Growing Through Dyslexia — Retesting Policy

Purpose:
This policy outlines recommended intervals for retesting cognitive measures and other assessments used in instructional planning, ensuring ethical, defensible, and meaningful use of data.

Why it's necessary:
These activities help us understand how your child processes information so we can tailor instruction. Because children can remember or learn strategies, we don't repeat the exact same activities too often. Reading growth is tracked with reading measures, not these tasks.

Assessment Types Included:
- WISC-V Subtests (Digit Span, Vocabulary, Similarities, Coding, Symbol Search)
- SDQA (San Diego Quick Assessment)
- DIBELS-8
- CBCL
- Vanderbilt ADHD Rating Scales

General Ethical Principles:
1. Avoid inflated scores due to practice effects. Cognitive measures, especially repeated administrations of the same test content, can produce artificial gains unrelated to true ability.
2. Retest *only* with a clear purpose. Retesting must be linked to instructional planning or monitoring, not simply gathering more data.
3. Interpret results qualitatively when subtests are reused. Emphasize strengths/weaknesses, not score growth alone, in reporting.

Assessment	Typical Use	Minimum Interval	Recommended Interval
WISC-V Subtests (same subtest)	Cognitive profile	12 months	24–36 months
SDQA	Word recognition	Not limited	4–8 weeks
DIBELS-8	Literacy screening/progress	Not limited	Weekly–quarterly
CBCL	Behavior broad band	6 months	6–12 months
Vanderbilt Scales	ADHD symptoms & impairment	1 month	1–6 months

WISC-V Subtests: Although research on long-term test stability is mixed, subtest scores tend to have lower stability over years compared with composites, and practice effects are strongest in shorter intervals. Clinical practice often avoids retesting the same cognitive subtest within a year to reduce practice effects. https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK581906/

Parent FAQ:

Q: Why do you use only certain subtests from the WISC-V?
We use selected subtests (Digit Span, Vocabulary, Similarities, Coding, Symbol Search) to understand specific processing skills that inform your child's instruction. These help identify work memory, language strengths, and processing speed, which support tailoring tutoring strategies.

Q: Why wait at least 1 year before repeating the same subtest?
Psychometric research shows that when the same test material is given too soon, students can remember content or test-taking strategies, and this "practice effect" can artificially inflate scores, making it hard to tell if real change has occurred due to instruction or just familiarity with the test itself. Delaying retesting helps ensure that score differences reflect true development rather than memory for the test.

Q: Can practice effects last longer than a few months?
Yes. Practice effects can influence performance when tests are repeated within several months or even up to a year, especially for cognitive tasks. For this reason, we avoid retesting the same subtest within at least 12 months, and professionals often recommend retesting every 2–3 years for meaningful comparisons.

Q: What if my child is making progress and we want updated results?
For reading and behavior measures designed for frequent monitoring (like SDQA or DIBELS-8), we can assess progress every few weeks or months as needed because those tools track skill development without the same practice-effect concerns.

Q: Does this mean tutoring isn't helping if we wait to retest?
Not at all. Tutoring progress is tracked with frequent curriculum-based measures. The cognitive subtests help us plan how to teach best — and we avoid retesting soon simply to prevent misleading results.

Q: Where do these recommendations come from?
Independent research and professional practice in assessment show that short intervals between cognitive retests are more likely to reflect familiarity with test content rather than true skill growth. Many evaluation guidelines discourage retesting the same cognitive measure within a year, and often recommend waiting longer (18 months to 3 years) to meaningfully interpret changes.