

Early Childhood Screening Assessment (ECSA) At A Glance

Age range covered: 1 ½ -5 yrs

Languages: English, Spanish, and Romanian

Domains (Areas) screened: Emotional & Behavioral Development; Maternal Distress

Components:

Two versions:

1. Medical Home: 1 page 40 items (includes 4 questions relating to maternal depression)
2. Child Care: 1 page 36 items

User Manual

Who completes it: Parents/caregivers complete questionnaires; trained professionals interpret them

Approximate time: Each questionnaire takes 5-10 minutes to complete and less than 1 minute to score

Validity and reliability:

ECSA scores are strongly associated to scores on longer, established measures including the Child Behavior Checklist. The ECSA has appropriate ability to identify children who meet criteria for a psychiatric diagnosis (sensitivity = 86%) and to correctly identify children who don't have a diagnosis (specificity = 83%). It is reliable over multiple time points (test-retest reliability is 0.88 at 10 days).

Instructions

Parents circle a "0", "1", or "2" to indicate the frequency of the behaviors described in the item. They are also asked to circle a "+" if they are "concerned about a behavior and want help with it".

Scoring

Score all items in order to get the most accurate score. The ECSA is not valid if more than 2 child items are skipped.

Child Score: the sum of the circled numbers of items 1-36, with a maximum score of 72. A score ≥ 18 suggests that the child may be at higher risk of having a mental health problem. *Statistically, slightly more than 3/4 of children with this score are likely to meet criteria for an impairing mental health problem and 1 in 10 children with a score < 18 will be experiencing difficulties.* A pediatric or mental health review of the clinical context will guide decision making about further assessment or referral.

"+" Clinicians will evaluate any items with a "+".

Parent depression score (items 39 plus 40): A score greater or equal to 3 suggests a higher rate of depression and should be followed up clinically. Items 38 and 39 reflect maternal distress. No cut-off has been identified.

Follow-up: Handouts the Bright Futures Website (www.brightfutures.org/mentalhealth/) or Zero to Three (www.zerotothree.org) can be useful resources for parents.

Use of the ECSA: It is important to know that the ECSA is a new measure and assessment of the measure is ongoing. For updates or questions, please contact: Mary Margaret Gleason, MD, FAAP, Mgleason@Lifespan.org, (401) 793 8215.