

Autism Program Environment Rating Scale Self-Assessment Companion Tool Infant and Toddler Version (APERS-IT)

Background: Have not redone this section

The Autism Program Environment Rating Scale—Infant Toddler (APERS-IT) is an environmental assessment designed to be used by an outside observer for program improvement and/or research. The full version of the APERS includes 69 items, a complex scoring system, and requires at least 4-6 hours to complete.

This self-assessment companion tool is comprised of selected items from the APERS-IT presented in a simpler, more straightforward format that can be scored much more quickly and easily. Using this tool, early intervention providers can self-identify strengths and challenges in their intervention work. This information, in combination with a report from an outside observer using the complete APERS-IT environmental assessment, enables early intervention providers and coaches to gather information about program quality, and to develop a focused plan for program improvement.

Just like the APERS-IT environmental assessment, this self-assessment companion tool is organized into 7 domains and the scores will result in a visual profile of program quality.

Scoring Directions:

For each item, check the box that corresponds with the statement that **best** describes your classroom or program. If you feel that the statement does not provide an entirely complete or accurate portrayal, use the notes column to more specifically describe your work.

Example:

Item	This is a challenge for me/us.	This element is consistently in place, but we still have some work to do.	This is a real strength for me/us.	Notes
13	<input type="checkbox"/> Does not support caregiver to assist child imitation skills in social or object activities.	<input type="checkbox"/> Models for caregiver how to recognize, elicit, and reinforce child imitation skills in social and/or object activities (e.g., imitate child actions and sounds through social games, songs, finger play, and action on toys).	<input type="checkbox"/> Coaches caregiver to recognize, elicit and reinforce child imitation skills in social and object activities (e.g., imitate child actions and sounds through social games, songs, finger play, and action on toys).	

Positive Relationships – Interactions

Item	This is a challenge for me/us.	This element is consistently in place, but we still have some work to do.	This is a real strength for me/us.	Notes
1	<input type="checkbox"/> Speaks with the caregiver in a way that minimizes their confidence, ease, and understanding (e.g. being critical, correcting)	<input type="checkbox"/> Speaks with the caregiver in a respectful way that acknowledges their understanding at an appropriate level of formality and use of language (e.g. that was great how you praised Aiden with tickles).	<input type="checkbox"/> Focuses on caregiver’s strengths and capabilities especially during times when the caregiver questions his or her own abilities (e.g. reminds caregiver about specific strategies that worked well for them).	
2	<input type="checkbox"/> Dominates conversation with the family leaving little room for family to engage <input type="checkbox"/> Seldom makes constructive comments to the caregiver.	<input type="checkbox"/> Engages the caregiver in conversation by listening and responding to questions. (e.g., open-ended questions, focus on interests, non-judgmental questions, active listening). <input type="checkbox"/> Offers comments in a way that encourages further discussion and acknowledges caregivers knowledge.	<input type="checkbox"/> Approaches conversations with caregiver in a collaborative way with adequate “give and take” and frequent use of “we” <input type="checkbox"/> Elicits self- reflection from the caregiver.	

Physical Environment

Item	This is a challenge for me/us.	This element is consistently in place, but we still have some work to do.	This is a real strength for me/us.	Notes
4	<input type="checkbox"/> Has not acknowledged or discussed the importance of having defined space at home for play.	<input type="checkbox"/> Suggests ways to create and define such spaces.	<input type="checkbox"/> Coaches the caregiver in creating defined space or spaces for play in the environment that are realistic for the environment and child.	
5	<input type="checkbox"/> Does not recognize that age-appropriate equipment and furniture is not being used with the toddler during activities).	<input type="checkbox"/> Suggests ways to use age-appropriate equipment and furniture during routines and activities	<input type="checkbox"/> Coaches the caregiver in how to use age-appropriate equipment and furniture (mobile, table/chair, high chair or booster seat, scooter) during routines and activities.	

Activity and Daily Routines

Item	This is a challenge for me/us.	This element is consistently in place, but we still have some work to do.	This is a real strength for me/us.	Notes
6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Has not assisted caregiver(s) to learn how to use a toddler’s favorite activities to promote learning. <input type="checkbox"/> Has not addressed with the caregiver that many opportunities exist for embedding play and caretaking activities during daily routines. <input type="checkbox"/> Is not addressing with the caregiver that few, if any, daily routines for toddler’s activities exist. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Identifies with the caregiver infant/toddler’s favorite activities. <input type="checkbox"/> Identifies ways that caregiver can incorporate developmentally appropriate activities during daily routines. <input type="checkbox"/> Discusses the importance of establishing daily routines for toddler’s activities with the caregiver. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Coaches the caregiver(s) to identify the toddler’s favorite activities to support the learning of new skills <input type="checkbox"/> Coaches caregiver on strategies to incorporate developmentally appropriate activities during daily routines. <input type="checkbox"/> Coaches the caregiver in establishing and following predictable daily routines for toddler’s activities. 	

Intervention Strategies: Supporting Child Development

Item	This is a challenge for me/us.	This element is consistently in place, but we still have some work to do.	This is a real strength for me/us.	Notes
9	<input type="checkbox"/> Does not model or coach caregiver to provide a consequence for the most of desired/undesired behaviors at a rate that will support child learning.	<input type="checkbox"/> Coaches caregiver to provide a consequence for the majority of desired or undesired behaviors at a rate that will support child learning.	<input type="checkbox"/> Coaches caregiver to use natural reinforcers (and external rewards as needed) as a consequence for most behaviors appropriately	
10	<input type="checkbox"/> Does not model or coach caregiver to prepare or support child for transitions within or across activities using verbal or nonverbal communications.	<input type="checkbox"/> Coaches caregiver to prepare and support child through smooth transitions between activities through verbal and nonverbal communications	<input type="checkbox"/> Coaches caregiver to prepare and support child through smooth transitions both within and across activities using verbal and nonverbal communication including activity structure itself (e.g., pointing out that the last shape is about to be placed in the shape sorter after which the game will end - "One more and we're all done")goals	

Item	This is a challenge for me/us.	This element is consistently in place, but we still have some work to do.	This is a real strength for me/us.	Notes
11	<input type="checkbox"/> Does not address function of child behaviors during visit.	<input type="checkbox"/> Addresses function of child behavior in dialogue with caregiver.	<input type="checkbox"/> Based on the function of behavior identified during visit, coaches caregiver on ways to address child's behaviors Assessments include information on skills needed for successful transitions (between grades, programs, etc.) and provide specific information about upcoming transitions.	
12	<input type="checkbox"/> Teaches only one developmental skill during entire visit (e.g., requesting "more")	<input type="checkbox"/> One or more developmental skills are targeted within each activity (e.g., requesting and fine motor during dressing activity)	<input type="checkbox"/> Coaches caregiver to address practicing skills in additional daily routines	

Intervention Strategies: Imitation

Item	This is a challenge for me/us.	This element is consistently in place, but we still have some work to do.	This is a real strength for me/us.	Notes
13	<input type="checkbox"/> Does not support caregiver to assist child imitation skills in social or object activities.	<input type="checkbox"/> Models for caregiver how to recognize, elicit, and reinforce child imitation skills in social and/or object activities (e.g., imitate child actions and sounds through social games, songs, finger play, and action on toys).	<input type="checkbox"/> Coaches caregiver to recognize, elicit and reinforce child imitation skills in social and object activities (e.g., imitate child actions and sounds through social games, songs, finger play, and action on toys).	
14	<input type="checkbox"/> Does not coach the caregiver to imitate or expand on child play acts at times when it is needed.	<input type="checkbox"/> Models for the caregiver how to: imitate child or expand on child play acts..	<input type="checkbox"/> Coaches parent to imitate and expand on child play by giving caregiver opportunity to practice.	

Intervention Strategies: Joint Attention

Item	This is a challenge for me/us.	This element is consistently in place, but we still have some work to do.	This is a real strength for me/us.	Notes
16	<input type="checkbox"/> Does not support the caregiver in recognizing or responding to the child's shared attention when the caregiver is not recognizing the child's focus).	<input type="checkbox"/> When caregiver is not attuned to child focus, models for the caregiver how to recognize the child's bids for shared attention	<input type="checkbox"/> In a situation that requires it, coaches the caregiver to recognize the child's bids for shared attention and comments on them <u>verbally</u> ("You have Thomas!" "You made a snake.") AND with gestures (e.g., adding track pieces to the train track, making a snake slither across the table	
17	<input type="checkbox"/> Does not support caregiver to provide child opportunities to give, share, show, and request objects through gestures.	<input type="checkbox"/> Models or coaches caregiver to provide child opportunities for two of the following actions through gestures: give, share, show, and request objects.	<input type="checkbox"/> Coaches caregiver to provide child opportunities for more than 2 of the following actions through gestures, gaze, and vocal/verbal: give, share, show, and request objects.	
18	<input type="checkbox"/> Does not coach caregiver to assist child to respond to bids for joint attention (e.g., prompt child to point, responds to name and the word "look").	<input type="checkbox"/> During instruction, key team member gives students multiple opportunities to respond (communicate a response to a question or prompt), provides frequent feedback to student responses (correcting errors as appropriate), and adjusts instruction based on student responses.	<input type="checkbox"/> During instruction, all team members give students multiple opportunities to respond (communicate a response to a question or prompt), provide frequent feedback to student responses (correcting errors as appropriate), and adjust instruction based on student responses.	
	<input type="checkbox"/> Team members provide prompts for students, but tend to always give the same kind of prompts (e.g., physical, verbal, gestures). Sometimes team members prompt too much or not enough.	<input type="checkbox"/> When needed, key team member uses a clear prompting hierarchy during instruction (e.g., less intensive prompts followed by increased support as needed).	<input type="checkbox"/> For each student, there is an individualized plan for what kind of prompt to use with the student initially, and what kind of prompt to use next if the initial prompt did not work. All staff understand this and consistently prompt the student in the same way.	

Intervention Strategies: Play

Item	This is a challenge for me/us.	This element is consistently in place, but we still have some work to do.	This is a real strength for me/us.	Notes
19	<input type="checkbox"/> Does not encourage the caregiver to sit across from the child.	<input type="checkbox"/> Coaches caregiver to sit across from the child.	<input type="checkbox"/> Coaches caregiver to sit across from the child at eye level when playing.	
20	<input type="checkbox"/> Does not provide information to the caregiver(s) regarding developmentally appropriate use of toys and materials that are readily available to the family (e.g., looking at books and labeling pictures instead of reading all the words, rolling a ball, using boxes to stack into towers, making road with DVD cases)	<input type="checkbox"/> Coaches caregiver to encourage child's appropriate play with at least two age appropriate materials).	<input type="checkbox"/> Coaches caregiver to encourage child's developmentally appropriate play with three or more age appropriate materials that serve different functions.	
21	<input type="checkbox"/> Does not address child objectives in the play activity.	<input type="checkbox"/> Models for caregiver how to address multiple child objectives).	<input type="checkbox"/> Coaches caregiver to address or reflect on multiple child objectives during a specific play activity.	
22	<input type="checkbox"/> Does not address the need for reciprocity between child and caregiver in play	<input type="checkbox"/> Models reciprocity of interaction between child and caregiver	<input type="checkbox"/> Coaches caregiver on the value of balanced interactions, or interaction is balanced and caregiver has articulated the concept in planning or reflection	
23	<input type="checkbox"/> Does not address communication during play	<input type="checkbox"/> Coaches caregiver to communicate with child during play.	<input type="checkbox"/> Coaches caregiver to use gestures and language that fit child learning objectives	

Intervention Strategies: Communication

Item	This is a challenge for me/us.	This element is consistently in place, but we still have some work to do.	This is a real strength for me/us.	Notes
24	<input type="checkbox"/> Responds to the child without ever explaining to the caregiver why the response was provided.	<input type="checkbox"/> Models responses to child’s appropriate verbal and nonverbal communication (including protest, request, and comments and discusses the meaning of communication attempts with the caregiver	<input type="checkbox"/> Coaches caregiver on how to appropriately respond to child’s verbal and nonverbal communication and asks the caregiver about their interpretation of communication attempts.	
25	<input type="checkbox"/> Consistently uses language and gestures that are either too far above or too immature for the child’s language learning needs.	<input type="checkbox"/> Models for caregiver the use of both verbal and gestural communication with child that is developmentally appropriate.	<input type="checkbox"/> Discusses with the caregiver why pairing words and gestures may be helpful for the child’s language learning).	
26	<input type="checkbox"/> Does not support the caregiver in the use of imitation or expansion of their child’s gestures, vocalizations and verbalizations).	<input type="checkbox"/> Models how to imitate child’s gestures, vocalizations and verbalizations for the caregiver.	<input type="checkbox"/> Coaches the caregiver on imitation and expansion of child’s gestures, verbalizations, and vocalizations.	
27	<input type="checkbox"/> Does not use visual cues to support the child’s comprehension of communication	<input type="checkbox"/> Models for the caregiver the use of visual cues to support the child’s comprehension of communication	<input type="checkbox"/> Coaches the caregiver in using visual cues to support the child’s comprehension of communication and explains the importance of using visual cues for children with ASD.	
28	<input type="checkbox"/> Does not focus on creating communicative opportunities at all.	<input type="checkbox"/> Models for caregiver how to provide opportunities for child to communicate at least <u>one</u> function beyond requesting (e.g., commenting, protesting).	<input type="checkbox"/> Coaches caregiver to provide opportunities for child to communicate <u>two or more</u> functions beyond requesting (e.g. greeting, commenting, protesting, gaining attention).	

Behavior: Supporting Positive Behavior

Item	This is a challenge for me/us.	This element is consistently in place, but we still have some work to do.	This is a real strength for me/us.	Notes
29	<input type="checkbox"/> Acknowledges but does not expand on the caregivers' concern about undesired behavior.	<input type="checkbox"/> Discusses with caregiver some proactive and prevention strategies available to address desired and undesired behavior	<input type="checkbox"/> Elicits, or recognizes and reinforces caregivers' independent identification and use of proactive strategies that encourage desired behavior.	
30	<input type="checkbox"/> Does not mention that problem behaviors generally have an adaptive function when engaging in discussion of problem behavior with caregiver).	<input type="checkbox"/> Discusses with caregiver the concept of functions of problem behavior.	<input type="checkbox"/> Coaches caregiver to identify the function(s) of child's problem behavior.	
31	<input type="checkbox"/> Provides no suggestions or assistance to caregivers for strategies that prevent child frustration or failure when it occurs	<input type="checkbox"/> Coaches caregiver in identifying alternatives for child that would reduce child's distress or frustration (e.g., take a break, support child's communication, etc.)	Recognizes and reinforces caregivers' spontaneous use of alternative strategies that support child to achieve goal in order to reduce distress, frustration or failure for the child	

Teaming

Item	This is a challenge for me/us.	This element is consistently in place, but we still have some work to do.	This is a real strength for me/us.	Notes
30	<input type="checkbox"/> Few decisions are made at team meetings. When decisions are made, team members often do not follow through with implementing the decisions.	<input type="checkbox"/> Team members take responsibility for implementing actions determined by team that are relevant to their discipline (e.g., language/communication and SLP, sensory and OT).	<input type="checkbox"/> Systems are in place for making decisions at team meetings (e.g., action plans, problem solving processes). Team members implement all actions determined by the team (e.g., SLP implements language/communication goals as well as sensory goals).	
31	<input type="checkbox"/> Key team member (e.g., special education teacher) has no collaborative relationship with other team members. Team meetings are rare.	<input type="checkbox"/> Key team members have an ongoing collaborative relationship with at least two other team members, who provide limited feedback, communication, and sharing of data (e.g., assessment data, ongoing data collected). Team meetings occur on an “as needed” basis, but more than 2 times a year.	<input type="checkbox"/> A key team member (e.g., special education teacher, SLP) is assigned and has an ongoing collaborative relationship with all team members. Key team members provide effective feedback, frequent communication, and data with other team members (e.g., assessment data, ongoing data collected). Team meetings are scheduled at regular, predictable times throughout the school year.	
32	<input type="checkbox"/> Paraprofessionals have had no training about special education, developmental disabilities, or ASD (e.g., district in-service, college course).	<input type="checkbox"/> Paraprofessionals have had general training related to developmental disabilities and special education, but not specifically about ASD (e.g., district in-service, college course).	<input type="checkbox"/> Paraprofessionals have had formal training related to ASD (e.g., district in-service, college course). Paraprofessionals regularly participate as members of the team.	