

# **Mccarthy Scales of Children's Abilities (Msca) Encyclopedia Article**

## **Mccarthy Scales of Children's Abilities (Msca)**

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# McCarthy Scales of Children's Abilities (Msca)

*Assesses the cognitive development and motor skills of young children.*

An individually administered test that assesses the **cognitive development** and motor skills of children aged 2½-8½. The length of the testing session is about 45 minutes for children under the age of 5 and an hour for older children. A wide range of puzzles, toys, and game-like activities is used to evaluate each child according to five different scales. The Verbal Scale, consisting of 5 subtests, assesses comprehension and use of language. The Quantitative Scale (3 subtests) measures mathematical ability. The Perceptual-Performance Scale (7 subtests) evaluates a child's ability to conceptualize and reason without words. The Memory Scale (4 subtests) tests short-term recall of words, numbers, pictures, and tonal sequences. Finally, the Motor Scale (5 subtests) assesses both gross and fine motor coordination. In addition to individual scores for each scale, the Verbal, Quantitative, and Perceptual-Performance Scales are combined to yield the General Cognitive Scale, an index of overall intellectual functioning expressed as a Mental Age Equivalent between 1-½ and 12-½ years. Besides indicating overall cognitive development, the McCarthy Scales are useful for determining strengths and weaknesses in specific areas. Parts of this test are included in the McCarthy Screening Test, used to assess school readiness in the early grades.

## For Further Study

### Books

Cohen, Libby G., and Loraine J. Spenciner. *Assessment of Young Children*. New York: Longman, 1994.

McCullough, Virginia. *Testing and Your Child: What You Should Know About 150 of the Most Common Medical, Educational, and Psychological Tests*. New York: Plume, 1992.

Wortham, Sue Clark. *Tests and Measurement in Early Childhood Education*. Columbus: Merrill Publishing Co., 1990.