

# Children's Loneliness and Social Dissatisfaction Scale

Asher, Hymel, and Renshaw (1984)

This 24-item questionnaire was developed to assess children's feelings of loneliness and social dissatisfaction. It was designed for use with children in grades 3-6, or ages 8-12.

Assessment of children's own feelings about their peer relations may be useful in identifying children for participation in intervention programs, such as improving social interaction skills or self-concept. Data on the child's perspective is also useful in evaluating whether social skill training decreases children's feelings of loneliness or social dissatisfaction and in determining whether intervention efforts are differentially successful as a function of children's feelings prior to training. Identifying children's feelings of loneliness may predict later adjustment based on children's participation in a social network.

The 16 primary items focus on student's feelings of loneliness (e.g., "I'm lonely"), feelings of social adequacy very inadequacy (e.g., "I'm good at working with other children"), or subjective estimations of peer state (e.g., "I have lots of friends"). The other eight items focus on children's hobbies or preferred activities (e.g., "I like to paint and draw"; "I watch TV a lot"). These eight "filler" items are included to help children feel more open and relaxed about indicating their attitudes about various topics (items 2, 5, 7, 13, 15, 19, 23).

## Psychometric information:

The Children's Loneliness and Social Dissatisfaction Scale was administered to 506 children grades 3-6 (243 female, 263 male). The children came from 20 classrooms in two schools in a moderate-size Midwestern city in the United State. The scale was administered in a group testing session in each classroom. The children were first trained in the use of the rating scale by responding to several activity preference statements. After the children understood the task the tester read aloud each of the 24 items, waiting for children to record their ratings for each item before going on to the next item. Two weeks later, sociometric measures were administered in each classroom: (1) a positive-nomination measure in which children were asked to name their three best friends in the classroom, (2) a rating-scale measure on which children rated each classmate on a 1-5 scale according to how much they liked to play with that person at school. The sociometric scores were computed and analyzed on the basis of nominations and ratings received from same-sex classmates. The average rating received from same-sex peers was then converted to standard scores. On nearly all items over 10% of the sample reported feelings of considerable social dissatisfaction and loneliness. Children's responses to all 24 questions were subjected to factor analysis resulting in a primary factor that included all 16 of the primary items. None of the filler items loaded significantly on this factor. The resulting 16-item scale was found to be internally consistent (Cronbach's  $\alpha = .90$ ) and internally reliable (split-half correlation between forms = .83; Spearman-Brown reliability coefficient = .91; Guttman split-half reliability coefficient = .91). On the basis of the factor analysis, all 16 primary items were used to compute a total loneliness or social dissatisfaction score for each child that could range from 16 (low loneliness) to 80 (high loneliness). In the 506 children tested, loneliness scores ranged from 16 to 79 with a **mean score of 32.51 and a standard deviation of 11.82**. Correlational analyses were performed to examine the relationship between loneliness and sociometric status resulting in a significant negative relationship between loneliness and friendship nominations and play ratings received from same-sex peers. Lowest rated children reported significantly greater feelings of loneliness and social dissatisfaction ( $M = 40.61$ ;  $SD = 12.46$ ) than did their more accepted peers ( $M = 31.36$ ;  $SD = 11.13$ ). All other main effects and interactions were nonsignificant. A second analysis examined whether children with few or no best-friendship nominations within their classroom would experience greater loneliness as compared with children who indicated 1, 2, 3, 4 or 5 or more friendship nominations. Loneliness scores were observed to increase as the number of friends decreased. Post-hoc Scheffé comparisons indicated that children receiving 0, 1 or 2 best-friend nominations reported significantly more loneliness than children receiving 5 or more best-friend nominations. Achievement test scores (CTBS) were available for 364 of the 506 children. A modest but significant correlation was observed between achievement scores and sociometric status:  $r(362) = .27$ ,  $p < .001$ ).

In summary, lower-status children do experience and report considerably more loneliness and social dissatisfaction than their more accepted peers, regardless of the type of sociometric measure used to identify such children. This scale can reliably measure children's loneliness and social acceptance as children's feelings about their social relationships do relate to their sociometric status in the classroom. Children whose status was lowest, reported more loneliness and social dissatisfaction. It has been found to be especially effective\* in identifying children who have been socially rejected. Those who are socially neglected tend to not differ from children scoring as not at-risk.

\*Asher, S.R & Wheeler, V.A. (1985). Children's Loneliness: A comparison of rejected and neglected per status. *Journal of Consulting & Clinical Psychology*, 53:500-5.

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Asher & Wheeler (1984)

Print out pages 3 and 4 of this document. Provide the student with page 3; *All About Me*. Present items A-D to the student (i.e., read aloud) to ensure that they understand the use of the 5-point scale. Then proceed to present the 24 items. This scale can be presented individually or to a group of students.

A. I like chocolate ice cream.

C. I like to play outside when it's raining.

B. I am good at roller skating.

D. I am good at climbing trees.

Present the following items to the student.

1. It's easy for me to make new friends at school.
2. I like to read.
3. I have nobody to talk to.\*
4. I'm good at working with other children.
5. I watch TV a lot.
6. It's hard for me to make friends.\*
7. I like school.
8. I have lots of friends.
9. I feel alone.\*
10. I can find a friend when I need one.
11. I play sports a lot.
12. It's hard to get other kids to like me.\*
13. I like science.
14. I don't have anyone to play with.
15. I like music.
16. I like to get along with other kids.
17. I feel left out of things.
18. There's nobody I can go to when I need help.\*
19. I like to paint and draw.
20. I don't get along with other children.\*
21. I'm lonely.\*
22. I am well-liked by the kids in my class.
23. I like playing board games a lot.
24. I don't have any friends.\*

When completed, transfer scores of the indicated 16 questions to the scoring form.

\*Items that will have reversed scoring.

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## Scoring Form

Student Name \_\_\_\_\_ Grade \_\_\_ School \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Evaluator \_\_\_\_\_ Comments: \_\_\_\_\_

Circle the number corresponding to student's response. Do not score filler items in gray. Compare total to scoring grid.

	Always True	True Most of the Time	Sometimes True	Hardly Ever True	Not True At All
1	5	4	3	2	1
2					
3	1	2	3	4	5
4	5	4	3	2	1
5					
6	1	2	3	4	5
7					
8	5	4	3	2	1
9	1	2	3	4	5
10	5	4	3	2	1
11					
12	1	2	3	4	5
13					
14	1	2	3	4	5
15					
16	5	4	3	2	1
17	1	2	3	4	5
18	1	2	3	4	5
19					
20	1	2	3	4	5
21	1	2	3	4	5
22	5	4	3	2	1
23					
24	1	2	3	4	5

<b>Total:</b>			
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<b>Total of All</b>	
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<b>16 - 28</b>	<b>29 - 40</b>	<b>41 - 52</b>	<b>52+</b>
<b>Fail</b>	<b>Marginal</b>	<b>Pass</b>	<b>Pass</b>
-1 SD →	Mean →	+1 SD →	+2 SD →

Based on mean scores of students rated as having most significant loneliness and social acceptance issues.

# All About Me

Student Name \_\_\_\_\_ Grade \_\_\_\_ School \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

	<b>Always True</b>	<b>True Most of the Time</b>	<b>Sometimes True</b>	<b>Hardly Ever True</b>	<b>Not True At All</b>
<b>A</b>					
<b>B</b>					
<b>C</b>					
<b>D</b>					
	<b>Always True</b>	<b>True Most of the Time</b>	<b>Sometimes True</b>	<b>Hardly Ever True</b>	<b>Not True At All</b>
<b>1</b>					
<b>2</b>					
<b>3</b>					
<b>4</b>					
<b>5</b>					
<b>6</b>					
<b>7</b>					
<b>8</b>					
<b>9</b>					
<b>10</b>					
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<b>23</b>					
<b>24</b>					