

### Assessment and Diagnosis of Autism Spectrum Disorders

From ASHA (2006), *Knowledge and Skills Needed by Speech-Language Pathologists for Diagnosis, Assessment, and Treatment of Autism Spectrum Disorders Across the Life Span* [Knowledge and Skills]. Available from [www.asha.org/policy](http://www.asha.org/policy).

<b>Screenings:</b>			
-Limited research regarding the accuracy of broadband screeners to identify children at risk for ASD.			
Assessment:	Measure:	Description:	Training Required:
<i>Checklist for Autism in Toddlers (CHAT)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Consists of 9 items reported by parents and 5 items observed by a health professional at the 18-month development checkup</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>According to ASHA (2006), "the validity of the CHAT is disappointing, it indicates that some children with ASD can be identified at 18 months and provides clues to the early indicators of ASD, based on the children they were able to identify early. The poor sensitivity indicates it should not be relied on as an accurate screener and likely does not merit the time in a pediatric practice" (p. 11).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>None</li> </ul>
<i>Modified Checklist for Autism in Toddlers</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Expanded version of the original CHAT</li> <li>23 questions</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Follow-up data has yet to be published; therefore, the extent to which the M-CHAT will identify children who will later be diagnosed with ASD is unknown.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>None</li> </ul>
<i>Social Communication Questionnaire (SCQ)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>40-question parent report intended for individuals</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Caution should be taken when using this assessment with children under the</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>None</li> </ul>

	previously identified with developmental concerns	age of 4.	
<i>Pervasive Developmental Disorders Screening Test, Second Edition (PDDST-II)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Self-administered parent-interview divided into three stages</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Questionnaire has yet to be validated with a general population sample</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• None</li> </ul>
<i>Screening for Autism in Two-Year Olds (STAT)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Observational scale designed for children from age 24 to 35 months” (ASHA, 2006, p. 12).</li> <li>• Serves as a screening for children referred for developmental concerns.</li> <li>• 20-minute play interaction targets 3 main developmental areas: play, motor imitation, and nonverbal communication.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• May not identify children with milder symptoms</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• None</li> </ul>
<i>Systematic Observation of Red Flags (SORF)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Observational rating scale for 29 potential “red flags”</li> <li>• Systematic procedures are designed to encourage spontaneous behaviors that range in degree of structured provided.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Preliminary samples indicated a strong sensitivity and specificity</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Minimal</li> </ul>

<b>Diagnostic Evaluations:</b>			
<p>-Should be performed by professionals who have <i>specific expertise</i> in the evaluation and treatment of autism.</p> <p>-Diagnostic tools for ASD include parent/caregiver report as well as diagnostic observation instrument.</p> <p>-According to ASHA (2006), the Autism Diagnostic Interview-Revised (ADI-R) and the Autism Diagnostic Observation Schedule (ADOS) are considered to be the current “gold standards” for ASD diagnosis.</p>			
<i>Autism Diagnostic Observation Scale (ADOS)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Semi-structured observational assessment to assess reciprocal social interaction, play, stereotypic behavior, restricted interests, and other abnormal behaviors.</li> <li>• Appropriate for individuals across the life span (preschool to adulthood).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The ADOS has a high degree of accuracy when compared to DSM-IV criteria.</li> <li>• However, it not effective in discriminating autism from pervasive developmental disorders (PDD)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Requires a substantive amount of experience, skill, training, and practice to administer (Volkmar, Paul, Klin &amp; 2005).</li> </ul>
<i>The Childhood Autism Rating Scale (CARS)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Serve as a tool to familiarize parents with behaviors associated with autism (Volkmar, 2005).</li> <li>• It contains 15 items in which the child and adult are rated on a 4-point scale after careful observation.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• According to Volkmar et al., the CARS is “the strongest, best-documented, and most widely used clinical rating scale for behaviors associated with autism” (p. 748).</li> <li>• Distinguishes between mild-to-moderate and severe presentations of ASD.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Minimal training is required</li> </ul>
<i>The Autism Diagnostic Interview-Revised (ADI-R)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• According to ASHA (2006), it is comprehensive structured</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Developmental history and current behaviors are combined using a</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•</li> </ul>

	interview that probes for symptoms of ASD in areas of social relatedness, communication, and ritualistic or preservative behaviors” (p. 15).	scoring algorithm to indicate whether the person meets the DSM-IV criteria for autism or a related disorder.	
<i>The Parent Interview for Autism (PIA)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Structured interview designed to gather relevant information regarding symptoms and severity of young children (under age 6) suspected of having ASD.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Targets 11 relevant areas including social behavior, communication, repetitive activities, and sensory behaviors.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No formal training is required</li> </ul>
<i>The Gilliam Autism Rating Scale (GARS)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Checklist designed to be used by parents, teachers, and professionals to estimate the severity of ASD symptoms.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Only normed from age 3</li> <li>• Provides a global rating of ASD symptoms.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•</li> </ul>