in preparation for the assessment?

No. However, your child should be prepared to listen carefully and follow directions. The different activities do not respond to coaching. A good night's rest and breakfast are always important.

How long will the evaluation take?

The WPPSI takes from 20-60 minutes depending on the age of the child. The younger the child taking the WPPSI, generally the shorter the administration time. These are average times and it should be remembered that some children work faster or slower than others. The psychologist

will also need to meet with one or both parents, alone, to gather information regarding developmental milestones, birth and pregnancy history. You should plan on spending 1- 1 1/2 hours total in the office.

Can I watch while my child is assessed?

The psychologist will meet with parents prior to beginning the assessment. Parents are expected to wait in the waiting room during the evaluation. An important source of the information is how your child responds during your absence. This will provide a better estimate of how your child will perform in school. The psychologist will work to help your child relax and approach the activities positively. In addition the test items are designed to be appealing and engaging to children.

When can I expect the results from the assessment?

Results are mailed to parents and schools within 7-10 business days. They can also be faxed to WIS with a backup hard copy. If there is a shorter deadline, evaluators will make every effort to assist you.

If my child does not perform to my expectations can he/she be re-evaluated?

It is rarely necessary to retest a student. In the event it becomes necessary, the same instrument cannot be administered for at least six months. This is because most people score slightly higher the second time due to the "practice effect". If re-testing were necessary a different instrument would need to be used. That new instrument may or may not be accepted by the school to which you are applying. WIS will accept a test that has been administered within one year of the admissions deadline. (January)

Parents are generally very happily surprised to see how well their children have scored. If there is an area of concern that is discovered, it should be remembered that early intervention can sometimes produce wonderful results, and that the most important outcome of any evaluation of your child is placement in a setting that will best serve their development. We always hope that will be Washington International School!