

Chapter 4

Administration

The administration and scoring of *The Arc's Self-Determination Scale* requires minimal special preparation: familiarity with the questions on the Scale, its appropriate use, and knowledge about the students with whom the Scale is being used. It is important that the teacher or individual working with the student be familiar with the items, the directions that precede each section and the scoring procedures. Users are strongly encouraged to read the **Introduction and Overview** chapter to identify procedures that enhance the reliability and validity of self-report measures, like *The Arc's Self-Determination Scale*. The Scale was designed, field-tested, and validated for use with students with cognitive, developmental, and other disabilities. More specifically, the Scale was designed for use by students with mild levels of cognitive disability, mental retardation and global learning disabilities. Field-testing indicated that the Scale was applicable to students with emotional and physical disabilities as well. A portion of the field-test was conducted with students without disabilities and the Scale probably has utility beyond the populations identified. The Scale was designed and field-tested for individual or group administration. Several factors will influence how the Scale is completed, but two important factors are the student's reading and writing skills. The Scale can be administered orally, and in group situations it is often preferable to do so. Reading each item aloud may ensure that students understand what is being requested. If a student has difficulty writing responses, particularly those in Section 2, requiring written responses, teachers or others can transcribe the student's response.

Tips for Administration of the Scale

To ensure adequate reliability and validity, it is important that the following procedures for administering the Scale be adhered to as closely as possible. The following guidelines are recommended:

1. Individuals administering *The Arc's Self-Determination Scale* should become thoroughly familiar with each domain and administration instructions for each. An assessment schedule should be arranged that minimizes disruption to students' school routines.

2. It is permissible to involve as many as 15 students at a time in the assessment process if the students' reading abilities warrant this and there are enough adults to provide the needed support. Even in group settings, students can proceed at a self-paced speed and the teacher can provide individual support. However, for some students with mental retardation it may not be appropriate to complete the assessment in a group setting. In such cases, teachers should work one-on-one with students to complete the items.
3. Individual assessment should be completed within one session. If it is not feasible to complete the Scale in one session, a second session can be held to complete the remaining questions. Teachers should set aside between thirty minutes and one hour for students to complete the items on the Scale.
4. For students with more significant disabilities, it may be necessary to read questions and provide accommodations for answering the questions. Teachers should arrange for the additional time necessary in this process to ensure that the student finishes the Scale in one session.
5. The standardized method of examination included BOTH oral and written presentation of all questions. This was done to account for the considerable differences in reading comprehension and vocabulary among students receiving special education services. If students with more advanced reading abilities are frustrated by oral presentation, the examiner might tactfully explain the reasons for using this method of presentation or encourage these students to complete the Scale by themselves after the directions are read in full to them.
6. During oral administration students may need to be reminded of the instructions (on each protocol) for the specific domain being assessed at that time.
7. Students should be seated so that they can do their own work. It is important for the examiner to be sure students do not look at and duplicate other students' responses. Otherwise, invalid response data will be collected.
8. Each student should have a Scale protocol and two sharpened pencils with erasers. All responses should be recorded directly on the Scale protocol. Desks should be clear of other objects and the environment should be free from distraction.
9. Before students begin, they should be informed why they are completing the Scale, what will be done with the results, and the importance of answering honestly. It is

essential to convey this information without making students feel anxious and without overstating the Scale's importance. Students should be assured that they are completing the Scale to help them and their teachers better meet their instructional needs. Teachers should emphasize a team approach to the process, restating the student's opportunity to take more control over his or her educational planning process.

10. Directions should be read aloud. Each Scale item, its answer choices, and any other accompanying information should be read once unless the examiner has observed some students have not comprehended an item and chooses to repeat that item. If you elect to allow students to take the Scale by themselves, be certain they understand the instructions for each domain section.
11. It is acceptable for the teacher or administrator to restate the directions, expanding or defining them if necessary, to define words within the questions that students find problematic or to explain what the various answering options mean. It is important that the teacher not be directive when describing options for the student to answer, but simply provide information to the student.
12. If students do not understand vocabulary used in the test items, the examiner should give a brief definition of the word(s) in question. In so doing, it is imperative that the examiner not place undue emphasis on any outcome or answer or influence the student's answer in any way.
13. In sections 3 and 4, students are asked to choose one of two categories (yes/no or agree/don't agree) that describe how they feel about themselves. Students may feel that both or neither answer describes them. Teachers should assure the student that this is not uncommon, but they should choose the one that BEST indicates what they think or believe.
14. It is important that the student respond in a manner that accurately and honestly reflects his or her beliefs and not in a manner which is perceived as socially appropriate. Stress that there are no right answers, that students should respond with what they believe to be true and that all responses are strictly confidential.