



The Supports Intensity Scale and You

What is the Supports Intensity Scale (SIS)?

The SIS was developed over a five year period by the American Association for Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (AAIDD) which was formerly known as AAMR. AAIDD developed the SIS in response to changes in how society views persons with Developmental Disabilities. The SIS is an interview tool that measures the support needs or level of assistance that a person with developmental disabilities would need in order to do the same things that you and I do every day in our lives.

Why does Georgia use the Supports Intensity Scale (SIS) on people who are getting waiver or state funded services?

For many years individuals with developmental disabilities had annual assessments that measured their deficits not their strengths. There was not a tool or assessment available that could tell providers and families what every day life skills the person needed. Often times ISP goals were written that did not promote growth and independence. A good example would be a goal for shoe tying. In response to this, Georgia implemented the use of the SIS in 2005 to help determine the support needs in a variety of life activities of individuals getting waiver or state funded services. By determining the support needs, providers, families and the State of Georgia may help plan services to assist each person to live a full life.

What will the SIS information be used for?

The information in the SIS will be used to develop personalized goals for your loved one's Individual Service Plan (ISP).

Who is going to conduct the Supports Intensity Scale interview with me?

The SIS is conducted by a staff person who has been trained and tested on how to complete the SIS correctly. Staff completing the SIS may be a Support Coordinator or a state employee from the Regional Office.

When will the SIS interview be conducted?

When possible, the team should strive to schedule and administer the SIS, 90 – 120 days prior to the ISP expiration date or date of birth. At a minimum the SIS should be administered 45 days before the ISP expiration date.

Do I have to do anything to get prepared for the SIS interview?

There is not anything specific that you need to do to get ready for a SIS interview other than make sure you allow at least 2 hours to attend the interview.

Who needs to attend this SIS interview with me and do I get to decide who attends?

You may invite anyone you want to your SIS interview as long as they know you well. (At least 3 months or longer) Please invite someone that you spend a lot of time with and who you feel comfortable sharing private information with. We recommend that you invite people who assist you such as providers, friends or family members. However, the larger the group the longer the interview will be, so please try and keep the number small. Those in attendance should meet the following criteria to be a respondent:

- ✓ It is **highly** recommended that the individual with the disability, whose support needs are being assessed, participate in the interview.
- ✓ There **must** be at least two respondents to complete a reliable SIS interview.
- ✓ Respondents **must** have known the person being rated for at least 3 months.
- ✓ Respondents **must** have had recent opportunities to observe the person in one or more

- environments for substantial periods of time (at least several hours per setting).
- ✓ Respondents can be parents, relatives, guardians, direct support staff, work supervisors, teachers, or any other individuals who work or live with the person being evaluated.
 - ✓ Respondents must understand and be able to speak to the sorts of supports a person needs to be successful in current and potential situations.
 - ✓ Respondents must be open to thinking, with and about, the individual being assessed in potentially new ways.
 - ✓ At least two respondents must be willing and able to be fully engaged, with out interruption, for the length of the interview.
 - ✓ The individual being assessed may also serve as a respondent if they meet the respondent criteria.

Do I have to participate in the SIS interview?

It is hard to figure out what supports you would need if you do not participate. So if you do not want to participate in the entire interview it is most helpful for you to participate in at least part of the interview.

Do I have to answer all the questions in the SIS Interview and why?

Yes, all questions must be asked and answered on the SIS interview so that all information is obtained and used to calculate the score.

What if I don't understand what the question means?

Please ask the person conducting the SIS to explain the question or anything you don't understand. The person conducting the SIS interview is well trained and will be able to answer any questions you might have.

How do I know that I answered the questions correctly?

There is no right or wrong answer to the SIS if you answer each question honestly and thoroughly. A special note for family members or providers- it is important that it be a positive experience for the person being interviewed. Please share what the needs are but also positive examples of abilities. It is important that all answers are accurate and not over or under estimated.

Will I know what I score on each question before I leave the SIS interview?

All information is gathered and the interviewer uses their clinical judgment to determine the appropriate rating. Clinical judgment is the combination of the interviewer: understanding the intent of each SIS item; synthesizing information gathered; balancing out the bulk/weight of pieces that make up the SIS item, professional training; professional experience; using critical thinking skills to apply all of the above to the support needs of the individual. The person conducting the SIS interview will inform the respondents of the final rating for each item.

What if I don't agree with the score that is listed for the question?

If you don't agree with the score, talk to the person administering the SIS. The person can explain why they scored the SIS the way they did.

May I have a copy of the SIS to read before the interview?

Yes, a copy may be given to you prior to the SIS meeting. Just ask your Support Coordinator for a copy.

May I have a copy of my SIS results?

Yes. A copy may be given to you or your legal guardian prior to the ISP meeting. If you are the parent or other stakeholder, a copy can be provided to you if the individual provides written consent. Just ask your Support Coordinator for a copy after you sign the Copy Confirmation form.

Does the SIS address extensive medical needs or reoccurring behavioral situations?

Yes. The SIS contains a section for extensive medical needs as well as extensive behavioral needs.

What if I do not agree with the way the SIS was administered?

The individual and/or their family have the right to request a review of how the SIS was administered if they find that the standard operating procedures were not followed. These standard operating procedures are:

1. The SIS is administered by a Certified SIS Administrator as outlined in the SIS Protocol. Requirements of a Certified SIS Administrator:
 - a. The persons administering the SIS meets Interviewer Reliability Review; the person administering the SIS must have one year of direct work experience with people with developmental disabilities and know how to request and verify information from respondents.
 - b. All Support Coordination Agencies, Regional Offices, and Hospitals with DD Units have at least one **Master Trainer** available to train staff on the SIS. **Master Trainers** have attended SIS Train the Trainer Training with AAIDD, as well as have been certified by an AAIDD Master Trainer. **Master Trainers** provide reliability training to other agency staff who attended the AAIDD SIS Training. Once these staff achieve an Interviewer Reliability Review of 89% or better on the SIS and 19 or more point on the strength and/or satisfaction out of 23 Interviewer Technique items, they are approved **Certified SIS Administrators**.
2. The SIS Interviewer discusses with the person who he/she wants to participate in the SIS interview. The following guidelines are in place related to respondents:
 - a. The SIS is administered with 2 or more respondents who know the person well, preferably in a group setting. Respondents must have known the person at least 3 months and have had recent opportunities to observe the person in one or more environments for substantial periods of time. See additional respondent criteria above.
 - b. The individual receiving services is always the first choice of respondents. The individual should always be invited and should be present for as much of the interview as possible. Should the individual act as a respondent they should meet the respondent criteria listed above. Family and friends who know the individual well are preferred respondents. People who may know the person well and understand his/her support needs and be part of the interview and/may include: Parent, siblings, spouse, other family members, friend, neighbor, roommate, employer, Direct Support Professional staff, other provider staff who know person well.
 - c. If the SC knows the individual well, they may count as one of the respondents. Note- At no time should the SIS take place with just the Individual and the Support Coordinator, at least one other respondent is needed.
3. The family and/or legal guardian should be informed about the SIS meeting and be invited to attend.
4. When possible, the team should strive to meet and administer the SIS 90 – 120, days prior to the ISP expiration date or date of birth. At a minimum the SIS should be administered 45 days before it is due to expire.
5. The SIS will be administered in its entirety in person. It is acceptable to make phone calls to get additional information for a SIS, but the SIS should never be completed in its entirety via telephone.
6. A copy of the SIS report will be provided to the family if the individual provides written consent. A copy of the SIS report will be provided to the legal guardian. In both cases the request for a copy of the report must be documented on the Copy Confirmation form.
7. For all individuals a Supports Intensity Scale is valid for 12 months.
8. If any of these did not happen at the SIS interview, you have the right to request a case review. If you wish to request a case resolution, please contact your Support Coordinator for a copy of the Case Resolution process and checklist or contact the Lead Master SIS Trainer for your Support Coordination agency. If you still have concerns after going through this process you may follow the Administrative Review and Complaint process by sending a written letter to the regional office Administrative Review Team.