

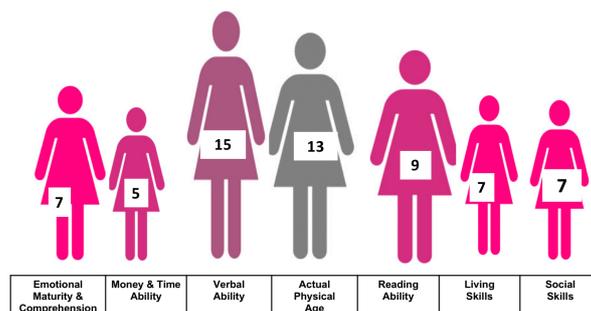
Getting the best from Adaptive Functioning Assessments

Why is it useful to have an Adaptive Functioning assessment of your child? What is Adaptive Functioning?

Briefly put, Adaptive Functioning (AF) is our ability to consistently remember and apply the lessons learned yesterday to improve outcomes and life tomorrow. We use these skills in order to find our way effectively through the complex demands that daily living places on us. In most people there is a close correspondence between their AF and their IQ (which is sometimes described as 'general intelligence').

However, this is not the case for people with NDpae/FASD. They can have a normal I.Q. and low AF scores - even to a discrepancy of, for instance, 15 points in some cases. A discrepancy like this, of AF -v- IQ is one of the key diagnostic criteria for NDpae.

The pictogram below shows clearly how a young person with good verbal abilities scores at a much lower age-equivalence in other key areas. It explains how a child who on first acquaintance seems 'normal' can often behave in ways totally at odds with expectations. For instance, my child of 13 talks like a 15 year old but sometimes behaves socially and emotionally like a 7 year old because her emotional and social skills are affected by her compromised receptive language and understanding.



Preparing for an assessment

A variety of AF assessment tools is available. Your Educational Psychologist should be familiar with at least one of these.

Whether your psychologist works for NEPS or is being paid by you, remember that you are the expert on your child - you see the 24/7 version. Schools etc get the 'edited' version which you have often sweated blood and tears to get ready for them.

Make sure to have a preliminary meeting with your psychologist. At this you should make clear that you require three things from the assessment report*:

- a viable, agreed timeline
- all raw data - you will almost certainly need this in the future for consultations with other professionals
- useable outcomes and recommendations, not just percentiles.

How has getting an AF assessment helped me?

It has improved the quality of our home life. When put to the pin of my collar, it helps make my reactions more appropriate when I remember the pictograph as it applies to my child. I can then try to acknowledge that what is frustrating me at the moment is the fact this is a 13 year old person whose ability to appreciate dangerous consequences is operating at their personal 7 year old level in this area of their abilities. They are actually doing their best: this is not poor behaviour or willfulness, I am not a bad parent.

I can also introduce the concept of AF to other adults my child is in contact with: knowledge which will hopefully then inform their interactions. The child's self respect and self awareness will also benefit from their gaining a better understanding of how their AF influences their experience of the world.

*As an example, we can supply an anonymised AF report which is a real-world example of an AF assessment done very well.