

## INITIAL ASSESSMENT

**These are just some initial steps of my process and some details about how I work with my clients. There is a lot more that goes into the overall plan in terms of assessment, distinguishing the client's strengths and integrating them into the learning process.**

- 1** Initially, I hold a meeting with parents (without the child present) to discuss the child's academic, social and emotional history and needs. I have parents bring all previous assessments (Neuropsychological testing, all previous I.E.P documentation, previous report cards or private school narratives and documentation, and any other documentation from outside professionals, such as Speech and Language Therapists, Occupational Therapists, Behavioral Pediatricians, Child Psychologists, etc.). If parents are comfortable after the initial meeting, I request that they sign a Release of Information Form so that I can speak with other professionals who have worked with their child. After reviewing all documentation, I then ask parents (and child depending on age) what their goals are and what they intend to accomplish by utilizing my services. This helps me to get a sense of their parenting style, as well as the goals and expectations for their child.
- 2** Depending on what academic areas the child needs support with, I conduct initial formal and informal assessments as a baseline. Afterwards, I normally reassess the child's academic progress on a quarterly basis to make sure that the child is making significant progress.
- 3** I also set up one or more initial meetings with the child. This depends on their age and personality. I meet with them to get to know them and to create a safe space in which they feel comfortable and are able to speak freely. The goal is for them to actually look forward to their sessions with me. Depending on the confidence level of the child, I may start instruction right after our 1st meeting. There are also times when it takes several meetings to develop a rapport with the child. I ask the child a series of questions that can provide me with insight into their favorite subjects, academic goals and extracurricular activities.
- 4** If both the parents and the child feel that my service is a good fit, I will have the child write down their goals (depending on age, grade and skill level) and immediately start working on them along with my goals for them and their parents' goals. I always start out with a plan, but I leave room for spontaneous changes that would depend on the child's mood, etc. For example, if they come in one day and are really energetic and seem more confident, I will push them harder. With most children, I explain what I am doing and why at a verbal level that they can easily comprehend. I spend the last few minutes with young children (Kindergarten thru 3rd grade) playing a fun game or having them show or teach me something. Depending on age, I will usually present them with a long term "reward" for working hard, such as a trip to their favorite park or a healthy snack.
- 5** Depending on the child, I like to work with them either one or two times per week for one hour (for young elementary children, I recommend no more than 50 minutes to ensure that they remain focused for the entire session). I have occasionally worked with children three times per week, and have worked with some children on a daily basis, which made progress come much more quickly.