Social Skills Rating System  
(SSRS)

Publisher/Date:

Purpose:
- Integrated, multi-rater system for screening and classifying student social behavior in educational and family settings, and to assist in the development of appropriate interventions for identified preschool and school-age children (ages 3-18 years).

Provides:
- The system includes teacher and parent/caregiver rating forms as well as a self-report. Utilizing all three versions ecologically assesses Social Skills (Communication, Cooperation, Assertion, Responsibility, Empathy, Engagement, and Self-Control), the presence of competing Problem Behaviors (Externalizing, Internalizing, and Hyperactive), and teacher-rated Academic Competence (rating of relative standing to the student’s classmates).

Standardization Issues:
- 4,170 self-ratings of students, 1,027 parents, and 259 teachers. Balanced male/female ratio, representing sufficient number for each grade-level represented. Ethnic and racial representation included slight over-representation of Caucasian and African-American groups and slight under-representation of Hispanics. Demographics were based on 1988 Census data. At the time, approximately 31% of US population included minorities, with the SSRS’ representation being 27% minority-classified. The sample included general education students as well as those classified, “Mentally Handicapped,” “Learning Disabled,” “Behaviorally-Disordered,” and “Other.”

Reliability and Validity Issues:
- Psychometric data is presented in great detail in the manual. Content validity is demonstrated through evidence of extensive empirical research. Criterion/Construct Validity is evidenced through correlations with several similar and well-regarded measures (Piers-Harris, Achenbach, Social Behavior Assessment). Reliability data, for the most part, appears good. Users can feel very good confidence with the Teacher Forms and moderate-confidence with the Parent Forms. The Student Forms should be used with some caution, as only the Total Score on the two student forms demonstrated adequate reliability (the individual subscales on
Student Forms are not reliable enough to warrant individual clinical interpretation.

Additional Points:

- **Note:** At the time of this analysis, a revised edition of the measure is in publication.

- The strength of the SSRS is the system’s attempt to link assessment and intervention. The well-written manual and the accompanying Assessment-干预 Record (AIR) provide a very useful format for linking the assessment findings directly into evidence-based intervention plans—with specific approaches for addressing skills (acquisition) deficits, performance deficits, and social skill strengths (with- and without the presence of interfering behaviors). By including the eight-page form (unnecessary with the computer scoring program), professionals are assisted in making the important connection between assessment and intervention. The authors have compiled an intervention program teaching 43 social skills within five domains measured by the SSRS. A program for preschool children (Cartledge & Kleefeld, 1991) was developed for preschool children.

- Including and asking the respondent the “How Important” aspect of specific skills to the particular environmental demands is an excellent feature and method for determining priority.

- Because of negatively-skewed global and subscale score distributions, the SSRS is better-suited to estimating social skill deficits than well-developed social skills.

- Standard scores below 85 are unavailable to the Problem Behaviors scale, and examiners interested in evaluating the impact of interventions upon a student’s Problem Behaviors should consider another (more sensitive) instrument. The authors acknowledge that the “Behavior Levels” are a very general description that may have limited clinical utility, and are meant for screening purposes and program planning, only.

- Examiners should cautiously interpret intervention-effectiveness from the two Student Forms subscales because of low reliabilities. Only the overall score derived on the Student Forms appears to show adequate reliability.

- Individual items included in the rating scales do not represent specific social skills, but represent sample skills within each domain.

- Caution should be used in interpreting parent scales from low-SES backgrounds, since the parent sample contained (proportionately) too few parents with less than high school education.

- The general norm sample underrepresented rural communities, the Northeast and West regions of the US, and Hispanic children.

- The elementary-level Student Form’s (self-report) Cooperation and Assertion scales should be interpreted independently with caution as 10 subscale factor loadings on the elementary Student Form yielded loadings below .30, with 9 of those 10 items falling within the Cooperation and Assertion subscales.
• Criterion-validity evidence is given for the elementary versions, but not for the secondary versions.
• The Preschool Form was not included in the national standardization, and normative data are available only for the tryout sample. As such, the preschool form should be considered with care.
• This system is designed to be used with normal and mildly-handicapped students for whom social skill deficiencies may be limiting academic performance.
• The SSRS currently appears to be the most comprehensive social skills assessment system available. Because of some psychometric/technical-issues (sample characteristics, representation, size) its use as an “assessment tool” may actually be secondary to its usefulness as a program planning/intervention tool.
• Items are written in concrete, behavioral terms, reducing the degree of rater/respondent “inference.”