

You are concerned about your child. Is it a learning issue, sleep issue, behavioral challenge or mental health problem, such as ADHD? Children are complex and sometimes disorders impact many aspects of your child's life and can be complicated by co-existing conditions. There is not one single medical professional that can accurately diagnose and provide all forms of treatment such as medications and therapy. Not every team member uses the same tools to diagnose and assess your child. The best care for your child always involves a TEAM for the best outcome. There are different professional specialties that can assist you in helping us properly diagnose and treat your child.

PEDIATRICIANS

These individuals are medical doctors that obtain specialized training in the care of children from birth to 18 years of age. Pediatricians are trained in assessing developmental milestones that indicate good health in children at different ages and stages. They get to know your child over multiple visits and have an established relationship with your family. However, routine wellness and acute visits alone do not give sufficient information to allow a thorough evaluation and accurate diagnosis of your child's problem. The role of your pediatrician is to be your medical home - to assist you in confirming there is a problem that needs further work up and help you navigate which specialists to see next. This team of specialists will assist us in providing your child with the most accurate diagnosis and offer best individualized treatment options. Although pediatricians are trained to understand the science and chemistry of drugs and do provide prescription medications, there are times when your child is best cared for by a psychiatrist or neurologist for medications. Pediatricians often refer to specialists when counseling or cognitive behavioral therapy may be beneficial, but do not provide these services themselves.

DEVELOPMENTAL PEDIATRICIANS

These individuals are medical doctors that specialize in the development of children. They have additional training in learning disabilities, developmental disorders and behavioral challenges. They can provide diagnosis with clinical interviews and objective testing. They provide educational and therapy recommendations. They do not typically provide medication management or therapy.

PSYCHIATRISTS

These individuals are medical doctors that obtained specialized training in mental health to qualify them to diagnose and treat mental health disorders and treat these issues with medications. They diagnose mental health disorders, such as ADHD, using clinical interviews and rating scales rather than extensive batteries of tests. Psychiatrists usually focus on the use of a medication as their contribution to the treatment plan. They work with clinical psychologists or licensed therapists, but do not provide cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT) or counseling. Behavioral therapy and counseling are very valuable in improving executive function and the life skills that are important to address after the initial diagnosis. Often, patients will see psychiatrists during the initial phase of treatment. After obtaining an accurate diagnosis and finding a successful medication regime, they will sometimes transition the care of medication management back to the pediatrician.

NEUROLOGISTS

These individuals are medical doctors that obtained specialized training in how the brain works to qualify them to diagnose and treat neurological disorders such as seizures, sleeping disorders and tics. Their specialized skill set is needed when there is a concern of a learning disability or ADHD along WITH a comorbidity such as seizures or a

structural anatomical brain disorders. Neurologists can provide additional studies such as an EEG (electroencephalogram) to rule out seizures, testing for sleep disorders, or order relevant brain imaging if needed. They can also prescribe medication as their contribution to the treatment plan. There is some overlap between the medical scope of practice between psychiatrists and neurologists. However, like psychiatrists, neurologists work with clinical psychologists or licensed therapists, but do not provide cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT) or counseling themselves.

PSYCHOLOGISTS & NEUROPSYCHOLOGISTS

These individuals are trained at the doctorate level (PhD) in clinical psychology. Neuropsychology is a specialized branch of clinical psychology that studies how the brain and nervous system affect cognitive functioning and behavior. They utilize objective standardized tests, psychological assessments and questionnaires to make a diagnosis. They are trained specifically in diagnosis and interpretation of learning and thought processes. They can provide a diagnosis and assist families with additional treatment and educational recommendations based on behavior and learning styles to assist children, based on the child's level of impairment and functioning. Most psychologists offer counseling services, while neuropsychologists tend to focus exclusively on testing and diagnosis. These individuals understand how the brain works, but they are not medical doctors and cannot prescribe medications. Thus, they often work with a pediatrician, psychiatrist and/or neurologist if medications are needed and desired by the family to help children achieve the best treatment outcome. Some psychologists provide therapy but neuropsychologists do not provide this service.

LICENSED PROFESSIONAL COUNSELORS

These professional providers are master's degree trained in particular areas of therapy. They do not play a role in the diagnostic process, but rather focus on non-medication based treatment. Often they specialize in play therapy or talk therapy, such as cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT). They are not medical doctors and cannot provide medical diagnosis or medication treatment. They focus on providing coping skills to help patients work through difficult emotions and psychological challenges. They help improve life skills such as organization, time management and goal achieving strategies for children and teens.