

7 days of Psychology

Educational & Developmental Psychology



Educational and Developmental Psychologists are uniquely qualified to help with issues related to learning and development throughout the life span.

Educational and developmental psychologists are uniquely trained to manage learning difficulties, anxiety, bullying, friendships, developmental disabilities, behaviour problems, parenting issues, giftedness, and educational problems and support. They assist people of all ages throughout transitions in life, from youth to adulthood to retirement and healthy ageing in later years.

Learn well. Live well.



APS College of Educational and Developmental Psychologists

Where might you find Educational & Developmental
psychologists?

- In schools (government and private)
- Early childhood settings (e.g. preschools, child care settings)
- Disability services for children and adults
- Private Practice
- In Atlantis (actually no, just checking you were reading)

Why would I see an Educational & Developmental psychologist?

In early childhood, parents might seek help for:

- Concerns with a child's development and/or parent-child relationship issues;
- Managing a child's difficult temperament or behaviour;
- Assisting a child with disabilities;
- Sibling rivalry in the family.

In a child's school years, parents, teachers, or children themselves may seek assistance to deal with:

- Problems with transition, that is, entering into school;
- School avoidance;
- Learning difficulties (e.g. dyslexia);
- Poor peer relationships;
- Low self-esteem;
- Problems with behaviour;
- Family relationships;
- Physical or sexual abuse.

In adolescence, adolescents, their parents or others concerned with their welfare may seek help to deal with:

- Conflict between adolescent and parents;
- Peer pressure;

- Career guidance;
- School to work transition;
- Sexuality issues;
- Drug and alcohol problems;
- Identity issues.

In adulthood, individuals, their partners or employers may seek assistance with:

- Relationship problems;
- Parenting issues;
- Mid-life concerns;
- Career restructuring;
- Work stress;
- Education and training in the workplace.

Finally, in later adulthood, elderly people or their adult children may seek information or assistance with:

- Healthy ageing;
- Coping with decline in functioning;
- Dependency.

What does a consultation with an Educational & Developmental psychologist involve?

Like most professional consultations, it would start with an individual meeting with the psychologist. This might happen in a professional consulting room, or sometimes at a service delivery setting (e.g. a school, a disability group home, a supported employment venue, or at a child care centre).

The educational and developmental psychologist would start by finding out details about you or your relative's situation. This would involve an open conversation, but perhaps also some formal assessments or questionnaires.

These might be directly with the person who has the educational and developmental issues; for example administering an academic achievement test with a child. It may also involve the carer; for example, administering a parenting stress measure to the parents.

In addition to these consultations with the person and their family, the educational and developmental psychologist might also arrange to meet other workers dealing with the person who has the issues. This could be at the workers' workplace or over the phone.

Following these initial consultations, the educational and developmental psychologist might write up what they find in a report, with recommendations for others to follow. They might also continue to see the person and/or carers or workers regularly, to achieve the best support outcome for the issues that led to the consultation in the first place.

Skills of educational and developmental psychologists

Educational and developmental psychologists have knowledge and skills in the following areas:

- Identifying and clarifying problems;
- Diagnosing disabilities and disorders such as Autism Spectrum Disorders;
- Assessing developmental, learning and behavioural difficulties (e.g. dyslexia);
- Designing effective treatment programs;
- Counselling;
- Consulting with individuals or groups;
- Designing training programs for implementations in schools and workplaces;
- Evaluating programs and interventions;
- Designing professional development programs.

What are some of the interesting things that educational and developmental psychologists and educational and developmental psychology have given us?

Standardised testing

Standardised testing is such a huge part of modern life, and it has helped vast numbers of people find the right occupations, the right kind of education and training, and the right support system. This has come to us via educational and developmental psychologists.

Standardised tests are tests where the conditions under which the test are administered are tightly controlled, allowing any individual's performance to be ranked against that of their peers. Standardised testing is now used across all areas of psychology and many other human service occupations as well. It is indispensable to armed forces, to job recruitment, and to measuring student progress in school systems all over the world.

Positive behaviour support

Positive behaviour support (PBS) refers to techniques used to manage behaviours of concern in people with behavioural, learning, social and even mental health problems, both mainstream and non-mainstream. What separates PBS from other behaviour management programs is a focus on improving quality of life, encouraging positive behaviours and creating positive environments instead of focusing on aversive techniques to extinguish behaviours of concern. For example, instead of using 'time out' rooms to remove a person when their behaviour is inappropriate, PBS would focus on creating an environment in which more positive behaviours (e.g. cooperation/play) are encouraged.

The **vital intervention framework of positive behaviour support** has been central to the elimination of restrictive practices in human services, and to the

development of more effective and ethical interventions. This is a key product of educational and developmental psychologists. This psychological methodology has become one of the primary frameworks applied in a whole raft of areas, such as education, youth justice, speech pathology, and aged care.

Maximising learning outcomes

The work of educational and developmental psychologists has helped us understand how children and adults learn and develop, so that we can better design education and training systems. This is especially true for children and adults who don't fit into the mainstream. The theoretical frameworks from educational and developmental psychology now underpin a significant proportion of the services provided by education, special education, occupational therapy and speech pathology.

Improving outcomes for people with developmental disorders

Educational and developmental psychologists have helped us understand the best ways to help people with debilitating developmental conditions, like autism, intellectual disability, and ADHD. These conditions affect all areas of life (learning, behaviour, socialisation, family relationships, etc), and many of the methodologies used to support these people were developed by educational and developmental psychologists.

What is a finding from educational and development psychology that I can apply in my own life?

Educational and developmental psychologists are experts in learning. Try these [tips](#) to help you learn faster, for longer!

What are some myths or misconceptions about educational and developmental psychology?

All they do is administer IQ tests

This might have been the case in some state government departments in days gone by. Those days have gone.

They just assess and don't provide any real help

If there's a certain kind of help you're looking for that your educational and developmental psychologist hasn't delivered, make sure they know what you want. They have spent many years learning how to do what they do. The more specific your query, the easier it will be for them to tune in to what you need/want.

They only work with special populations (e.g. intellectual disability)

Places supporting special populations have historically employed the largest groups of educational and developmental psychologists, hence this impression. Those days too are gone. Educational and Developmental psychologists work with any population that can have issues with learning (see above).

They don't provide anything special that other types of psychologists can't do (e.g. clinical or generalist)

If the primary issue you need help with falls within the specific areas of practice listed above, chances are the kind of psychologist who will help you best is an educational and developmental psychologist! Educational and developmental psychologists study and work with those areas in more depth than other psychologists.

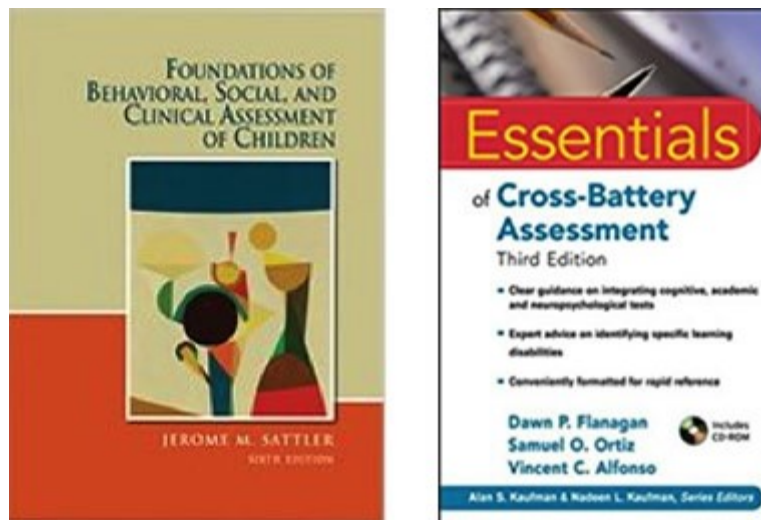
What do I do if I want to see an educational and developmental psychologist?

Talk to the educators already in your life (e.g. your child's school teacher, or a

caseworker in a support service you are dealing with that helps people with learning problems). They probably have educational and developmental psychologists that they refer to regularly.

Finally, if you just want to go directly to a psychologist, you can use one of the [‘find a psychologist’](#) services in Australia.

Where can I read more?



What if I want to study to become an educational and developmental psychologist?

A Google search for ‘educational and development psychology’ will quickly tell you. Pick one in your local area and start reading. Keep in mind that studying to be an educational and developmental psychologist is at least a [6-year commitment](#).

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