

Adaptive Behavior Assessment

Overview of Instruments

Adaptive behavior is a critical part of assessing students who have or are suspected of having autism (AU) (Klin & Volkmar, 2000; Myles et al., 2007). 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 work place. This type of assessment will assist in transition planning and ensure the student has the necessary skills to be productive when he leaves 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.

Adaptive Behavior Assessment System – Second Edition (ABAS-II)

The Adaptive Behavior Assessment System-Second Edition (ABAS-II; Harrison & Oakland, 2003) uses a behavior rating format to assess adaptive behavior and related skills for individuals 0 through 89 years of age. Information on children may be provided by parents and/or teachers; information on adults may be provided by significant others, care providers, supervisors, and/or the client him/herself. ABAS scores help describe a person's general adaptive behavior as well as his or her functioning in 10 related adaptive skill areas: communication, community use, functional academics, school/home living, health and safety, leisure, self-care, self-direction, social, and work (for older adolescents and adults). These areas encompass the practical, everyday skills required to function and meet environmental demands, including those needed to effectively and independently care for oneself and interact with others.

The ABAS groups adaptive skills into three broad domains: conceptual, social, and practical. The conceptual domain includes the skill areas of communication, functional academics, self-direction, and health and safety. The social domain includes social and leisure skill areas. Finally, the practical domain includes the skill areas of self-care, home living, community use, health and

safety, and work. The motor skills area is supplemental for ages 5 through 89, and required for ages 0 through 5.

The ABAS provides a general adaptive composite; the composite scores for the conceptual, social, and practical domains; and scaled scores for the 10 skills areas. Report forms include parent/caregiver, teacher, adult form-self report, and adult form-rated by others.

Scales of Independent Behavior – Revised (SIB-R)

The Scales of Independent Behavior-Revised (SIB-R; Bruininks, Woodcock, Weatherman, & Hill, 1997) is a comprehensive measure of adaptive and problem behaviors. Administered individually, the SIB-R assesses functional independence and adaptive functioning across settings – school, home, employment, and community. The authors note that the SIB-R was designed for individual evaluation, individualized program planning, selection, and placement, and to assess service needs. The SIB-R may be administered using the structured interview or a checklist procedure.

Information obtained during the assessment yields two scale scores, the Adaptive Behavior Full Scale score and the Problem Behavior Scale score. Different rating systems are used for the two scales. The Adaptive Behavior items are rated based on the extent to which the individual performs a task completely and independently (no help or supervision). The Problem Behavior scale is rated based on the frequency and severity of each behavior. Additionally, a Support Scale score is available. This score, based on the information obtained from the other two scales, indicates an approximate level of support that an individual may need in order to be independent in different areas.

Vineland Adaptive Behavior Scales – Second Edition (VABS-II)

The Vineland Adaptive Behavior Scales-Second Edition (VABS-II; Sparrow, Cicchetti, & Balla, 2005) is a measure of personal and social skills needed for everyday life. Domains assessed include Communication, Daily Living, Motor Skills, and Socialization. The Socialization domain is targeted at measuring impairments associated with autism. A Maladaptive Behavior Index is

optional. Four formats include survey interview (may be administered through a semi-structured interview); expanded interview (more comprehensive; may be used as follow-up to obtain more information about skill deficits reported in the survey interview); parent/caregiver rating form (covers the same content as the survey interview but can be completed by the parents as a rating scale); and teacher rating form (consists of a teacher checklist of adaptive skills that the student is performing in the classroom setting).

Chapter 5 of the VABS-II manual describes classical score profiles for individuals with different diagnostic classifications and provides comparisons between high-functioning autism and Asperger Syndrome, autism and mental retardation, normal development and attention deficit hyperactive disorder (ADHD), normal development and hearing impaired, and nonspecific mental retardation and Down Syndrome.

Summary of Adaptive Behavior Assessment Instruments

Name of Tool/ Author (Year)	Age Range (in years)	Method of Administration/Format	Approximate Time to Administer	Subscales	Availability
Adaptive Behavior Assessment System-Second Edition (ABAS-II) Harrison & Oakland (2003)	Birth-80+	Individually administered, norm-referenced measure of adaptive behavior 5 forms-Parent/Primary Caregiver (0-5 yrs.) (S), Parent (5-21) yrs. (S), Teacher/Day Care Provider (2-5 yrs.) (S), Teacher (5-21 yrs.), Adult (16-89 yrs.) [S= available in Spanish]; 10 skill areas, 3 domains; respondent rates frequency of specified skills using a 4-point rubric Yields composite scores, skills profile, analysis of strengths and weaknesses Yields standard scores, percentiles, test-age equivalents	20 min.	General Adaptive Composite; Adaptive Domains – Conceptual (Communication, Functional Academics, Self-Direction, Composite); Social (Leisure, Social, Composite); Practical (Community Use, Home Living, Health & Safety, Self-care, Work, Composite); Motor	Pearson Assessments http://www.pearsonassessments.com/HAIWEB/Cultures/en-us/Productdetail.htm?Pid=015-8004-507

TARGET: Texas Guide for Effective Teaching
Adaptive Behavior Assessment

Name of Tool/ Author (Year)	Age Range (in years)	Method of Administration/Format	Approximate Time to Administer	Subscales	Availability
Scales of Independent Behavior, Revised (SIB-R) Bruininks, Woodcock, Weatherman, & Hill (1997)	Birth-80+	Individually administered, norm-referenced comprehensive measure of adaptive behavior; 14 areas of adaptive behavior, 8 areas of problem behavior Three forms: Early Development, Short Form, Full Scale Yields standard scores, percentile ranks, age equivalents, developmental range; may be administered as a structured interview or as a checklist	45-60 minutes for Full Scale; 15-20 minutes for Short or Early Development Forms	Support Score (weighted measure of maladaptive and adaptive behaviors), Broad Independence, Motor Skills, Social Interaction and Communication Skills, Personal Living Skills, Community Living Skills. Maladaptive Indices (General, Internalized, Asocial, Externalized)	Riverside Publishing http://www.riversidepublishing.com/products/sibr/index.html
Vineland Adaptive Behavior Scales- Second Edition (VABS-II) Sparrow, Cicchetti, & Balla (2005)	3-22 Teacher Rating Form (TRF) Birth-90 Parent/Car egiver Form & Survey Interview Form	Individually administered, norm-referenced measure of self-sufficiency and adaptive behavior. Three forms– Teacher Rating Form (TRF); Parent/Caregiver Rating Form; Survey Interview Form; and Expanded Interview Form; 4 domains, 10 subdomains, Maladaptive Behavior scales. Yields composites (standard scores), percentiles, adaptive levels, age equivalents	20-60 min. Survey Interview and Parent/Care-giver Form	Adaptive Behavior Composite, Domain Scores – Communication (Receptive, Expressive, Written), Daily Living Skills (Personal, Domestic, Community), Socialization (Interpersonal Relationships, Play and Leisure Time, Coping Skills), Motor Skills (Fine, Gross), Maladaptive Behavior Index (Internalizing, Externalizing, Other)	Pearson Clinical Assessment http://psychcorp.pearsonassessments.com/HALWEB/Cultures/en-us/Productdetail.htm?Pid=Vineland-II

Research on Adaptive Behavior Instruments

While available research confirms that adaptive behavior is a valuable aspect of assessment of students with autism (Klin & Volkmar, 2000), no studies have evaluated the current versions of the adaptive behavior measures included here. However, the VABS-II manual specifically addresses adaptive behavior performance of individuals on the spectrum. Adaptive behavior is essential to determine appropriate programming in order to maximize independence upon leaving the school environment. In addition, research supports the view that students with

Asperger Syndrome demonstrate deficits in all areas of adaptive functioning (Myles et al., 2007).

Misconceptions

Myth	Reality
<p>According to the DSM-IV-TR criteria for Asperger Syndrome, there can be no clinically significant delay in adaptive behaviors except for the area of socialization.</p>	<p>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 & Park, 2007).</p>
<p>If a student has an average IQ, an adaptive behavior measure is unnecessary.</p>	<p>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 & 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 environment.</p>
<p>If adaptive behavior measures demonstrate a discrepancy between home and school functioning, the results are probably invalid.</p>	<p>It is possible that the student's behavior is drastically different in each setting because the demands of the settings differ (Lee & 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 fall apart when he gets home.</p>

References

- Bruininks, R., Woodcock, R., Weatherman, R., & Hill, B. (1997). *Scales of Independent Behavior-Revised*. Rolling Meadows, IL: Riverside Publishing.
- Harrison, P. L., & Oakland, T. (2003). *Adaptive Behavior Assessment System* (2nd ed.). Minneapolis, MN: Pearson Assessment.
- Klin, A., & Volkmar, F. (2000). Treatment and intervention guidelines for individuals with Asperger syndrome. In A. Klin, F. R. Volkmar, & S. S. Sparrow (Eds.), *Asperger Syndrome* (pp. 340-366). New York: Guilford.
- Lee, H. J., & Park, H. R. (2007). An integrated literature review on the adaptive behavior of individuals with Asperger Syndrome. *Remedial and Special Education, 28*(3), 132-139.
- Myles, B. S., Lee, H. J., Smith, S. M., Tien, K. C., Chou, Y. C., Swanson, T. C., et al. (2007). A large-scale study of the characteristics of Asperger Syndrome. *Education and Training in Developmental Disabilities, 42*(4), 448-459.
- Sparrow, S., Cicchetti, D., & Balla, D. (2005). *Vineland Adaptive Behavior Scales* (2nd ed.). Minneapolis, MN: Pearson Assessment.

Resources and Materials

- Lee, H. J., & Park, H. R. (2007). An integrated literature review on the adaptive behavior of individuals with Asperger Syndrome. *Remedial and Special Education, 28*(3), 132-139.