

High-Functioning ASD Screening Questionnaire (ASSQ)

Adapted from Ehlers et al. 1999, Journal of Autism and Developmental Disorders. 29(2): 129-41.

Name of child _____

Date of birth _____

Name of rater _____

Date of rating _____

This child stands out as different from other children of his/her age in the following ways:

		No	Somewhat	Yes
1	Is old-fashioned or precocious			
2	Is regarded as an "eccentric professor" by the other children			
3	Lives somewhat in a world of his/her own with restricted and/or idiosyncratic (individually peculiar) intellectual interests			
4	Accumulates facts on certain subjects (good rote memory) but does not really understand the meaning			
5	Has a literal understanding of ambiguous and metaphorical language			
6	Has an odd style of communication with a formal, fussy, old-fashioned or "robot-like" language			
7	Invents idiosyncratic words and expressions			
8	Has a different voice or speech			
9	Expresses sounds involuntarily; clears throat, grunts, smacks, cries or screams			
10	Is surprisingly good at some things and surprisingly poor at others			
11	Uses language freely but fails to make adjustment to fit social contexts or the needs of different listeners			
12	Lacks empathy			
13	Makes naïve and embarrassing remarks			
14	Has an odd or peculiar style of gaze			
15	Wishes to be sociable but fails to make relationships with peers			
16	Can be with other children but only on his/her terms			
17	Lacks a best friend			
18	Lacks common sense			
19	Is poor at games: no idea of cooperating in a team, scores "own goals"			
20	Has clumsy, ill coordinated, ungainly, awkward movements or gestures			
21	Has involuntary face or body movements			
22	Has difficulties in completing simple daily activities because of compulsory repetition of certain actions or thoughts			
23	Has special routines; insists on no change			
24	Shows idiosyncratic attachment to objects			
25	Is bullied by other children			
26	Has markedly unusual facial expression(s)			
27	Has markedly unusual posture(s)			

Comments (continue on reverse as necessary):

ASSQ scoring and interpretation:

Sum up the total (No = 0; Somewhat = 1; Yes = 2)

Use the table below (from Ehlers et al., 1999) to establish cutoff based on desired sensitivity vs. specificity.

- To minimize the risk of missing potential cases (i.e., to have a low threshold or 'cast a wide net') choose a low cut-off score, e.g., ~13 on the parent report and 11 on the teacher report. A score in that range would catch most cases of possible ASD (warranting further evaluation with the Autism Diagnostic Observation Schedule (ADOS) or comparable validated assessment) but would run a high risk of false positives. But...that is the point of a screening test!
- A much higher cut-off, e.g., parent score of 22 or teacher score of 24, would miss half the potential cases of ASD, but if positive, would increase confidence in the odds of identifying ASD (though because of the relatively low base rate, the positive predictive value as a screening tool is still poor...not that any other screening metrics are much better).

Cutoff Score	True Positive Rate (Sensitivity %)	False Positive Rate (%)	Specificity (%)	(+) Likelihood Ratio
Parent				
7	95	44	56	2.2
13	91	23	77	3.8
15	76	19	81	3.9
16	71	16	84	4.5
17	67	13	87	5.3
19	62	10	90	5.5
20	48	8	92	6.1
22	43	3	97	12.6
Teacher				
9	95	45	55	2.1
11	90	42	58	2.2
12	85	37	63	2.3
15	75	27	73	2.8
22	70	9	91	7.5
24	65	7	93	9.3