Who We Are

Neuropsychological services at the Center for Autism and Related Disorders (CARD) primarily provide evaluations that focus on understanding and addressing the social, emotional, behavioral and cognitive needs of children with autism spectrum disorders (ASD) and their families.

Our Team

Our neuropsychologists have advanced training in diagnosing and treating mental health disorders, particularly those affecting children. All faculty and staff are licensed by the Maryland Board of Examiners of Psychologists. Our team members are also active in the Institute’s training and research programs, where they provide supervision to psychology associates, doctoral students in psychology and post-doctoral psychology residents in accordance with state regulations.

Our Approach

Neuropsychological Evaluation

At Kennedy Krieger, we use a neuropsychological evaluation to understand each patient’s individual concerns. The results of the evaluation are used to identify strategies and interventions that allow individuals to realize their full potential.

Clinical neuropsychology focuses on normal and abnormal brain functioning, including thinking, behavioral, social and emotional functioning, all of which are crucial to a child’s development. Neuropsychological evaluations are indicated when there is a question about the child’s cognition or behavior, particularly as it relates to brain development and functioning.

Using a combination of approaches and assessment methods, neuropsychologists attempt to understand not only a child’s level of functioning, but also any meaningful patterns of strengths and weaknesses of their skills. This information is particularly useful in treatment planning, and neuropsychological evaluation is often indicated for newly diagnosed children and during times of developmental transition (e.g., late childhood, adolescence and late-adolescence/early adulthood).

When children receive a neuropsychological evaluation, they participate in question-and-answer, paper-and-pencil and hands-on tasks with a neuropsychologist. Their performance is then compared to that of other children the same age. The neuropsychologist also carefully observes each child to understand how he or she approaches tasks and behaves in structured situations. In addition, the neuropsychologist usually gathers other information, including parent interviews and behavior checklists, and reviews available records.

Through this process, the neuropsychologist evaluates each child’s strengths and weaknesses to ensure a more informed diagnosis, along with better instruction, intervention and treatment. Family members and other providers also receive a better understanding of the child’s learning style and needs.

Any appropriate diagnoses will also be discussed (including presence or absence of ASD). With a better understanding of each child’s abilities, individualized treatment approaches are recommended based on needs at home, in school and in the community. This information is discussed with the family and provided in a written report that can be shared with other providers at the family’s discretion.
Specialty Clinics and Populations

Early Functioning Children
Our center’s neuropsychologists and developmental psychologists have specialty training in the assessment of younger and minimally verbal children with ASD. Our providers use a wide range of assessment tools that take into consideration the child’s specific developmental profile to inform programming needs. These evaluations also provide a baseline to help monitor future progress.

School Age Children
Our neuropsychologists participate in both multidisciplinary team evaluations as well as stand alone evaluations to address the needs of school-age children with ASD. Evaluations are typically broad in basis, and they assess multiple aspects of cognitive and behavioral functioning, including intelligence, language, visual/motor, attention, memory and executive and academic functioning. Information documented through the evaluation is often useful to better understand and clarify any potential co-occurring conditions (e.g., mood disorders, learning disabilities, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder), inform treatment planning and provide insights into difficulties experienced with daily living skills. Additionally, our neuropsychologists have specialized training in considering the impact of co-occurring medical conditions (e.g., seizures, genetic disorders) on cognitive and behavioral functioning.

Transition Team
Our neuropsychologists work as part of a multidisciplinary team to focus on issues important to adolescents who will soon be transitioning to young adulthood. Specifically, the neuropsychological assessment will examine cognitive, functional and adaptive skills as well as emotional and behavioral functioning in order to identify an individual’s strengths and weaknesses. Subsequently, recommendations will be provided to promote independence, academic and vocational preparation, and interventions to assist with the transition process.

Deafness-Related Evaluations
The Deafness-Related Evaluations Clinic at the Center for Autism and Related Disorders (CARD) offers a range of comprehensive neuropsychological services to deaf and hard-of-hearing children. One of only a few programs of its kind in the country, the clinic provides language-accessible assessment services for children and adolescents who are deaf or hard-of-hearing and who have known or suspected ASD. We focus on understanding and addressing the social, emotional, behavioral and cognitive needs of deaf and hard-of-hearing children with (ASD) and their families. We offer outpatient neuropsychological assessments for infants, children and young adults 1 to 21 years old who are on the autism spectrum and have any type of hearing loss or deafness. We also work with children raised in bilingual environments, such as American Sign Language (ASL) and English, who need evaluations. Our clinical staff for this service are fluent in ASL.

Contact Information
Center for Autism and Related Disorders at Kennedy Krieger Institute
For more information or to schedule an appointment, please call 443-923-7680, or call toll-free at 888-554-2080. TTY users, please contact us at 443-923-2645, or dial 711 to make a Maryland Relay call.

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For physicians and healthcare professionals:
To make a referral, call our Physician Referral Line at 443-923-9403.

For more information, please visit our website at Card.KennedyKrieger.org.