

Preparing for Your Child's Assessment

A practical guide for parents and carers · Child Psychiatry Consultancy Ltd

This guide will help you prepare for your child's assessment appointment at Child Psychiatry Consultancy. Being well-prepared helps the assessment run smoothly and ensures we have the most complete picture of your child's needs.

Before the assessment — documents to gather

Please gather as much of the following as you can before the assessment. Don't worry if you don't have everything — we can work with what is available.

- Previous reports — any previous assessments, educational psychology reports, or specialist reports your child has received
- School reports — recent end-of-term or end-of-year reports, and any SEN support plans or EHCP documents
- Medical history — any relevant diagnoses, medications, or significant health history
- Letters from professionals — any letters from GPs, paediatricians, or other specialists
- Your own notes — anything you have written down about your observations over time

Completing the questionnaires

Before your appointment, you will receive questionnaires to complete. These are an important part of the assessment — please take time to complete them as thoroughly as you can.

- Answer based on your child's typical behaviour, not their best or worst days
- Think across different settings — home, school, social situations
- If a question doesn't seem to apply, note that it doesn't apply rather than leaving it blank
- There are no right or wrong answers — be as honest as possible
- Return the questionnaires promptly — we cannot arrange your appointment until we have received them

School questionnaires

For ADHD and autism assessments, teacher input is required. Please share the school questionnaire with your child's class teacher or SENCO as soon as possible. Teacher questionnaires are a required part of the diagnostic process and appointments cannot proceed without them. For home-educated children, a tutor or professional who works regularly with your child can complete the questionnaire instead.

Preparing yourself for the appointment

- Write down your main concerns in advance so you don't forget anything during the appointment
- Note when you first started noticing difficulties and how they have changed over time
- Think about which settings are most challenging for your child and why
- Note any strengths and things your child enjoys and does well
- If both parents are available to attend, this is helpful — two perspectives add to the picture
- It is fine to bring notes and refer to them during the appointment

On the day — practical preparation

All appointments are conducted via Zoom Business — our secure video consultation platform. Here is how to prepare:

- Test your Zoom connection in advance — download the Zoom app if you haven't already
- Find a quiet, private room where you can speak freely without interruption
- Ensure you have a stable internet connection — a wired connection or strong Wi-Fi works best
- Have your device charged or plugged in
- Let other household members know you need uninterrupted time
- Have a glass of water nearby — appointments can be emotionally tiring

Preparing your child for the appointment

How much you tell your child will depend on their age, maturity, and temperament. Generally, it is best to be honest and keep it simple. See our separate guide 'What to tell your child about their assessment' for detailed age-appropriate suggestions.

- Tell your child in advance — don't surprise them on the day
- Keep your explanation calm and matter-of-fact
- For younger children: 'We're going to have a video call with a doctor who talks to children about how they think and feel'
- For older children: 'We're having a meeting with a specialist to help us understand how you learn and what might help you'
- Answer their questions honestly and let them know it is okay to feel nervous

During the ADOS (autism assessment observation)

If your child is having an autism assessment, the ADOS session involves a trained clinician spending time with your child in a relaxed, activity-based way. Your child does not need to know they are being assessed for autism.

- You can tell your child they are having a video call with someone who likes to play and chat with children
- Let your child know it is fine to be themselves — there are no right or wrong answers
- Try not to coach or prompt your child during the session
- It is normal for children to behave differently in an assessment than at home — this is expected and accounted for

After the appointment

- You will receive verbal feedback on the diagnostic decision at the end of the assessment
- A full written report will be provided — same day for ADHD assessments; shortly after for autism assessments
- A 30-minute feedback session is included to discuss the findings and next steps
- If you have questions after the appointment, you can contact Dr Athina Zakyntinaki by email

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