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Manual for Psychological Evaluation
of Children for Placement in
Special Classes

BULLETIN 1965 — NUMBER 9

State of Alabama
Department of Education
Austin R. Meadows
State Superintendent of Education
MANUAL FOR PSYCHOLOGICAL EVALUATION
OF CHILDREN FOR
PLACEMENT IN SPECIAL CLASSES

A handbook for administrators,
local placement committees, psychologists,
psychometrists, and teachers of exceptional children

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
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Alpha Brown, Consultant, Program for Exceptional Children and Youth
Reba Penn, Consultant Program for Exceptional Children and Youth
Gale Lambright, Psychologist, Program for Exceptional Children and Youth
FOREWORD

The purpose of this manual is to provide information to the school systems which will help them in proceeding with the evaluation of children for placement in the special classes. The intention is to clarify and expand the guidelines already set up in the Alabama State Plan and generally practiced throughout the State.

The material will be available to all those concerned with evaluation and placement of children in the special classes so that the various disciplines can work together to meet the needs of these children in the best ways possible.

Suggestions for future improvement of evaluation procedures will be helpful. Cooperation in carrying out the Program for Exceptional Children and Youth will be appreciated.

A. R. Meadows
State Superintendent of Education
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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Grateful appreciation is expressed to all of the people who helped in the development of this manual and to the many others who encouraged the writing of it.

Thanks go to the following:

Mrs. Alpha Brown, Consultant and Supervisor, Program for Exceptional Children and Youth, State Department of Education.

Dr. A. R. Meadows, State Superintendent of Education.

Mr. Clifton Nash, Guidance Consultant N.D.E.A., Title V, State Department of Education.

A special acknowledgement goes to Dr. Glenn Vergason, Professor of Special Education, University of Alabama, for his assistance in organizing the material.
INTRODUCTION

The development and expansion of the Program for Exceptional Children and Youth in Alabama for the past several years has led to an over-all improvement in services for children with mental, physical, and/or emotional disabilities.

The State Department of Education, The Division of Mental Health, The Alabama Psychological Association, The Alabama Medical Association, and The Colleges and Universities have contributed much to the evaluation of children for special class placement.

Within the development of the program there is a recognized need to further strengthen the use of the evaluation procedures.

For total evaluation many areas are involved. Ideally, this is done by a team of qualified persons representing all the disciplines needed to cover a case. This is not always possible.

However, the necessary minimum evaluation of a child considered for special class placement includes:

1. An individual psychological evaluation
2. A physical examination
3. A family profile
4. An academic record and appraisal

ALL INFORMATION ABOUT A CHILD SHOULD BE KEPT IN STRICTEST CONFIDENCE BY THE PROFESSIONAL PERSONS CONCERNED WITH HIS EVALUATION, PLACEMENT, AND EDUCATIONAL PLANNING.

Special education programs are the responsibilities of the local school systems. Evaluation and placement of children in special classes are part of this responsibility.

This manual has evolved as a common body of information for administrators, guidance counselors, special education teachers, psychologists, and psychometrists so that there may be a mutual understanding of the needs in psychological evaluation for special education.
PART I
RULES AND REGULATIONS

REGULATIONS ON PSYCHOLOGICAL EVALUATION IN
THE ALABAMA STATE PLAN

It is necessary to be familiar with the entire State Plan for
the Program for Exceptional Children and Youth. A copy of
this is available from the State Department of Education.

Briefly, the following regulations are related to psycholog-}

A. Placement Committee
(1) A Placement Committee appointed by the local
superintendent shall be established for determining the eligi-
bility of exceptional children for placement in special classes.
Such a committee should be composed of representation from
medicine, education, and psychology if possible.
(2) This committee, after the study of all data avail-
able on each child, shall make recommendations concerning each
child's admission to the special class on a trial basis.

B. Psychological Evaluation
(1) An individual psychological study shall be a part
of the data available on each child admitted to any special class,
with the exception of speech correction.
(2) The psychological study shall be done by a psy-
chologist or psychometrist acceptable to the State Department
of Education.
(3) This study shall contain information concerning
intelligence, social maturity, educability, . . . background in-
formation . . . and the individual's strengths, special abilities,
and weaknesses.

C. Educable Mentally Retarded
(1) Service for educable mentally retarded may be
provided for the chronological ages of 6-21.
(2) All of the children thought to be educable mentally
retarded should be given a group mental maturity test before
referring for further testing.
(3) The child must have a minimum mental age of 4.
(4) The child must have an intelligence quotient
within the range of 56-80.
D. Trainable Mentally Retarded
(1) Services for trainable mentally retarded may be provided for the chronological ages of 6-21.
(2) The child must have a minimum mental age of 2½.
(3) The child must have an intelligence quotient within the range of 80-55.

E. Physically Handicapped
(1) In the case of multiple handicaps, mental retardation takes precedence for the purpose of establishing eligibility for classification.

QUALIFICATIONS FOR PSYCHOLOGISTS AND PSYCHOMETRISTS

There is no certification for school psychologists at present by the State Department of Education. The Program for Exceptional Children and Youth maintains a register of persons who test for special class placement.

A. Psychometrists
(1) A basic course in the theory of individual testing.
(2) A practicum of test experience supervised by a qualified instructor.
(3) Recommendation by the instructor as to the person’s competency in testing.

B. Psychologists (requirements set by Alabama Psychological Association and incorporated in the State Plan).
(1) The master’s degree from an accredited university or college, or evidence of satisfactory completion of not less than 30 semester hours of graduate work acceptable toward an advanced degree at an accredited institution and also acceptable to the State Board of Education.
(2) An undergraduate major in the specialized field for which the certificate is granted and 15 hours of graduate work in that specialized field.
(3) Eight semester hours of clinical or field experience in the specialized field for which the certificate is granted.

COST OF PSYCHOLOGICAL SERVICES

(1) Psychologists and psychometrists are contacted for services by the local school systems.
(2) Fees are agreed upon prior to testing.
(3) Payment for services is made through the local systems.
(4) For the fee an individual psychological test and a narrative report of the findings are expected on each case.
(5) Persons employed by school systems as counselors, psychologists, etc. are expected to test without charge as part of their regular duties, or in accordance with the agreements between those persons and their employing systems. If such persons test in other school systems on their own time they are paid the regular fees.
PART II
HOW TO PROCEED WITH THE PROGRAM OF
PSYCHOLOGICAL EVALUATION

STEP I — IDENTIFICATION AND REFERRAL

There are several ways in which a child may be referred for evaluation and possible placement in a special class.

All referrals must be made through the school system to the person or persons locally designated to facilitate the special education services. That person or group reviews the reasons for referral and then decides whether or not to proceed with the evaluation.

The most common ways of referral are:

1. Standardized Group Mental Maturity and Intelligence Tests
   a. All children thought to be retarded must be given group mental maturity tests by the school system before referral for further testing.
      (1) Those schools which have routine testing programs using group intelligence tests can screen children who deviate from the average so that they can be referred for individual tests.
      (2) Schools with no regular testing programs should give these tests to small groups of children who are suspected of retardation as a method of screening before individualized testing.
   b. Group tests useful for this are:
      (1) Otis Quick Scoring Mental Ability Test—Alpha Short Form. Grade range 1-4. Norms: mental age equivalents and deviation I.Q.'s. Harcourt, Brace, and World.
      (2) California Short Form Test of Mental Maturity (revised edition), 5 levels Grades K-12. Use lower forms for suspected retardates. California Test Bureau.
      (5) Cattell Culture Fair Intelligence Test, Grades 3-12. Items which do not require school-type skills. Bobbs-Merrill Company.
2. Teacher Appraisal

Children who have a record of academic failures or who are known to have some disability in learning may be referred by teachers to the persons in charge of the special education program. It is more practical to obtain group test scores for these children before going to the expense of individual testing. Teacher appraisal is, however, an important part of the child's record.

3. Agency Referral

Any agency such as the Crippled Children's Service, Health Departments, Department of Pensions and Security, Juvenile Court authorities, etc. who have had charge of the care of a child believed to need special education may refer the child to the proper school authorities for evaluation. Diagnostic clinics, physicians, and guidance personnel might also refer a child for evaluation under the school program. Evaluations already done under agency direction should be made available to the school system to avoid duplication of services.

4. Others

Parents often request admission for their children into special classes. Referral may come from them to the school for evaluation. The child must have individual evaluation before placement. On rare occasions, children refer themselves for placement. These cases are handled the same way as any other.

STEP II — INDIVIDUAL PSYCHOLOGICAL EVALUATION

A. An individual intelligence test must be administered to each child under consideration for placement in the special class.
B. It must be administered before a child can be admitted to the class.
C. Tests are to be given only by qualified psychologists or psychometrists.
D. The State Plan requires one of the following tests to be used:
   (1) Stanford Binet Intelligence Scale Form L-M. Ages 2 and over. Mental age and Intelligence Quotient. Houghton Mifflin, Publisher.
   (2) Wechsler Intelligence Scale For Children. Ages 5-15 Verbal I.Q., Performance I.Q., Full Scale I.Q. Psychological Corporation, Publisher.
E. Supplementary Tests.

There are many tests which can be used to supplement the above. When handicapping conditions are present that prevent the use of these (i.e. blind, deaf, speech), tests such as the Hayes-Binet Revision for Blind, The Nebraska Test for Young
Deaf Children, The Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test, and others are used at the discretion of the examiner. The Binet or Wechsler tests should be attempted in most cases.

F. Responsibilities of the School System

(1) The person in charge of directing the special education program in the local school system is responsible for referring children for testing.

(2) That person should obtain background information, a statement of the reason for referral, and the exact birthdate of each individual before the psychologist begins testing.

(3) A schedule should be set up for testing which will include not more than 5 children in a school day. Time allotments should include a few minutes for talking to parents.

(4) The person in charge of the local program or a designated representative is responsible for scheduling, for getting the children to the test area and away from it, and for coordinating the entire procedure.

(5) A quiet well lighted room should be provided for testing.

(6) There should be no interruption or distracting influences.

(7) There should be provided a small table and three chairs (one for the child, one for the examiner, and one for equipment).

G. Responsibilities of the Examiner

(1) The psychologist is expected to furnish the test materials, record forms, and stopwatch.

(2) Within three weeks after testing, the psychologist should complete and return a report of his findings. This should include the I.Q. scores, mental age, test analysis, academic potential, and recommendations.

(3) A suggested form for this report is on page 12.

(4) The psychologist in this capacity acts only as a member of the team and does not make the final decision as to placement.

H. Testing in Clinic or Private Facilities

(1) If referral is from the school system, the Superintendent or his representative contacts the clinic or psychologist for an appointment. All pertinent information should be made available to these agencies.

(2) Clinics and private examiners have their own policies and procedures. It is expected that they will have the same responsibility for reporting findings to the school system as G2 and G4 above.
SUGGESTED OUTLINE FOR
CONFIDENTIAL PSYCHOLOGICAL REPORTS
ON CHILDREN EVALUATED FOR SPECIAL CLASS
PLACEMENT

NAME: ______________________ SEX: ______________________ DATE OF TEST: ______________________
ADDRESS: ______________________ DATE OF BIRTH: ______________________
SCHOOL: ______________________ GRADE: ______________________ CHRONOLOGICAL AGE: ______________________
PARENTS: ______________________ MENTAL AGE: ______________________
EXAMINER: ______________________ I.Q.: ______________________
TITLE OF TEST ADMINISTERED: ______________________ VERBAL SCORE: ______________________
OR
PERFORMANCE SCORE: ______________________
FULL SCALE SCORE: ______________________

REFERRAL:
Name of referring agency, name of person who is responsible for the referral, and specified reason for referral.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:
Include information considered to be relative to the behavior of the child such as physical symptoms, cultural factors, school progress, etc. (Be brief). State the source of this information. If it is hearsay or surmised information, indicate it as such or do not include it. Responsibility for getting this information lies with the referring agency prior to testing.

CONDITIONS OF TESTING AND TEST BEHAVIOR:
Describe elements in the test situation (area for test, noise, interruptions) which may have influence on the child's performance.
Describe the observed attitude of the child, his mannerisms, and reactions to the test. This may include some impressions of the examiner and should be stated as such.

TEST FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS:
Statement of the test form given with the score results. If the Stanford-Binet is used, include basal and ceiling ages, mental age, and I.Q. If the Wechsler tests are used, give verbal, performance, full scale scores. Analyze briefly the items passed and failed on the test in relation to the strengths and weaknesses they show in the child's intellectual behavior. Evaluate
the mental level at which the child was operating at the time of testing. State his educational range of intellectual functioning (trainable, educable, borderline, slow learner, average, etc.) Estimate the child's academic potential at maturity based on present mental age or I.Q.

This is the most important section in the report as it is a summary of the findings for which the test is given. It will probably be the longest section of the report.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

Include here the professional opinion of the examiner as to the needs of this child.

Recommendations are made to the local placement committee whose responsibility it is to finally recommend special class placement. The recommendations made by the examiner are based only on the test results and it is up to the committee to evaluate the entire case.

Signed by the Examiner

Title

STEP III — THE LOCAL PLACEMENT COMMITTEE

A. A placement committee composed of at least 3 people is appointed by the superintendent.

B. This committee must become familiar with the rules and regulations for special class placement as set up in the State Plan.

C. All information to be considered should be compiled before the meeting of the placement committee.

D. The complete information on the child being considered for placement should be made available to the committee.

E. The committee should make recommendations for the best possible placement for the child in accordance with the needs of that child in relation to the provisions in the State Plan. These recommendations are made to the Superintendent or a designated representative for action.

F. This committee is also responsible for reviewing a case before a child is to be withdrawn from the special class.
STEP IV — PLACEMENT IN THE SPECIAL CLASS

A. When the placement committee has acted upon the case and the superintendent or his representative has agreed that the child should be placed in the special class, the principal and teacher should be informed.

B. The evaluation information should be made available to the teacher to apply in planning for the child's educational program.

   1. A confidential file should be set up on each child in the special class. This file should include:
      a. The narrative psychological report.
      b. A report from the physician with information that will be helpful to the teacher in working with the child.
      c. A family profile report including the social history of the child.
      d. The cumulative academic record of the child.
      e. Other information that is pertinent and useful in program planning for the child.

C. Each child is admitted to the special class on a trial basis.

STEP V — RE-EVALUATION

A. A child should be given an individual intelligence test to note deterioration, improvement, or stability at least every 2 years, if possible.

B. Constant appraisal by the teacher is necessary to develop a program to meet the child's needs.

C. A review should be made at least once a year to decide on continuing each child in special class.

   1. This can be done by the teacher and principal working together.
   2. In special problem cases, it would be necessary to include other personnel.

D. If it is felt that a child cannot benefit from the special education program, if he is a detriment to this program, his case should be referred to the placement committee with some definite recommendations and dated anecdotal records of behavior.

E. If it becomes apparent that a child needs services in addition to or instead of those in the local school program, he should be referred to other agencies for help. It is better to refer a child than to reject him completely.
STEP VI — ANNUAL REPORTING ON EVALUATION TO
THE STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

When applications for Classes for Exceptional Children are
made each year, they are accompanied by evaluation record
forms with information on each child enrolled. These record
forms are filed with the State Department Program for Ex-
ceptional Children and Youth.

The following is a guide for the use of the Evaluation
Record Form.

1. List alphabetically the names of all children who are
intended to be enrolled in the coming school year.
   a. Do not include any names of children who are known
to have withdrawn, have been removed from the school district,
or who otherwise do not attend the school.
   b. Children may be enrolled throughout the year as
customary in the local systems, but they must be fully
evaluated and approved by the local placement committee before enrolling.
   c. Transfer students in special classes should be
handled as any other transfer student locally, but should be
referred through the regular channel of placement in local
special classes.
   d. The number of children enrolled at any one time
should not exceed the number set by the Alabama State Plan.
If there are more on the list, select those who will be enrolled
at the beginning of the year and hold the others on a waiting
list. Include on this form only the names of children who will
be initially enrolled in the class.
   e. If a child is listed who does not fall into the exact
I.Q. classification of the Alabama State Plan, and the placement
committee feels the child should be in the class, attach a state-
ment of reasons for this and the case will be reviewed by the
State Department.
   f. Children may not attend special classes who are not
enrolled in them.

2. Age (Age limits are set by Alabama State Plan. Do not
include children who are not within these limits). The age of
each child should be given in years and nearest months as of the
date designated as deadline for filing applications.

3. Sex. Indicate B (boy) G (girl)

4. Medical Diagnosis (See Alabama State Plan)
A brief summary of the report on the physical examination and diagnosis must be given. Such defects as orthopedic (kind: club foot, spina bifida, cerebral palsy); vision (visual acuity in best eye); or hearing (list decibel loss and frequency); and disease syndromes (named) should be listed if there are any. If there are no physical defects state "none".

5. Psychological Diagnosis (Review Alabama Plan for those eligible.
   a. Test Administered—list as follows (if all children have the same form, list only once and ditto the rest).
   1. WAIS
   2. WISC
   3. Stanford-Binet
   4. Others (list by name)

   Only the I.Q. score derived from an individual intelligence test will be accepted.
   b. Date administered
   Use most recent test date with the most recent scores.
   c. If additional tests have been given and it is felt that this information is relevant, list test and findings on back of evaluation record.
   d. I.Q.: Intelligence quotient listed as scored on the test. This should be Full Scale Score on the Wechsler Tests and I.Q. on the Stanford-Binet.
   e. M.A.: The mental age should be current, and if test was given over 12 months previously the revised M.A. as derived by the formula on page 20 of the Evaluation Manual should be listed here.
   f. Remarks:
   Any specific recommendations (such as "needs special education, needs help in school work, etc.") may be listed here. Diagnosis (such as "educable range", "trainable range", "normal", "borderline," etc.) should be listed.

6. New Admissions
   If the child is a new enrollee in the special education program, mark (x)

7. Previous enrollment in special class
   a. If the child has been in a special class in your school system mark (x) under "place" and list the number of years there.
   b. If the child is a transfer from another school system list the name of the most recent system he attended under "place," and the number of years in special education, if known.
Evaluation Record on Special Class, School Year 19-19

(Make in duplicate and file one copy with the State Department of Education with each application.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School</th>
<th>Type of Class</th>
<th>Teacher</th>
<th>Principal</th>
<th>Psychologist(s)</th>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of Pupil</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Sex</th>
<th>Medical Diagnosis (Physical Defects)</th>
<th>Psychological Diagnosis</th>
<th>New Admission</th>
<th>Previous Special Class Place</th>
<th>Years</th>
</tr>
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PART III
HOW TEACHERS USE PSYCHOLOGICAL EVALUATION INFORMATION

A. Definitions

I. Q. Intelligence quotient is the ratio of mental age to chronological age based on a standard score with a mean of 100 and a standard deviation. The scores are standardized for each age level on the tests.

M. A. Mental age is a measurement of the mental level, in terms of years and months, at which a child is functioning on a given test.

B. Use of the Scores For Academic Expectancy

The Intelligence Quotient is useful in estimating academic grade levels which can be expected of retarded children at each chronological age level. The chart on page 19 shows academic expectancy calculated on the basis of a valid I.Q. The mental age of a retarded child is somewhat less than his chronological age. Use of the mental age score derived from the intelligence tests is valuable to a teacher in planning a developmental program of education based on the level at which the child is functioning. The teacher will need to accommodate the differences in physiological, social, and interest maturity that occur when the chronological and mental ages differ.

For example, a child of C.A. 12 with M.A. 7 years 5 months will not behave exactly as a child of C.A. 8 with M.A. 7 years 5 months because of experiential and developmental differences. A chart for calculation of the Mental Age is on pages 21-22.

While I.Q. and Mental Age are highly related to academic behavior, the teacher is cautioned to consider all the other factors influencing a child's progress. If a child shows marked deviation from his grade expectancy level or his mental age level, further evaluation is necessary.

C. Use of Narrative Information

The teacher is in the best position to recognize daily progress and behavior changes. The information in the psychological report will indicate the test behavior of a child. The teacher can compare the test behavior and daily behavior and accommodate or investigate any extreme differences. Usually the narrative sections of the psychological
report are useful in substantiating a teacher's appraisal. Some patterns of learning disabilities and deficiencies as well as strengths of a child may appear on the test. The narrative report suggests these so that further diagnosis of learning problems can be made.

INTELLIGENCE CLASSIFICATIONS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CLASSIFICATION</th>
<th>I. Q.</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Very superior</td>
<td>130 and above</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Superior</td>
<td>120-129</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bright Normal</td>
<td>110-119</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average</td>
<td>90-109</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slow learner</td>
<td>80-89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mentally Retarded</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Educable</td>
<td>(50) 55-(75) 90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trainable</td>
<td>(25) 30-(50) 55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Custodial</td>
<td>below (25) 30</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

How To Use The I.Q. Level For Academic Expectancy

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Intelligence Quotient Levels</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
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<tr>
<td>7</td>
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<td>8</td>
</tr>
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<td>9</td>
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<td>13</td>
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<td>14</td>
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<tr>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*—Kindergarten

(1) The academic grade levels indicate potential functioning levels. Those levels showing 4 or 5 grade expectancy can be assumed to be potentially at functional literacy.

(2) The grade levels estimate mental age grade expectancy but the interest level of materials and areas of work should be chosen with interest levels in excess of grade level listed.

Compiled by Dr. Glenn A. Vergason, University of Alabama.

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TO COMPUTE THE MENTAL AGE OF A CHILD FROM PREVIOUS TESTS USING THE CONVERSION TABLE AND FORMULA

M.A. = C.A. x I.Q. (expressed as a decimal to the hundredths)

The following example is given:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Month</th>
<th>Day</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1965</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1956</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Subtract to find current chronological age:

- 9 years - 2 months = 110 months

I.Q. (from test report) = 62

M.A. = C.A. x I.Q.

M.A. = 110 x 0.62

M.A. = 68.20 or 68 months

Use conversion table to change M.A. to years and months:

- M.A. = 5 years 8 months

The teacher is then able to use the mental age as an indication of the level on which the child is functioning intellectually.
## CONVERSION TABLE: C. A. OR M. A. IN TOTAL MONTHS

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PART IV
RESOURCES FOR PSYCHOLOGICAL EVALUATION

A. Program for Exceptional Children and Youth
   Alabama State Department of Education
   Montgomery, Alabama 36104
   A register of psychologists and psychometrists is available on request.

B. Alabama Psychological Association
   A list of members is available. (This includes members in private practice who do testing as well as those employed by agencies.)

C. Division of Mental Hygiene
   Alabama State Health Department
   Montgomery, Alabama
   Locations of the Mental Hygiene Clinics where testing services are available may be obtained by writing the Division Director.

D. The University of Alabama Medical Center
   Department of Psychology
   Birmingham, Alabama
   Provides complete clinical diagnosis and evaluation. Contact Director for information.

E. College and University Testing Services
   Several Alabama institutions of higher learning provide testing services. Write the Departments of Psychology or the Departments of Education at the various schools for information.