Adaptive Behavior Evaluation Introduction

Overview of Instruments
Adaptive behavior is a critical measure when assessing students who have or are suspected of having autism spectrum disorder (Volkmar, et al., 2014). The use of a formal adaptive behavior measure allows the assessment team to determine the student’s level of functioning in daily tasks required to be successful in the home, community, and workplace. Tassé et al. (2012) have provided a thorough explanation on the use of the adaptive behavior construct and its contribution to a broader understanding of intellectual disability. This type of assessment assists in transition planning and may help ensure the student has the necessary skills to be productive when he or she has left the school environment. Assessing adaptive behavior in both school and home settings can provide additional valuable information about generalization of skills across settings. The following are the most commonly used adaptive behavior measures, which will be reviewed individually within this section of the TARGET documents: Adaptive Behavior Assessment System – Third Edition (ABAS-III); Scales of Independent Behavior-Revised (SIB-R); and, Vineland Adaptive Behavior Scales – Second Edition (Vineland™ II).

Misconceptions

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<th>Myth</th>
<th>Reality</th>
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<td>High functioning individuals with ASD do not have significant delays in adaptive behaviors.</td>
<td>A study completed in 2007 revealed that on the Vineland Adaptive Behavior Scales, participants with Asperger Syndrome had low or moderately low levels of adaptive skills across all domains, including communication (M = 76.10), daily living skills (M = 67.75), socialization (M = 62.27), and Adaptive Behavior composite (M = 64.28) (Myles, Lee, Smith, Tien, Chou, Swanson, et al., 2007). Additional research supports these findings (Lee &amp; Park, 2007).</td>
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<td>If a student has an average IQ, an adaptive behavior measure is unnecessary.</td>
<td>Although a student has an average IQ and is doing well academically, that does not mean that an adaptive measure is not needed. Research indicates that many students with autism have deficits in communication, daily living skills, and socialization (Lee &amp; Park, 2007, Myles et al., 2007). Klin and Volkmar (2000) noted that adaptive behavior is a critical area of planning for students who have autism in order to help them be successful when transitioning from the school environment to the work and community environments.</td>
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<td>If adaptive behavior measures demonstrate a discrepancy between home and school functioning, the results are probably invalid.</td>
<td>It is possible that the student’s behavior is drastically different in each setting because the demands of the settings differ (Lee &amp; Park, 2007) and the student is not generalizing skills from one setting to another. The student may also be using coping strategies to “hold it together” at school and then may “fall apart” when he gets home due to the stress of coping with the functional demands of the school setting throughout the day.</td>
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References


