

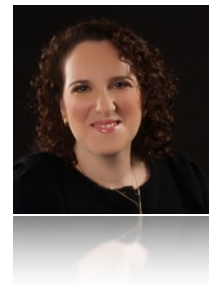
**SOCIALLY SPEAKING LLC**

The Special Education Evaluation Process Explained
In Memory of Dr. Natalie Nechah Hochstein PsyD 2012

Edited by Penina Pearl Rybak MA/CCC-SLP, TSHH, Speech-Language Pathologist,
Educational Consultant, and Founder/CEO Socially Speaking LLC

Dr. Natalie Nechah Hochstein, PsyD was my best friend, colleague, and mentor for over 20 years. She was a brilliant, dynamic, and caring therapist. She was an expert in conducting comprehensive and specialized psychological evaluations. These psycho-educational, neuropsychological and psychological test batteries were administered to students (i.e. young children, adolescents) who had learning, language/speech, attention, social, behavior and emotional concerns. Nechah helped countless children in Manhattan, until she lost her 3 year battle to cancer on 12/12/12. She was instrumental in helping me become a better person, better speech therapist, start my consulting company, and assemble my seminar handouts for my *Socially Speaking™ Seminars*. Nechah will be sorely missed; as both a wonderful human being and a wonderful diagnostician and clinician.

Nechah often explained, "Testing goes beyond *just the numbers* to help figure out strengths and weaknesses, to diagnose, advocate and help prepare for remediation. The results also give parents insight as to the challenges that their children face. Through evaluations, parents gain more knowledge about their children, and children learn about themselves in a warm and personal environment. Results must be carefully explained, and when necessary; and with consent; shared with other professionals to put needed services in place."



Nechah always tried to explain the process of gathering baseline data as follows:

FACTORS TO CONSIDER AND DISCUSS WITH THE CHILD'S TEAM:

- Diagnostic information (i.e. does a student have cognitive challenges and/or behavioral challenges such as a learning disability or ADHD?)
- Identification of a student's learning style/profile, strengths and weaknesses, and personal preferences to help with remediation of behavioral/academic issues.
- Documentation of the need for special education services, such as placement and accommodations, including extra time on standardized tests.

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Interventions, such as speech/language therapy, psychotherapy (individual/family), occupational therapy, and physical therapy etc.

Nechah also freely provided a list of red flags for parents and caregivers, that she shared over the years as the Senior Psychologist at ICD of NY. She was renown for her sensitive, succinct, and sequential intakes, evaluations, and follow-up sessions.

Red Flags For Parents-Assessment Needed:

Language Issues

- ❖ Delays in speaking
- ❖ Trouble understanding directions
- ❖ Difficulty with following multiple step commands

Learning Problems

- ❖ Struggles with learning nursery rhymes
- ❖ Trouble recalling names of colors, letters and numbers
- ❖ Slow reader

Attention Issues

- ❖ Does not always complete independent work
- ❖ Inconsistent performance
- ❖ Poor study skills
- ❖ Disorganized

Behavior Problems

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- ❖ Talks in class
- ❖ Calls out
- ❖ Fidgets
- ❖ Clowns around

Motor Issues

- ❖ Clumsy
- ❖ Poor coordination
- ❖ Lack of hand dominance
- ❖ Handwriting is slow, messy or illegible

Emotional Concerns

- ❖ Refuses to go to school
- ❖ Complains of stomachaches and/or headaches
- ❖ Sleep difficulties
- ❖ Poor appetite
- ❖ Cries with little provocation
- ❖ Irritable
- ❖ Clingy

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Nechah profoundly influenced the way I have approached teamwork, assessment, and treatment of my own students with special needs. My *Socially Speaking™ Social Skills Curriculum* contains echoes of her genius and playful approach to language and social skills development. I hope to carry on her work and share her wisdom with others.

Penina Pearl Rybak December 2012

Join the Journey for Change! Try the Socially Speaking™ Experience!

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