Clinical Psychologist

Children who have autism may sometimes visit a clinical psychologist. These professionals can see how well a patient's treatment plan is working. They help parents and teachers create a plan for teaching the student in the way they learn best.

Career Path

Clinical psychologists study for five to seven years after college graduation to get a Ph.D. in their field. During this time, doctoral students do research in an area of psychology that they find interesting. If you enjoy learning about how the mind works, you would like doing psychology research.

Clinical psychologists spend a lot of time testing their patients. The tests a psychologist gives do not always use a paper and pencil. Sometimes the psychologist will observe their patient playing with toys. Children with autism often play in a way that is very different than most children their age. The psychologist can learn a lot about how a child's mind is working by watching the child at play.

One helpful tool that many psychologists use is a video camera. The psychologist will use the video camera to tape a child's actions during the appointment, and then compare that to a video taken at an earlier appointment. The psychologist can then tell if the child is making progress. If your teacher or parent has a video camera, you could try using the camera to record your progress at something you are learning to do. Read the section below for help in setting up the project.

Technology Spotlight

Think of something you are just learning how to do, or something you would like to learn to do. Find someone with a video camera who is willing to make a video recording of you now. Then practice your chosen activity for three or four weeks, and ask the person to make a new video recording. Compare both recordings and see how much progress you've made!

Professional athletes, dancers and musicians all use video recordings to help them improve their skills. Look at the picturess below to get some ideas about what you might like to try!