

SCHOOLCHILDREN — INTELLECTUAL DISABILITY TESTING

2103. Mr M.P. Murray to the Parliamentary Secretary representing the Minister for Disability Services

- (1) What steps does the Disability Services Commission take to make a diagnosis that a child has an intellectual disability?
- (2) How many tests are required to be undertaken to make a diagnosis that a child has an intellectual disability?
- (3) How does the Disability Services Commission inform parents and the child of the outcomes of these tests and if they accepted or rejected a claim of intellectual disability?
- (4) Does the Disability Services Commission use a phrase 'must present clinically as intellectually disabled' in its letters to families informing them of intellectual disabilities; and
  - (a) if so, what does this phrase mean?
- (5) Does the Disability Services Commission explain in writing on what grounds and why an application for intellectual disability is rejected?

Mr M.J. COWPER replied:

- (1) To be eligible for services provided by the Commission on the basis of intellectual disability a person must meet criteria specified by the internationally recognised 'American Association for Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities'.

Each person's referral to the Eligibility Team is evaluated by the Commission's Principal Eligibility Officer to determine whether or not the criteria has been met and the child meets residency requirements.

In cases where a person's eligibility appears equivocal the Principal Eligibility Officer will consult with other relevant professionals within the Commission or with professionals from the referring agency or elsewhere. In those cases where insufficient information is included with an application the Commission will, where possible, request the necessary information from other sources (e.g. Education Department or other agencies/service providers).

Where the necessary information cannot be obtained from existing sources the Commission will arrange for one of its own assessors to conduct an eligibility assessment and write a report which is then submitted to the Principal Eligibility Officer.

- (2) In most cases two standardised tests are required; a test of intelligence and a test of adaptive behaviour. Children under the age of five and a half years, or cases with specific medical conditions may be accepted without formal testing if, in the opinion of the Principal Eligibility Officer, formal testing is not possible.
- (3) All applicants or their parents are advised by mail of the outcome of their application.

In those cases where one of the Commission's assessors conducted an assessment and submitted a written report a copy of the report is normally made available to the applicant/parents.
- (4) Not in the form shown in the question.

The Commission may use the phrases 'clinical presentation must be consistent with an intellectual disability' or 'clinical presentation is inconsistent with an intellectual disability'.

  - (a) These phrases refer to the fact that a person may score low on IQ tests for many reasons such as fatigue, substance abuse, noncompliance, mental illness, emotional or behaviour disorders, language disorder and yet not have an intellectual disability.
- (5) Yes. When advised of the outcome of their application, applicant's or their parents are advised of which of the criteria was not met.