

# Scoring Instructions for NICHQ Vanderbilt Assessment Scales

The validation studies for the NICHQ Vanderbilt Assessment Scales were for the 6- to 12-year-old age group. However, to the extent that they collect information to establish *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, Fourth Edition (DSM-IV)* criteria, they are applicable to other groups, particularly preschoolers, where they have identified that *DSM-IV* criteria are still appropriate.

These scales should *not* be used alone to make a diagnosis of ADHD without confirming and elaborating the information with interviews with at least the primary caregivers (usually parents) and patients. You must take into consideration information from multiple sources. Scores of 2 or 3 on a single symptom question reflect *often-occurring* behaviors. Scores of 4 or 5 on performance questions reflect problems in performance.

The initial assessment scales, parent and teacher, have 2 components: symptom assessment and impairment in performance. On both parent and teacher initial scales, the symptom assessment screens for symptoms that meet criteria for inattentive (items 1-9) and hyperactive (items 10-18) attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD).

To meet *DSM-IV* criteria for the diagnosis, one must have at least 6 positive responses to the inattentive 9 or hyperactive 9 core symptoms, or both. A positive response is a 2 or 3 (often, very often) (you could draw a line straight down the page and count the positive answers in each subsegment). There is a place to record the number of positives in each subsegment.

The initial scales have symptom screens for 3 other comorbidities: oppositional-defiant disorder, conduct disorder, and anxiety/depression. (The initial teacher scale also screens for learning disabilities.) These are screened by the number of positive responses in each of the segments. The specific item sets and numbers of positives required for each comorbid symptom screen set are detailed below and on the next page.

The second section of the scale has a set of performance measures, scored 1 to 5, with 4 and 5 being somewhat of a problem/problematic. To meet criteria for ADHD there must be at least 2 items of the performance set in which the child scores a 4, or 1 item of the performance set in which the child scores a 5; ie, there must be impairment, not just symptoms, to meet diagnostic criteria. The sheet has a place to record the number of positives (4s, 5s).

Parent Assessment Scale	Teacher Assessment Scale
<p><b>Predominantly Inattentive subtype</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Must score a 2 or 3 on 6 out of 9 items on questions 1–9.</li> </ul> <p style="text-align: center;"><u>AND</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Score a 4 on at least 2, or 5 on at least 1, of the performance questions 48–54.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Predominantly Inattentive subtype</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Must score a 2 or 3 on 6 out of 9 items on questions 1–9.</li> </ul> <p style="text-align: center;"><u>AND</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Score a 4 on at least 2, or 5 on at least 1, of the performance questions 36–43.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Predominantly Hyperactive/Impulsive subtype</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Must score a 2 or 3 on 6 out of 9 items on questions 10–18.</li> </ul> <p style="text-align: center;"><u>AND</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Score a 4 on at least 2, or 5 on at least 1, of the performance questions 48–54.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Predominantly Hyperactive/Impulsive subtype</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Must score a 2 or 3 on 6 out of 9 items on questions 10–18.</li> </ul> <p style="text-align: center;"><u>AND</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Score a 4 on at least 2, or 5 on at least 1, of the performance questions 36–43.</li> </ul>
<p><b>ADHD Combined Inattention/Hyperactivity</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Requires the criteria on Inattentive <u>AND</u> Hyperactive/Impulsive subtypes</li> </ul>	<p><b>ADHD Combined Inattention/Hyperactivity</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Requires the criteria on Inattentive <u>AND</u> Hyperactive/Impulsive subtypes</li> </ul>
<p><b>Oppositional-Defiant Disorder</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Must score a 2 or 3 on 4 out of 8 behaviors on questions 19–26.</li> </ul> <p style="text-align: center;"><u>AND</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Score a 4 on at least 2, or 5 on at least 1, of the performance questions 48–54.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Oppositional-Defiant/Conduct Disorder</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Must score a 2 or 3 on 3 out of 10 items on questions 19–28.</li> </ul> <p style="text-align: center;"><u>AND</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Score a 4 on at least 2, or 5 on at least 1, of the performance questions 36–43.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Conduct Disorder</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Must score a 2 or 3 on 3 out of 14 behaviors on questions 27–40.</li> </ul> <p style="text-align: center;"><u>AND</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Score a 4 on at least 2, or 5 on at least 1, of the performance questions 48–54.</li> </ul>	



Parent Assessment Scale	Teacher Assessment Scale
<b>Anxiety/Depression</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Must score a 2 or 3 on 3 out of 7 behaviors on questions 41–47.</li> </ul> <p style="text-align: center;"><u>AND</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Score a 4 on at least 2, or 5 on at least 1, of the performance questions 48–54.</li> </ul>	<b>Anxiety/Depression</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Must score a 2 or 3 on 3 out of 7 items on questions 29–35.</li> </ul> <p style="text-align: center;"><u>AND</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Score a 4 on at least 2, or 5 on at least 1, of the performance questions 36–43.</li> </ul>
	<b>Learning Disabilities</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Must score a 4 on both, or 5 on 1, of questions 36 and 38.</li> </ul>

The parent and teacher follow-up scales have the first 18 core ADHD symptoms and the comorbid symptoms oppositional-defiant (parent) and oppositional-defiant/conduct (teacher) disorders. The Performance section has the same performance items and impairment assessment as the initial scales; it is followed by a side-effect reporting scale that can be used to assess and monitor the presence of adverse reactions to prescribed medications, if any.

Scoring the follow-up scales involves tracking inattentive (items 1–9) and hyperactive (items 10–18) ADHD, as well as the aforementioned comorbidities, as measures of improvement over time with treatment.

Parent Assessment Scale	Teacher Assessment Scale
<b>Predominantly Inattentive subtype</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Must score a 2 or 3 on 6 out of 9 items on questions 1–9.</li> </ul> <p style="text-align: center;"><u>AND</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Score a 4 on at least 2, or 5 on at least 1, of the performance questions 27–33.</li> </ul>	<b>Predominantly Inattentive subtype</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Must score a 2 or 3 on 6 out of 9 items on questions 1–9.</li> </ul> <p style="text-align: center;"><u>AND</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Score a 4 on at least 2, or 5 on at least 1, of the performance questions 29–36.</li> </ul>
<b>Predominantly Hyperactive/Impulsive subtype</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Must score a 2 or 3 on 6 out of 9 items on questions 10–18.</li> </ul> <p style="text-align: center;"><u>AND</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Score a 4 on at least 2, or 5 on at least 1, of the performance questions 27–33.</li> </ul>	<b>Predominantly Hyperactive/Impulsive subtype</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Must score a 2 or 3 on 6 out of 9 items on questions 10–18.</li> </ul> <p style="text-align: center;"><u>AND</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Score a 4 on at least 2, or 5 on at least 1, of the performance questions 29–36.</li> </ul>
<b>ADHD Combined Inattention/Hyperactivity</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Requires the criteria on Inattentive <u>AND</u> Hyperactive/Impulsive subtypes</li> </ul>	<b>ADHD Combined Inattention/Hyperactivity</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Requires the criteria on Inattentive <u>AND</u> Hyperactive/Impulsive subtypes</li> </ul>
<b>Oppositional-Defiant Disorder</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Must score a 2 or 3 on 4 out of 8 behaviors on questions 19–26.</li> </ul> <p style="text-align: center;"><u>AND</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Score a 4 on at least 2, or 5 on at least 1, of the performance questions 27–33.</li> </ul>	<b>Oppositional-Defiant/Conduct Disorder</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Must score a 2 or 3 on 3 out of 10 items on questions 19–28.</li> </ul> <p style="text-align: center;"><u>AND</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Score a 4 on at least 2, or 5 on at least 1, of the performance questions 29–36.</li> </ul>

The recommendations in this publication do not indicate an exclusive course of treatment or serve as a standard of medical care. Variations, taking into account individual circumstances, may be appropriate. Original document included as part of *Caring for Children With ADHD: A Resource Toolkit for Clinicians*, 2nd Edition. Copyright © 2012 American Academy of Pediatrics. All Rights Reserved. The American Academy of Pediatrics does not review or endorse any modifications made to this document and in no event shall the AAP be liable for any such changes.

