

## Section 3:

### Evaluation

The complexity of ASD makes the educational evaluation process for ASD as unique as each individual student. When considering ASD for evaluation the team needs to have expertise in ASD and its unique presentation, along with an understanding that ASD not only has co-morbidity with several other neurodevelopmental disorders, but also characteristics that overlap with many mental health diagnosis and environmental situations such as poverty and trauma. Providing a diagnosis of ASD, be it clinical or educational, should not be taken lightly. The identified concerns must be atypical for the student's developmental level. Families may feel a sense of relief for having an "answer" for their concerns, but there is also a sense of loss and grief due to the uncertainty of the future dreams they have for their child.

The multidisciplinary team needs to utilize at least 2 methods that indicate qualitative impairment related to social interaction (Core Area 1), communication (Core Area 2), and/or restricted, repetitive, or stereotyped behaviors, interests, and activities (Core Area 3). Data can be collected through the following methods: structured interviews with parents, autism checklists, communication rating scales, developmental rating scales, functional behavior assessments, intellectual testing, informal and standardized evaluation tools, and application of diagnostic criteria from the current DSM. It is critical that the data gathered from the variety of chosen evaluation tools indicate concerns with some level of consistency when looking at the behavioral indicators for ASD.

### Developmental History

A developmental history is also known as a family history. This assessment tool is intended to obtain information from the parent regarding the student's development and early milestones. Information obtained about a student's early development can often help the educational team develop a better understanding of the student's current concerns.

A summary of the student's developmental history is a required component of an evaluation for ASD. Utilizing a developmental history tool that is specific to ASD will help the team gain a longitudinal view of a student's possible developmental concerns along with the indication of early signs of

ASD. Information can be obtained via an interview with the parent(s), by asking the parent(s) to complete a developmental history questionnaire, or a combination of the two (recommended for initial evaluation).

During a re-evaluation, a review of records for the developmental history is often sufficient, but the team may want to update current functioning in the areas of social development, communication, and behavioral concerns if there have been significant changes.

- [Developmental History #1 \(external website\)](#)  
Six pages with a combination of question types (checkboxes, yes/no, short and long answer) – covers general family information, family medical history, childhood milestones, behavior, social skills, and educational history.
- [Developmental History #2 \(external website\)](#)  
Five pages with a combination of question types (yes/no, short and long answer) – covers health, family, developmental and behavioral history.
- [Developmental History #3 \(external website\)](#)  
Four pages of long answer questions – covers three core areas of ASD.
- [Developmental History #4.pdf](#)  
Six pages of questions to prompt conversation with parents/guardians on the developmental history of the individual in evaluation.
- [Developmental History #5.pdf](#)  
Ten-page developmental history for guardians to complete across all areas of concern for ASD. It allows the guardian to identify early developmental concerns that were present and share whether they continue to be of concern at the present time.
- [Developmental Update for Re-Evaluation.pdf](#)  
Template to be used with developmental history #5 for re-evaluations. Include the summary from the original developmental history under each section on the template. Parents can then review the information and make changes where necessary.
- [Developmental Update for Re-Evaluation \(external website\)](#)  
One page of long answer questions – covers the three core areas of ASD.

## Observations

During the assessment process observations can serve a variety of purposes. They can be used to gather general information about a child's functioning within a specific environment, gather data on a specific behavior, or to gather information on skills and classroom performance. Observations can be systematic and focus on a particular behavior(s) and how often or if a specific behavior occurs. Observations can also be anecdotal, where the observer writes a summary of the significant events that happened during the observation period.

An initial evaluation for ASD requires that 2 observations be completed in 2 separate settings on 2 different days: at a minimum. Teams often choose to complete 1 observation in a structured classroom setting to observe the impact of delayed skills on academics and participation within the classroom environment; while completing the other observation in a less structured setting that will allow the observer to evaluate the student's social and communication skills. It would be considered best practice to check with the classroom teacher regarding your observation to determine if data collected is a typical representation of the student's performance/behavior. (It is not uncommon for students and adults to behave differently when there is a "new" or "unknown" person in the classroom)

Re-evaluation requires only 1 observation to be completed, but it is important that information regarding all areas of concern can be observed during the observation period.

- [Observation Form #1 \(external website\)](#)  
Lists multiple skills areas with definitions along with multiple settings with room for comments.
- [Observation Form #2 \(external website\)](#)  
Two pages that covers three core areas of ASD with descriptive indicators and areas for additional comments.
- [Observation Form #3 \(external website\)](#)  
Lists behavioral characteristics in the three core areas of ASD. Student engagement is recorded using time intervals and includes a large area for notes.

- [ASD Observation #4.pdf](#)  
This checklist provides characteristics to observe under each core area of criteria for ASD.
- [ASD Observation #5.pdf](#)  
Characteristic headings are provided in text boxes for the observer to take notes on what is observed of the individual in each area.
- [ASD Observation #6.pdf](#)  
Observation template created to provide notetaking for two observations.
- [Indices of Friendship Observation.pdf](#)  
Created by Tony Attwood – allows for documentation of multiple observations on one form – focus is on skills related to friendships.

### **Standardized (Formal) Assessments**

A standardized assessment is an assessment that is administered and scored in the same way for all students. A norm-referenced assessment compares a student's score/rating to their peers, providing the evaluator with a percentile/rank. Norm-referenced assessments are intended to be standardized.

Parent and teacher ratings are common norm-referenced assessments used during an initial ASD evaluation. Best practice would suggest that an evaluation team use caution when using and interpreting these results. Many factors can impact the validity of these results including, the amount of time a person has known the student, understanding of ASD specific terms, and knowledge of how ASD behavior presents differently from general behavior. (example – a student who is shy may not initiate peer interactions, but this would manifest differently than a student with ASD who avoids initiating peer interactions.) Although teams often use parent and teacher rating scales as part of the initial evaluation process it is important that the team not use these scores alone to validate behavioral indicators when addressing the educational criteria. Rating scales are only 1 of many pieces of information and data to be considered.

During the re-evaluation process teams may use a norm-referenced parent/teacher rating to compare to previous ratings as a method to show progress and gain information related to current needs. Note that students

do not need to meet initial criteria during a re-evaluation process but demonstrate a continued need for direct specialized instruction.

- [Autism Diagnostic Observation Schedule, 2nd Edition \(ADOS-2\) \(external website\)](#)  
Standardized assessment that allows trained administrators to accurately assess and diagnose autism spectrum disorders across ages, developmental levels, and language skills. Assessment time is 40-60 minutes and can be administered starting at age 12 months through adulthood.
- [ADOS 2 Write Up #1.docx](#)
- [ADOS 2 Write Up #2.docx](#)
- [Autism Spectrum Rating Scale \(ASRS\) \(external website\)](#)  
The ASRS is a nationally standardized, norm-references ASD rating scale. This multi-informant measure helps identify symptoms, behaviors, and associated features of ASD in children and adolescents ages 2-18.
- [ASRS Write Up #1.pdf](#)
- [ASRS Template #2.pdf](#)
- [ASRS Write Up #3.docx](#)
- [ASRS Write Up #4.pdf](#)
- [Checklist for Autism Spectrum Disorder \(CASD\) \(external website\)](#)  
The CASD can be used for screening or identification of children with ASD regardless of age, IQ or autism severity. Can be used for individuals ages 1-17.
- [CASD Write up.docx](#)
- [Childhood Autism Rating Scale, 2nd Edition \(CARS-2\) \(external website\)](#)  
The CARS-2 is an evaluator rating tool based on information gathered from observation and the completion of the CARS2-QPC (parent questionnaire). There are two summary rating forms: CARS2-ST is used with children under age six or those with communication difficulties or below-average estimated IQs; and CARS-HF, used with children ages six and older with IQ scores above 80. Two 15-item rating scales completed by the clinician.
- [CARS-2 Write up #1.docx](#)

- [CARS-2 Write up #2.docx](#)
- [Gilliam Autism Rating Scale, 3rd Edition \(GARS-3\)](#)  
The GARS-3 is a parent and teacher rating tool that yields standard scores, percentile ranks, severity level and the probability of autism. It consists of 56 items grouped into six subscales. Can be used for individuals ages 3-22 years old.
- [GARS-3 Write Up.docx](#)
- [Social Language Development Test – Adolescents \(external website\)](#)  
The SLDT-A: NU is a norm-referenced, reliable test that yields valid results regarding the social language development of students aged 12-17. Norms for the test are based on a nationally representative sample of 868 students in the US. The test is made up of 5 subtests: making inferences, interpreting social language, problem solving, social interactions, and interpreting ironic statements.
- [SLDT Adolescent Write Up.docx](#)
- [Social Language Development Test – Elementary \(external website\)](#)  
The SLDT-E:NU is a norm-referenced, reliable test that yields valid results regarding the social language development of students aged 6-11. The test is made up of 4 subtests: making inferences, interpersonal negotiation, multiple interpretations, and supporting peers.
- [SLDT Elementary Write Up #1.docx](#)
- [SLDT Elementary Write Up #2.docx](#)
- [Social Responsiveness Scale, 2nd Edition \(SRS-2\) \(external website\)](#)  
The SRS-2 identifies the presence and severity of social impairment within the autism spectrum and differentiates it from that which occurs in other disorders for the individuals aged 2 years 5 months to 18. There is a self-report for ages 19 and older.
- [SRS Write Up #1.docx](#)
- [SRS Write Up #2.docx](#)

### Informal Assessments

Informal assessments are used to measure the students' performance and progress related to a specific skill or set of skills. They are performance and

content driven. Examples include checklists, rating scales, event sampling, anecdotal records, and interviews. Informal assessments are often most helpful in determining a student's present level of skill along with identifying possible goal and objectives for IEP planning.

Informal assessments used during an ASD evaluation can address a large variety of concern areas. These informal tools can often give an in-depth view of a specific skill area, such as pragmatic language, social functioning, and play skills to name a few. Key considerations for informal assessments include choosing an assessment tool that addresses current areas of concern along with writing a succinct summary of the data that includes both areas of strength and weakness.

During the re-evaluation process teams typically utilize more informal assessment tools to gather data on the student's present level of performance in the specific areas of concern identified by the team during the re-evaluation planning process.

- [Autism Social Skills Profile.docx](#)  
The Autism Social Skills Profile (Scott Bellini) is an assessment tool that provides a comprehensive measure of social functioning in children and adolescents with ASD. A formal score is not given, but the checklist is a tool to measure specific areas of a child's social functioning. Behaviors are rated as occurring: Never (N/1), Sometimes (S/2), Often O/3), or Very Often (V/4).
- [ASSP Form #1.docx](#)
- [ASSP Form #2.docx](#)
- [ASSP Form #3.docx](#)
- [The Dyssemia Rating Scale \(DRS\).docx](#)  
Dyssemia is a term used to refer to a nonverbal social communication deficit (Nowicki and Duck, 1992). This scale as 10 subsections with a Likert scale of 0-3.
- [Dyssemia Rating Scale Write Up.docx](#)
- [Interoception \(external website\)](#)  
A tool that can be used to gain understanding of a student's interoceptive experiences (contains 18 black and white photos). At the

most basic level, interoception allows us to answer the question, “how do I feel?” in any given moment.

- [Interoception Write Up.docx](#)
- [Modified Checklist for Autism in Toddlers \(M-Chat\) \(external website\)](#) The Modified Checklist for Autism in Toddlers, Revised with Follow-Up (M-CHAT-R/F; Robins, Fein, & Barton, 2009) is a 2-stage parent report screening tool to assess risk for Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD).
- [Moving Towards Social Competencies \(Google\)](#)  
This scope and sequence profile has been developed to help educators assess and provide effective interventions for students with significant challenges in social cognition. This tool can be used in a variety of ways. It is not intended to be used as an interview, but more as a tool for members of teams to record observed social behaviors in a student in a variety of settings. A student who can demonstrate a skill in a 1:1 setting cannot be assumed to automatically demonstrate the same task in a small group, natural, or generalized setting.
- [Moving Towards Social Competence Write Up.docx](#)
- [Sensory Screening Tool – Home \(external website\)](#)
- [Sensory Screening Tool - School \(external website\)](#)  
The above two links are from the work of Lindsey Biel. The home and school screening tools are six pages each using a rating scale in different areas of possible sensory sensitivities.
- [Social Skills Checklist – Elementary/Pre-K \(external website\)](#)  
On this checklist, raters indicate if the child – almost always, often, sometimes, or almost never – exhibits skills in the areas of social play and emotional development, emotional regulation, and communication. Responses are summarized as a percentage.
- [Social Skills Checklist Write Up #1.docx](#)
- [Social Skills Checklist Write Up #2.docx](#)
- [Social Skills Checklist – Secondary \(external website\)](#)  
On this checklist, raters indicate if the student – almost always, often, sometimes, or almost never – exhibits skills in the areas of



conversational skills, problem solving, understanding emotions, compliments, and flexibility. Responses are summarized as a percentage.

- [Theory of Mind Inventory, 2nd Edition \(external website\)](#)  
The TOMI-2 consists of 60 items designed to tap a wide range of social cognitive understandings. Each item takes the form of a statement (e.g., “My child understands whether someone hurts another on purpose or by accident”) and is accompanied by a 20-centimeter continuum anchored by ‘definitely not’, ‘probably not’, ‘undecided’, ‘probably’, and ‘definitely’. The respondent is asked to read a statement and draw a hash mark at the appropriate point along the continuum.
- [Theory of Mind Inventory 2 Write Up.docx](#)
- [The TRIAD Social Skills Assessment \(external website\)](#)  
This assessment is designed for children ages 6-12 years who have basic reading skills at the first-grade level. It is criterion-based and assesses knowledge and skills in three areas: cognitive, behavior, and affective. The cognitive areas assess the child’s ability to understand other people’s perspectives. The behavioral aspects determine the child’s ability to initiate and maintain interactions and respond appropriately to other people. The affective components evaluate the child’s abilities to understand basic and complex emotions. Four sources of information are incorporated into the assessment: parent report, teacher report, observation, and direct child interaction.
- [Underlying Characteristics Checklist\(s\) \(external website\)](#)  
The UCC is an informal, non-standardized assessment tool designed to identify characteristics across several domains associated with ASD. It is not designed with a diagnostic cut-off score for ASD but is a valuable tool for evaluation of ASD. It is completed in conjunction with the Individual Strengths and Skills Inventory (ISSI), a parallel tool for identifying strengths across the same domains. The UCC is especially helpful for those working with school-aged individuals as the information gathered from the UCC provides a starting point for developing an IEP.

*UPDATE:* We will soon update our website to accept orders. For now, all orders for the “Underlying Characteristics Checklists and

other Ziggurat Materials” can be made by emailing [orders@texasautism.com](mailto:orders@texasautism.com). Underlying Characteristics Checklist and Individual Strengths and Skills Inventory the Underlying Characteristics Checklist (UCC) was developed as a component of the Ziggurat Model.

- [UCC Cover Letter Template.docx](#)
- [UCC Write Up.docx](#)
- [Assessment of Social & Communication Skills for Students with Autism.docx](#)

Adapted from the work of Kathleen Quill, this short answer assessment addresses the individual’s participation and/or skills in social and communicative activities.

- [Functional Academic Skills Checklist.pdf](#)  
This two-page questionnaire has the evaluator rank on a scale of 1-5 (not at all to very much) how the individual performs on common daily expectations in either the home or school setting.
- [Orion's Pragmatic Language Skills Questionnaire \(external website\)](#)  
This tool can be used by parents and professionals who know the child well. It provides a way to evaluate the current skill level of a child and to re-evaluate the child as the year progresses.
- [School Assessment Rating Scale.pdf](#)  
This rating scale was modified from the Tony Atwood book, Asperger’s Syndrome. Evaluators rate an individual’s skills on a scale of 0 (rarely) to 6 (frequently) in the areas of social & emotional abilities, cognitive, and movement skills.
- [Social/Emotional Assessment.pdf](#)  
This one-page assessment tool ranks skills into three categories: emerging, developing, or mastery of skill. Skills addressed cover interaction, interpersonal, public behavior, self-esteem, and problem solving/decision making.
- [Sensory Profile 2 - Short Form \(external website\)](#)  
The short form can be utilized as an informal assessment to determine if further evaluation in this area is necessary by an occupational therapist.

## Interviews

Although interviews are a type of informal assessment they are in a separate section within this manual because they have been divided into interviews for teachers, families, and students. Interviews are at times handed out for parents and/or teachers to complete, and not completed as a face-to-face interview. It is recommended that if the interview is handed out to be completed that the evaluator look over the information and contact the person who completed the interview form if there are additional questions or clarification that is needed.

### *Parent Interviews*

- [Informal ASD Parent Questionnaire \(external website\)](#)  
Four pages of questions related to social interaction, communication, restricted, repetitive behaviors, learning characteristics, problem behaviors, motor problems, and sensory challenges.
- [Communication and Symbolic Behavior Scales Developmental Profile Infant-Toddler Checklist \(CSBS DP\) \(external website\)](#)  
This checklist is designed to identify different aspects of development in infants and toddlers. Many behaviors that develop before children talk may indicate whether a child will have difficulty learning to talk.
- [ASD Parent Interview & Questionnaire.pdf](#)  
Short answer questions under the three core areas for parents or guardians to complete for preverbal students.
- [Autism Reassessment Parent Questionnaire.pdf](#)  
Two-page questionnaire with short answer questions and a rating scale of common ASD characteristics.
- [Informal Childhood Developmental Checklist.pdf](#)  
Checklist that addresses social interactions, behavioral observations, communication, and sensory/motor issues.

### *Teacher Interviews*

- [Informal ASD Teacher Questionnaire \(external website\)](#)  
Four pages of questions related to social interaction, communication, restricted, repetitive behaviors, learning characteristics, problem behaviors, motor problems, and sensory challenges.

- [Assessment of Social & Communication Skills for ASD \(external website\)](#)  
This 13-page document is based on the work of Kathleen Quill. It consists of yes/no questions with room for comments. Questions pertain to social skills, communication and play. There is also a section that asks about generalization of skills across multiple settings. This can be used with both teachers and parents in interview format.
- [Core Communication Checklist \(external website\)](#)  
This checklist looks at skill level and independence with communication related to initiation, persistence, and communicative reciprocity.
- [Informal Adaptive Behavior Skills Checklist \(external website\)](#)  
A checklist that lists strengths and challenges along with the level of support required in seven areas of adaptive skills.
- [Academic Teacher Interview.pdf](#)  
A three-page document that reviews general educational needs.
- [Autism Reassessment Teacher Questionnaire.pdf](#)  
Two-page questionnaire with short answer questions and a rating scale of common ASD characteristics.
- [Autism Teacher Questions – Elementary.pdf](#)  
This interview consists of short answer questions that relate to the core areas of autism.
- [Autism Teacher Questions – Middle/High School.pdf](#)  
A yes/no interview/questionnaire for teachers on skills broken down across the three core areas of autism.
- [ASD Classroom Information.pdf](#)  
A one-page interview using the three core areas of ASD to identify present level and student needs in each area.
- [Teacher Questionnaire ASD.pdf](#)  
A three-page teacher questionnaire that consists of short-answer questions.

### ***Student Interviews***

- [OAR Self-Advocacy Quiz \(external website\)](#)  
An online self-advocacy quiz to learn about your self-advocacy skills and knowledge.

- [Sensory Screening Questionnaire – Student](#)  
From the work of Lindsey Biel, this student questionnaire is formatted in long answer questions related to each sensory area.
- [ASD Social Language Interview.pdf](#)  
This interview, also known as the structured student interview, consists of questions that will solicit conversations with the student and allow the interviewer to observe conversational skills and language development. This interview is intended for individuals with higher verbal skills.
- [Student Stressor Interview.pdf](#)  
This rating scale allows the individual to rank a list of possible stressors on a Likert scale. It includes a visual reference for students who need that in order to determine where they are on the Likert scale.
- [Student Support Survey.pdf](#)  
The student support survey consists of four sections that address: adult supports in their life, description of their learning and personality styles, problem-solving skills, and interests.
- [Informal Pragmatic Language Test.pdf](#)  
This packet developed through Michelle Garcia Winner's book, Thinking of YOU, Thinking of ME, provides a variety of social interactions to elicit pragmatic language samples. The STDAP Overview includes more description of how to implement each section of the Informal Pragmatic Language Test.