

## **Autism Social Skills Profile-2 Scoring Guide**

The Autism Social Skills Profile-2 (ASSP-2) is an assessment tool that provides a comprehensive measure of social competence for youth on the autism spectrum between the ages of 6-17. The 49 items on the ASSP-2 represent a broad range of social behaviors that are typically challenging for individuals on the autism spectrum, including initiation skills, social reciprocity, perspective taking, and nonverbal communication skills. It can be used for both verbal and non-verbal children with autism, and as an informal (non-normative) or normative assessment tool.

Administration of the ASSP-2 serves two purposes. First, it may be used as an intervention planning tool by identifying the specific social skill difficulties of individuals on the autism spectrum that will become the precise targets of intervention. Items on the ASSP-2 are phrased in a manner that allows them to be easily adapted for use as social goals on Individualized Educational Programs (IEP) and Behavior Intervention Plans (BIP). The second purpose of the ASSP-2 is to assist in measuring intervention progress. ASSP is also unique in that the instrument is designed exclusively to assist with intervention planning and monitoring, not to diagnose ASD.

### **Psychometric Properties of the ASSP**

The ASSP-2 (and its earlier version, the ASSP) has been used extensively in research and applied settings as a social skills outcome measure. The instrument has been empirically documented in published research articles over the past 20 years by numerous researchers in multiple countries including the United States, Greece, Turkey, Portugal, Brazil, Canada, Thailand, and Jordan [1-22] (see ASSP references at end of Scoring Guide). The most extensive analysis of the psychometric properties of the ASSP was conducted with 340 youth on the autism spectrum [9]. The study demonstrated that the ASSP has

strong validity and reliability for this age group for both verbal and non-verbal children with autism and that it is well suited as a pre- and post-measure of social functioning. Psychometric data from the study are provided below.

**Mean Scores across Groups.** Separate means and standard deviations were calculated for the total sample, the high-functioning group, and the cognitive disability/severe language impairment group. The high-functioning group consisted of participants who did not have a diagnosis of cognitive disability and whose caregivers did not indicate that they were nonverbal or used only single words or short phrases to communicate. The mean score of 97.12 (n = 108, SD = 13.85, range = 67–161) for the cognitive disability or severe language impairment group was substantially lower than the mean score of the high-functioning group 109.83 (n = 232, SD = 19.67). Significant differences between these groups on an independent samples t-test were found for the high-functioning sub-sample (n = 231,  $t = 3.968$ ,  $p < .001$ ) and the cognitive disability or severe language impairment subsample (n = 108,  $t = 2.732$ ,  $p < .01$ ). Based on these data, separate normative tables were created for the high functioning group and the group with cognitive disability/severe language impairment.

**Validity of the Instrument.** After construction of the first 30 items, the ASSP was given to a panel of 10 experts in the field of autism to assess content-related or face validity. The members of the panel were asked to provide feedback in four areas: (1) determine if the items reflected the predominant knowledge base regarding social characteristics of individual with autism, (2) determine if the items were clear and unambiguous, (3) suggest modifications or revisions to the items, and (4) suggest the inclusion of additional items. Numerous revisions were made as a result of this feedback, including the addition of 19 items. In addition, an analysis of concurrent validity was conducted by examining and comparing the mean scores for children whose caregivers indicated that they currently had at least one friend and the mean scores for children whose caregivers indicated that their children did not have a friend. An independent samples t test was performed to test for differences

between these two groups. A comparison of mean scores indicated that children who currently had at least one friend ( $M = 111.61$ ,  $SD = 19.75$ ) scored significantly higher on the ASSP than children who did not have a friend ( $M = 100.25$ ,  $SD = 16.32$ ) ( $n = 339$ ,  $t = 5.787$ ,  $p < .001$ ). This result provides evidence regarding the concurrent validity of the ASSP.

**Reliability of the Instrument.** An examination of internal consistency and test-retest reliability indicated that the ASSP has excellent internal stability and demonstrates exceptional stability across two administrations of the instrument. The internal consistency for all 49 items on the ASSP was evaluated by calculating Cronbach's alpha. Internal consistency of the instrument was high for the total sample ( $\alpha = .926$ ) and the high-functioning group ( $\alpha = .940$ ). The internal consistency of the instrument was lower for the cognitive disability or severe language deficits group ( $\alpha = .848$ ) but still satisfactorily high. To measure test-retest reliability, caregivers were sent a second ASSP within 1 week of receiving their first instrument. Two hundred fifty-four participants completed the second ASSP within 3 weeks of completing the first profile. Test-retest reliability was high for the total sample and the two subsamples. Test-retest reliability was .904 for the total sample ( $n = 254$ ), .902 for the high-functioning group ( $n = 176$ ), and .878 for the cognitive disability or severe language deficits group ( $n = 79$ ).

**Factor Structure of the Instrument.** A series of PCAs with oblique rotation were performed to uncover the underlying structure of the instrument and to determine the number of potential subscales of the ASSP. Results of the scree test clearly indicated that a three-factor model fit the data best for both the total sample and the high-functioning group. After an examination of the item factor loadings, the three subscales were labeled as *Social Reciprocity*, *Social Participation/Avoidance*, and *Detrimental Social Behaviors*. Internal consistency and test-retest reliability for each subscale was satisfactorily high.

Based on the initial psychometric analysis of the instrument, and feedback provided by parent participants, a number of items on the ASSP were either

eliminated (e.g., “maintains personal hygiene”) or revised for clarity, specificity, and to enhance its usefulness as a progress monitoring tool (e.g., “Maintains Eye Contact” changed to “Makes Eye Contact when Initiating Interactions with Others” and “Speaks with an Appropriate Volume” changed to “Adjusts Voice Volume Based on the Needs of the Listener.” The revised items have been included in the second edition of the ASSP (ASSP-2).

## **ASSP-2 Total Scores and Subscales**

**ASSP-2 Total Score.** The 49 items on the ASSP-2 produce a total raw score of social competence. The use of raw scores is generally acceptable for monitoring intra-individual changes in performance for individual students, and when using teachers and other non-caregivers as informants. When using parents/caregivers as informants, the raw scores may be converted to standard scores using the normative tables provided in the *Building Social Relationships-3* text. Two separate raw score to standard score conversion tables are available that are based on the developmental level of the child. One table provides normative data for higher functioning children on the autism spectrum, and one table provides normative data for children with cognitive disabilities or significant language impairment. Standard scores for the ASSP-2 have a mean of 100, and standard deviation of 15. A high score on the ASSP-2 represents higher social competence relative to other children on the autism spectrum.

**Subscales.** The items on the ASSP-2 can be separated into three subscales that were elucidated by factor analysis: *Social & Emotional Reciprocity*, *Social Participation/Avoidance*, and *Detrimental Social Behaviors*. The subscales provide useful information to both researchers and practitioners seeking to examine the relative performance and differential effectiveness of social skill interventions across various domains of social performance. Subscales are only used with higher functioning individuals with autism and (similar to the *Social Skills Improvement System*), only raw scores are used for the subscales. Based on the previous factor analysis, seven items on the ASSP-2 are not included in

any of the subscales as they did not load on any of the three factors. However, these items (e.g., “Uses Gestures or Eye Contact to Direct the Attention of Others to Objects, Persons, or Situations” and “Adjusts Voice Volume Based on the Needs of the Listener” do provide both psychometric and clinical utility, so they are included in the total score calculations.

- *Social & Emotional Reciprocity* contains 20 items related to the active maintenance, or reciprocity of social interactions. This subscale also captures items that reflect social cognitive and social-emotional processing.
- *Social Participation/Avoidance* contains 11 items related to social engagement, initiation, or withdrawal from social participation. This subscale also captures items that reflect behavioral inhibition/activation and behaviors that could reflect social anxiety.
- *Detrimental Social Behaviors* includes items representing socially inappropriate behaviors that could lead directly to negative peer interactions. These subscale captures items reflect problem behaviors that interfere with positive social interactions.

<b>ASSP-2 Subscales</b>
<b>Subscale 1: Social &amp; Emotional Reciprocity (20 items)</b>
Takes Turns during Games and Activities
Asks Questions to Request Information about a Person
Maintains the “Give and Take” of Conversations
Talks About or Acknowledges the Interests of Others
Recognizes the Facial Expressions of Others Recognizes the Non-Verbal Cues, or “Body Language” of Others
Understands the Jokes or Humor of Others
Considers the Viewpoints of Others in Social Situations
Verbally Expresses How He/She is Feeling
Joins a Group Conversation by Politely Interrupting or Waiting for a Pause/Break in Conversation
Initiates Greetings with Others
Provides Compliments to Others
Acknowledges the Compliments Directed at Him/Her by Others
Responds to Questions Directed at Him/Her by Others Compromises during Disagreements with Others

Offers Assistance to Others
Introduces Self to Others
Responds to the Greetings of Others
Says "Excuse me" or Politely Asks Others to Move Out of His/Her Way
Expresses Sympathy for Others when They are Hurt or Upset
<b>Subscale 2: Social Participation/Avoidance (11 items)</b>
Invites Peers to Join Him/Her in Activities
Joins in Activities with Peers
Interacts with Peers during Unstructured Activities
Interacts with Peers during Structured Activities
Engages in One-On-One Social Interactions with Peers
Interacts with Groups of Peers
Allows Peers to Join Him/Her in Activities
Responds to the Invitations of Peers to Join Them in Activities
Exhibits Fear or Anxiety Regarding Social Interactions
Engages in Solitary Interests and Hobbies
Engages in Solitary Activities in the Presence of Peers
<b>Detrimental Social Behaviors (11 items)</b>
Changes the Topic of Conversation to Fit Self Interests
Exhibits Poor Timing with His/Her Social Initiations
Misinterprets the Intentions of Others
Makes Inappropriate Comments
Ends Conversations Abruptly
Maintains an Appropriate Distance when Interacting with Peers
Fails to Read Cues to Terminate Conversations
Engages in Socially Inappropriate Behaviors
Is Manipulated by Peers
Experiences Positive Peer Interactions
Experiences Negative Peer Interactions
<b>ASSP-2 Additional Items:</b>
<b><i>Items included in the total score but excluded from subscale analysis</i></b>
Maintains Appropriate Levels of Eye Contact During Conversations
Asks Questions about a Broad Range of Topics
Makes Eye Contact when Initiating Interactions with Others
Uses Gestures or Eye Contact to Direct the Attention of Others to Objects, Persons, or Situations
Successfully Adapts Behavior to New Settings and Situations
Adjusts Voice Volume Based on the Needs of the Listener
Says "Sorry" or Apologizes for Mistakes

## Administering the ASSP-2

The ASSP-2 may be completed by parents/caregivers and other individuals (e.g., school personnel) who have direct knowledge of the child's social functioning, but normative data is only available for parent informants. The ASSP-2 may be administered by professionals (teachers, psychologists, social workers, counselors, and speech and language pathologists) wishing to design and implement social skills interventions. The 49 items on the ASSP-2 are rated on a 4-point Likert scale reflecting how often child exhibits a social behavior and range from "never" to "very often". Each response on the scale has a corresponding numerical value (from 1 to 4), with high scores corresponding to positive social behaviors, to yield a total score of social competence.

Component Skill	How Often?
<b>Invites Peers to Join Him/Her in Activities</b>	N S O V 1 2 3 4
<b>Joins in Activities with Peers</b>	N S O V 1 2 3 4

Most items on the ASSP are written as positive behaviors (e.g., "Joins in Activities with Peers"); some items, however, are written as negative behaviors (e.g., "Makes Inappropriate Comments"). These "negative" items are reverse scored so that a response of "very often" would yield a score of 1, and thus indicate lower social competence.

<b>Exhibits Fear or Anxiety Regarding Social Interactions</b>	N S O V 4 3 2 1
<b>Is Manipulated by Peers</b>	N S O V 4 3 2 1
<b>Engages in Solitary Activities in the Presence of Peers</b>	N S O V 4 3 2 1

To assist with intervention planning, the ASSP-2 contains an additional column that allows respondents to indicate whether the child performs the social

behavior when prompting is provided. This information allows the practitioner to distinguish between a skill acquisition or performance difficulty and/or to determine the child's stage of skill acquisition (i.e., from novice to mastery performance).

Component Skill	How Often?	With Prompting?
Invites Peers to Join Him/Her in Activities	N S O V 1 2 3 4	
Joins in Activities with Peers	N S O V 1 2 3 4	

Finally, the ASSP-2 provides space for the informant to provide additional information relative to the child's social functioning.

Please provide additional information on the child's social skills and social cognitive functioning:

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**Filling-Out the Items on the ASSP-2.** After completing the demographic section at the top of instrument...

Bellini/ASSP-2

**Autism Social Skills Profile-2**

Scott Bellini, Ph.D., HSPP  
Indiana University, Bloomington

Child's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Birthdate: \_\_\_\_\_

Age: \_\_\_\_\_

Sex:  Female  Male

Today's Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Month: \_\_\_\_\_

Day: \_\_\_\_\_

Year: \_\_\_\_\_

School: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_

Grade: \_\_\_\_\_

Your Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Relationship to Child: \_\_\_\_\_

Mother  Father  Guardian  Other \_\_\_\_\_

Street Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_

State: \_\_\_\_\_

Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: (\_\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_

...begin the administration by reviewing the administration instructions with informants.

The following instructions are provided on the instrument:

The following phrases describe skills or behaviors that your child might exhibit during social interactions or in social situations. Please rate **HOW OFTEN** your child exhibits each skill or behavior independently **WITHOUT ASSISTANCE FROM OTHERS** (i.e., without reminders, cueing and/or prompting). You should base your judgment on your child's behavior over the last **9 Weeks**.

Please use the following guidelines to rate your child's behavior:

- Circle **N** if your child **never** or **almost never** exhibits the skill or behavior.
- Circle **S** if your child **sometimes** or **occasionally** exhibits the skill or behavior.
- Circle **O** if your child **often** or **typically** exhibits the skill or behavior.
- Circle **V** if your child **very often** or **always** exhibits the skill or behavior.

**Please do not skip any items.** If you are unsure of an item, please provide your best estimate. You may use the "with prompting" section to indicate whether the particular skill can be performed with additional assistance from adults. For instance, if your child will exhibit a particular skill or behavior more frequently when cueing or prompting is provided, or when interacting with adults rather than peers, please place an "X" in the "with prompting" section. Please use the "Additional Information" section at the end of the rating scale to provide additional information on the child's social skills and social cognitive functioning.

It is important to emphasize that the informant is to indicate how often a

particular social behavior is exhibited **without prompting**. This is done to

determine what the child is currently capable of performing independently, and

without adult assistance. If the child only exhibits the social behavior with

prompting, the informant may indicate so on the column to the right.

Also, the frame of reference for the ASSP-2, relative to time, is 9-weeks. Remind

informants to think about how often the social behavior has been exhibited over

the last 9-week period. Finally, reinforce the importance of completing all items

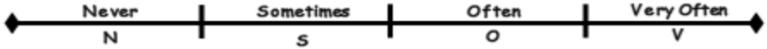
on the instrument for accurate scoring.

Informants complete the instrument by circling the letter (N-S-O-V) that best represents how frequently the child exhibits a particular social behavior. If the child performs a social behavior with prompting, they may indicate that by placing an X in the “with prompting column.

Bellini/ASSP-2		How Often?	With Prompting?
Component Skill			
Experiences Negative Peer Interactions		N 4 S 3 O 2 V 1	
Initiates Greetings with Others		N 1 S 2 O 3 V 4	X
Says "Sorry" or Apologizes for Mistakes		N 1 S 2 O 3 V 4	X

## Scoring the ASSP-2

After the informant completes the instrument, the administrator should check closely to make sure all items are completed. Note: raw scores may not be converted to standard scores if there are missing items. To score the instrument, the administrator transfers the scores of the circled items to the **unshaded** columns on the right-hand side of the instrument.

Bellini/ASSP-2		Autism Social Skills Profile-2			
					
Component Skill	How Often?	With Prompting?	Scoring		
			SER	SPA	DSB
Invites Peers to Join Him/Her in Activities	N 1 S 2 O 3 V 4	X	1		1
Joins in Activities with Peers	N 1 S 2 O 3 V 4		2		2
Takes Turns during Games and Activities	N 1 S 2 O 3 V 4		2		2

The columns marked **SER**, **SPA**, and **DSB** represent the subscales of the ASSP-2 (Social & Emotional Reciprocity, Social Participation/Avoidance, and

Detrimental Social Behaviors). The shaded column indicates that an item is NOT included in a particular subscale. As such, no score is entered on that column.

Note: some items are not included in any of the subscales, so all three subscale columns will be shaded.

After transferring all scores from the circled items to the right-hand column, the administrator then sums the total scores for each column and records the scores at the bottom of each page.

Component Skill	How Often?	With Prompting?	Scoring			
			SER	SPA	DSB	Total
Fails to Read Cues to Terminate Conversations	N S O V 4 3 2 1				1	1
Introduces Self to Others	N S O V 1 2 3 4	X	2			2
Exhibits Fear or Anxiety Regarding Social Interactions	N S O V 4 3 2 1			4		4
Is Manipulated by Peers	N S O V 4 3 2 1				2	2
Engages in Solitary Activities in the Presence of Peers	N S O V 4 3 2 1			1		1
Interacts with Peers during Structured Activities	N S O V 1 2 3 4			3		3
Makes Eye Contact when Initiating Interactions with Others	N S O V 1 2 3 4					1
Maintains Appropriate Levels of Eye Contact During Conversations	N S O V 1 2 3 4					1
Responds to the Greetings of Others	N S O V 1 2 3 4	X	2			2
Successfully Adapts Behavior to New Settings and Situations	N S O V 1 2 3 4					2
Says "Excuse me" or Politely Asks Others to Move Out of His/Her Way	N S O V 1 2 3 4	X	1			1
Makes Inappropriate Comments	N S O V 4 3 2 1				1	1
Page 5 Scoring Summary			SER 5	SPA 8	DSB 4	Total 21



Next transfer the sum totals for each page onto the ASSP-2 Scoring Summary table at the end of the instrument. Add each column from top to bottom to calculate subscale scores and total raw score for the instrument. Note: sum of subscale raw scores will NOT equal the total raw score because some items are not included in the subscale scores.

ASSP-2 Scoring Summary				
	SER	SPA	DSB	TOTAL
<b>Page 2</b>	7	11	2	21
<b>Page 3</b>	11	5	6	23
<b>Page 4</b>	12	2	8	25
<b>Page 5</b>	5	8	4	22
<b>Total Raw Scores</b>	35	26	20	91
	<b>SER Total</b>	<b>SPA Total</b>	<b>DSB Total</b>	<b>ASSP-2 Total</b>

The final step is to use the “Total Raw Score to Standard Score Conversion Table” located in the appendix of the ***Building Social Relationships-3*** text to convert the ASSP-2 total raw score to a standard score. Select the table that best represents the cognitive and language level of the child. The example below shows the “High Functioning” raw score conversion table.

Autism Social Skills Profile-2								
Total Raw Score to Standard Score Conversion Table*								
High Functioning ASD**								
Raw Score	Standard Score	Percentile Rank	Raw Score	Standard Score	Percentile Rank	Raw Score	Standard Score	Percentile Rank
49	53	<1	91	86	18	133	118	88
50	54	<1	92	87	19	134	118	88
51	55	<1	93	87	19	135	119	90
52	56	<1	94	88	21	136	120	91
53	57	<1	95	88	21	137	121	92
54	57	<1	96	89	23	138	122	93
55	57	<1	97	90	25	139	123	94
56	58	<1	98	91	27	140	123	94
57	59	<1	99	92	30	141	124	95

Use the raw score calculated on the ASSP-2 Scoring Summary table, to find the corresponding standard score from the conversion table. In the example above, we calculated a total raw score of 91. The corresponding standard score for this population is 86, with a percentile rank of 18.

Autism Social Skills Profile-2								
Total Raw Score to Standard Score Conversion Table*								
High Functioning ASD**								
Raw Score	Standard Score	Percentile Rank	Raw Score	Standard Score	Percentile Rank	Raw Score	Standard Score	Percentile Rank
49	53	<1	91	86	18	133	118	88
50	54	<1	92	87	19	134	118	88
51	55	<1	93	87	19	135	119	90
52	56	<1	94	88	21	136	120	91
53	57	<1	95	88	21	137	121	92
54	57	<1	96	89	23	138	122	93
55	57	<1	97	90	25	139	123	94
56	58	<1	98	91	27	140	123	94
57	59	<1	99	92	30	141	124	95
58	60	<1	100	93	32	142	125	96
59	61	<1	101	94	34	143	126	96
60	62	1	102	94	34	144	127	96
61	63	1	103	95	37	145	128	97
62	64	1	104	96	40	146	129	97
63	64	1	105	97	42	147	129	97
64	65	1	106	98	45	148	130	98
65	67	1	107	99	47	149	130	98
66	68	2	108	99	47	150	131	98
67	68	2	109	100	50	152	132	98
68	69	2	110	100	50	153	132	98
69	69	2	111	101	53	154	133	99
70	70	2	112	101	53	155	134	99
71	71	3	113	101	53	156	135	99
72	72	3	114	102	55	157	136	99
73	72	3	115	103	58	158	136	99
74	72	3	116	104	61	159	137	99
75	73	4	117	105	63	160	138	99
76	74	4	118	106	66	161	139	>99
77	75	5	119	107	68	162	140	>99
78	76	5	120	108	70	163	141	>99
79	77	6	121	109	73	164	142	>99
80	78	7	122	110	75	165	143	>99
81	78	7	123	110	75	166	144	>99
82	79	8	124	111	77	167	144	>99
83	80	9	125	112	79	168	145	>99
84	81	10	126	113	81	169	145	>99
85	82	12	127	114	82	170	146	>99
86	83	13	128	114	82	171	147	>99
87	84	14	129	115	84	172	147	>99
88	84	14	130	116	86	173	148	>99
89	85	16	131	116	86	174	149	>99
90	85	16	132	117	87	>174	>150	>99

\*Standard Scores have a mean of 100, and a Standard Deviation of 15. Normative data are based on parent reports only.

\*\*Table is used with youth on the autism spectrum, ages 6-17, who do **not** have a cognitive disability or significant language impairment

Finally, transfer the standard score to the bottom of the ASSP-2 Scoring Summary.

Total Raw Scores	35	26	20	91
SER Total	SER Total	SPA Total	DSB Total	ASSP-2 Total
<b>STANDARD SCORE</b> <u>86</u>				
<b>PERCENTILE RANK</b> <u>18</u>				

*Note: Raw Score to Standard Score Conversion Tables are Available in Building Social Relationships-3 (Bellini, 2023).*

## Interpreting the ASSP-2

Standard scores for the ASSP-2 have a mean of 100, and a standard deviation of 15. A high score on the ASSP-2 represents higher social competence relative to other children on the autism spectrum. The following table provides the range of social skills functioning that corresponds with a particular score.

Standard Score	Percentile Rank	Level of Social Competence
Below < 70	< 2%	Significantly Below Average
70 to 79	2-8%	Below Average
80-90	9-25%	Low Average
91-110	27-75%	Average
111-120	77-91%	High Average
121-130	92-98%	Above Average
Above > 130	> 98%	Significantly Above Average

Standard scores may be used for progress monitoring purposes (pre-and post-test measurement) and to determine the child's level of social competence relative to other children on the autism spectrum with similar cognitive and language functioning. At this time, normative data have not been established for the subscales of the ASSP-2. As such, only raw scores are calculated for the subscales. Practitioners and researchers may use these subscales to track intra-individual changes in performance (on subscale dimensions) during the social skills program.

## Research Studies Utilizing the ASSP & ASSP-2

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