

Options for a Psycho-educational Assessment for a Learning Disability for a Child

Outside of the school system, there are a few options for getting an assessment done.

Private psychologist

A private assessment will likely cost upwards from \$2000. Do you have any private health care benefits? Most health care plans have some coverage for psychological services ranging from \$500 to \$1000 per year. The psychologist can usually arrange the billing to try to maximize your benefits (ie. bill some in your name and some in your child's name.)

A website search will indicate a large number of psychologists within the city, and a wide variety of psychological specialties. The website www.calgarypsychdirectory.ca lists many psychologists. They have a heading called 'learning disabilities', which lists psychologists who do educational assessments. Keep in mind this list is incomplete, but may be a place to begin.

Another way to find a private psychologist is by speaking to your child's school admin team or resource teacher, or your family doctor or pediatrician.

Keep in mind that any fees that are not reimbursed by a health care plan can be claimed on your income tax as a medical expense.

CanLearn Society (www.canlearnsociety.ca)

CanLearn, formerly the Calgary Learning Centre, has subsidies available depending on a family's financial situation.

Integrated Services in Education at the U of C (www.werklund.ucalgary.ca/ise).

You do not need to be associated with the University of Calgary to use their clinic. They charge a flat rate of \$1350 for an assessment that is done by graduate students in Masters and PhD programs who are supervised by a registered psychologist.

The University of Alberta Clinical Services

(www.edpsychology.ualberta.ca/CentresAndInstitutes/ClinicalServices)

The Edmonton based clinic offers similar services to the U of C. They charge \$500 for an assessment, and may have a lengthy wait list. Travel to Edmonton would be required.



LDAA • Learning Disabilities Association of Alberta

There have been very positive reports from people who have had an assessment done at the CanLearn Society and at the University of Calgary. The University of Alberta clinic is new to the Association, so we don't have feedback on it yet.

The advantage to the private assessment is that it can usually be done more quickly and you can select the psychologist doing the assessment. If you are going to pursue a private assessment, it may be in your best interest to call a few different psychologists to find out more about their particular approach and get an estimate of cost. Some psychologists will quote a flat fee (meaning a definite price no matter how long the assessment takes.) Some will quote an hourly rate and hopefully give you an approximate time frame for the assessment.

Ensure that you are finding out exactly what is included in the assessment. Sometimes a school observation is included and sometimes it isn't. When there is a question about social skills or social/emotional development, a school observation can be really helpful to the psychologist because they can see behaviours that may not present themselves working one-on-one in an office setting with an adult.

Additionally, if you aren't sure if what your child is dealing with is a learning disability, the National Centre for Learning Disabilities' website (NCLD) has lots of great information about learning disabilities. Here is a link to one component of the website: <https://www.understood.org/en/learning-attention-issues/signs-symptoms/could-your-child-have/could-your-child-have-a-learning-or-attention-issue>. Keep in mind that it is an American site so information about rights and school information will look a little bit different in Calgary.