What is the Cognitive Abilities Test (CogAT)?

The Cognitive Abilities Test is a group ability test that measures general intellectual ability. The test consists of three batteries: Verbal, Quantitative, and Nonverbal. Each battery is designed to assess a group of general abstract reasoning skills that research suggests are related to learning and problem solving. The Verbal and Quantitative Batteries require the student to use verbal and mathematical concepts that are acquired from experiences both in and out of school. The Nonverbal Battery uses geometric shapes and figures that have little direct relationship to formal school instruction.

What is the Naglieri Nonverbal Ability Test?

The Naglieri Nonverbal Ability Test (NNAT) is a group ability test that does not require English language skills and knowledge that is taught in school. This test allows students to demonstrate their ability to think and reason by figuring out problems that are presented through a complex series of geometric shapes and designs. The Naglieri Nonverbal Ability Test allows students to demonstrate advanced levels of reasoning without word knowledge, mathematics, or reading skills. The content of the Naglieri Nonverbal Ability Test is completely nonverbal, the instructions are brief, and the questions may be solved using only the information that is presented in each diagram.

What are the similarities and differences between the two tests?

Both tests use a multiple choice format. The CogAT has three sections which yield three sub scores, one for each section. The NNAT has one section and one score. The highest possible score for each sub test of the CogAT and the NNAT is 160. The average score for each test is 100. The tests are given according to a child's grade level and the score is based on his/her age. In Fairfax County Public Schools, the tests are administered by classroom teachers, usually in multiple settings. Occasionally, other staff, such as the counselor, administrator, or testing coordinator may administer the tests.

How can I prepare my child to take the tests? Can I see sample questions or practice sheets?

Sample questions are practiced by students as part of the test preparation. Sample tests are not commercially available. The best test preparation is a good night's sleep and a healthy breakfast.

What do the different terms that are found on the score report mean?

**Percentile Rank**
This shows the relative standing of a student in comparison with other students of the same age or grade. For example, 95% means that a student scored higher than 95% of other students in the same age or grade taking the test during the same time of year (fall, winter, or spring).

**Stanine**
This indicates the student's relative standing in the national norm group and ranges from 1 - 9 with a mean of 5.

**Standard Age Scores (SAS) on the CogAT and Nonverbal Ability Index (NAI) on the NNAT**
These scores may be interpreted in terms of how many standard deviation units the score is above or below the mean for the age group. An SAS or NAI of 100 is zero deviations from the mean. The three digit SAS score for the CogAT and the three digit NAI score on the NNAT are used to select a second grade pool of candidates for the full-time AAP (level IV) center program. They are also reviewed as one of the criteria that must be submitted in a screening file.

Can students be re-tested?
Parent/guardians of students enrolled in and attending FCPS may request one re-test in grades three through seven. This test may be administered during the fall testing cycle. Please let the testing coordinator and Advanced Academic Resource Teacher at your local school know at the start of the school year if you wish to have your student re-tested. Additional testing may be obtained from George Mason University Psychological Clinic (703-993-4200, http://cap.gmu.edu/). Students must wait at least 6 months before retaking any group ability test or individual intelligence test. Students may take a different approved individual intelligence test administered by a state licensed clinical psychologist within the 6 month period.