

Autism Traits Assessment Scale

Clinical Screening Tool for Autism Spectrum Traits

CHILD INFORMATION

Child Name: _____ Date of Assessment: _____ / _____ / _____
MM DD YYYY

Date of Birth: _____ / _____ / _____ Age: _____ years
MM DD YYYY

Evaluator Name: _____

Setting / Context: _____

INSTRUCTIONS

This scale is designed to help professionals identify the presence and severity of autism-related traits. For each of the **23 domains** listed in the following pages, indicate the number of symptoms observed based on your **clinical interview, direct observation, and/or caregiver report**.

Consider the child's **typical behavior** across settings (home, school, community) and over time.

Circle the score that best reflects the child's presentation for each domain.

SCORING SCALE

0	1	2
		
No Symptoms No symptoms of this domain are present.	One Symptom Present One symptom of this domain is present.	Multiple Symptoms Present Two or more symptoms of this domain are present.

IMPORTANT NOTES

- This scale is a screening tool and does not provide a diagnosis.
- Use alongside other standardized assessments and clinical judgment.
- Total score is obtained by summing all domain scores (maximum = 46 points).
- A total score of **15 or higher** is considered the cut-off for clinically significant autism traits.



INSTRUCTIONS:

For each domain below, review the listed behaviors and circle the score (0, 1, or 2) that best reflects the child’s typical presentation.



1

**SOCIAL INTERACTION
DIFFICULTIES**



The deviation in sociability may range from mild forms, such as some negativism and avoidance of eye contact, to more severe forms, such as intense isolation.

1. Does not smile
2. Absence of spontaneous approaches
3. Does not seek company
4. Constantly seeks a hiding place or “safe corner”
5. Avoids people
6. Unable to maintain social exchange
7. Intense isolation

SCORE

0

No
Symptoms

1

One
Symptom
Present

2

Multiple
Symptoms
Present

2

**ENVIRONMENTAL
MANIPULATION**



The problem of manipulating the environment may appear in mild or severe forms, such as not responding to requests and remaining indifferent, or sudden outbursts, uncontrolled laughter, etc., to gain attention.

1. Does not respond to requests
2. Sudden change in mood
3. Remains indifferent, with no expression
4. Compulsive laughter
5. Passing tantrums or anger
6. Motor or verbal excitement (e.g., constantly moving or talking)

SCORE

0

No
Symptoms

1

One
Symptom
Present

2

Multiple
Symptoms
Present

3

**USING OTHERS PRIMARILY
TO MEET NEEDS**



The child’s relationship with adults is usually non-interactive; they use the adult as a means to obtain what they want.

1. Uses the adult as an object, leading them to what is desired.
2. Adult is used as support to obtain what is desired (e.g., to reach a cookie).
3. Adult is a means to meet a need the child cannot achieve alone (e.g., tying shoes).
4. If the adult does not respond, interferes with the adult’s behavior.

SCORE

0

No
Symptoms

1

One
Symptom
Present

2

Multiple
Symptoms
Present

4

RESISTANCE TO CHANGE



Resistance to change may range from irritability to clear refusal.

1. Insistent on maintaining routine
2. Great difficulty accepting events that alter routine (e.g., changes in place, clothing, food).
3. Shows resistance to change, persisting in the same response or activity.

SCORE

0

No
Symptoms

1

One
Symptom
Present

2

Multiple
Symptoms
Present

5

NEED FOR RIGID ORDER



Shows a tendency to order things, which can reach an obsessive need for order without which the child cannot perform any activity.

1. Orders objects according to their own criteria.
2. Adheres to spatial order (each thing always in its place).
3. Adheres to temporal sequence (each thing in its time).

SCORE

0

No
Symptoms

1

One
Symptom
Present

2

Multiple
Symptoms
Present

6

**EYE CONTACT DIFFICULTIES /
UNDEFINED GAZE**



Lack of eye contact may range from a strange gaze to constant avoidance of visual stimuli.

1. Avoids direct gaze, does not look into eyes
2. Turns head or gaze away when called (looks away).
3. Gaze appears empty, vacant.
4. Follows stimuli with eyes only intermittently.
5. Looks at objects peripherally, not centrally.
6. Gives the impression of not seeing.

SCORE

0

No
Symptoms

1

One
Symptom
Present

2

Multiple
Symptoms
Present



INSTRUCTIONS:

For each domain below, review the listed behaviors and circle the score (0, 1, or 2) that best reflects the child's typical presentation.



7

LIMITED FACIAL EXPRESSION



A lack of non-verbal expressiveness, ranging from reduced expression to a total absence of response.

- 1. When spoken to, does not use facial, gestural, or vocal expressions as expected.
- 2. Does not show anticipatory reactions.
- 3. Does not express wants or feelings through facial expressions or gaze.
- 4. Facial immobility or very little expression.

SCORE

0

No Symptoms

1

One Symptom Present

2

Multiple Symptoms Present

8

SLEEP DISTURBANCES



Sleep patterns may deviate from age-expected norms, inconsistently or consistently.

- 1. Does not want to go to sleep.
- 2. Wakes up very early.
- 3. Irregular sleep (in intervals).
- 4. Reverses day and night.
- 5. Sleeps fewer hours than expected for age.

SCORE

0

No Symptoms

1

One Symptom Present

2

Multiple Symptoms Present

9

FEEDING DIFFICULTIES



May be quantitative, qualitative, or both, ranging from refusal to eat to active oppositional behavior.

- 1. Rigid food selectivity (e.g., eats the same foods always).
- 2. Eats non-food items (paper, insects, etc.).
- 3. When young, did not chew food.
- 4. Displays rumination behavior.
- 5. Vomiting.
- 6. Eats messily, spills or throws food.
- 7. Rituals (crumbles food before eating, etc.).
- 8. Lack of taste sensitivity (reduced taste awareness).

SCORE

0

No Symptoms

1

One Symptom Present

2

Multiple Symptoms Present

10

TOILET TRAINING DIFFICULTIES



Toilet training may be delayed and/or used as a way to manipulate or seek attention.

- 1. Fear of sitting on the toilet.
- 2. Uses sphincters to manipulate the adult.
- 3. Uses sphincters for body stimulation or pleasure.
- 4. Daytime control achieved, but nighttime control is delayed or absent.

SCORE

0

No Symptoms

1

One Symptom Present

2

Multiple Symptoms Present

11

SENSORY EXPLORATION (TOUCH, MOUTH)



Explores objects sensory-wise, using senses other than sight, without a specific purpose.

- 1. Bites and swallows non-food objects.
- 2. Sucks and puts things in the mouth.
- 3. Smells everything.
- 4. Touches everything; examines surfaces thoroughly with fingers.

SCORE

0

No Symptoms

1

One Symptom Present

2

Multiple Symptoms Present

12

INAPPROPRIATE USE OF OBJECTS



Does not use objects functionally but in unusual or bizarre ways.

- 1. Ignores objects or shows only momentary interest.
- 2. Picks up, hits, or throws objects.
- 3. Atypical handling of objects (holds indifferently, spins, etc.).
- 4. Carries around objects insistently.

SCORE

0

No Symptoms

1

One Symptom Present

2

Multiple Symptoms Present



Notes: _____



INSTRUCTIONS:

For each domain below, review the listed behaviors and circle the score (0, 1, or 2) that best reflects the child's typical presentation.



13

ATTENTION DIFFICULTIES



May range from mild distractibility to inability to sustain attention on tasks or activities.

1. Easily distracted, attention shifts frequently.
2. Cannot sustain attention on tasks or activities.
3. Does not finish tasks or activities.
4. Attention is inconsistent and not age-appropriate.

SCORE

0

No Symptoms

1

One Symptom Present

2

Multiple Symptoms Present

14

LACK OF INTEREST IN LEARNING



Shows little or no interest in learning, exploring or acquiring new skills.

1. Shows little interest in learning new things.
2. Does not seek to explore or discover.
3. Does not ask questions or demonstrate curiosity.
4. No motivation to learn or try new tasks.

SCORE

0

No Symptoms

1

One Symptom Present

2

Multiple Symptoms Present

15

LACK OF INITIATIVE



Shows little spontaneous initiative in activities, interactions or play.

1. Does not initiate activities.
2. Does not initiate interactions with others.
3. Does not show spontaneous play.
4. Needs constant prompting to act.

SCORE

0

No Symptoms

1

One Symptom Present

2

Multiple Symptoms Present

16

LANGUAGE AND COMMUNICATION DIFFERENCES



Difficulties in receptive, expressive or social use of language.

1. Delayed onset of speech.
2. Limited vocabulary for age.
3. Does not start or maintain conversations.
4. Uses language in an atypical way (echolalia, repetition, scripts).

SCORE

0

No Symptoms

1

One Symptom Present

2

Multiple Symptoms Present

17

INCONSISTENT DEMONSTRATION OF SKILLS



Skills may be present one day and absent the next without clear reason.

1. Skills are present at times but not consistently.
2. Performance varies greatly from day to day.
3. Appears to "lose" skills previously demonstrated.
4. Learning is inconsistent and not consolidated.

SCORE

0

No Symptoms

1

One Symptom Present

2

Multiple Symptoms Present

18

REACTIONS TO FRUSTRATION



May overreact to small frustrations or show intense emotional outbursts.

1. Becomes upset over small changes or demands.
2. Intense tantrums or emotional outbursts.
3. Disproportionate reactions to frustration.
4. Difficult to soothe or calm down.

SCORE

0

No Symptoms

1

One Symptom Present

2

Multiple Symptoms Present



 PROFESSIONAL SCORING GUIDE

TOTAL SCORE

Sum of all domain scores
(23 domains; score range 0–46)

/ 46

Minimum Score: 0 | Maximum Score: 46

CUT-OFF SCORE

15+

A total score of 15 or higher is suggestive
of clinically significant autism traits.

 INTERPRETATION GUIDE

TOTAL SCORE	INTERPRETATION	CLINICAL CONSIDERATIONS
0 – 14	Below 15 Low likelihood of significant autism traits.	- Behavior patterns appear to be within expected range. - Continue monitoring as part of routine care.
15 – 23	15+ Elevated autism traits present.	- Consider comprehensive assessment. - Review in the context of developmental history, medical history, and family report. - Evaluate impact on daily functioning.
24 – 46	High Level High probability of clinically significant autism traits.	- Strongly consider comprehensive diagnostic evaluation. - Assess for co-occurring conditions. - Develop individualized intervention plan as appropriate.



This tool is a screening instrument and does not provide a diagnosis.
Clinical judgment and additional standardized assessments are essential.

 CLINICAL NOTES



EVALUATOR SIGNATURE