

Arc's Self-Determination Scale

(Adolescent version)

Student's name: _____ Date: _____

Teacher: _____

The Arc's Self-Determination Scale-Adolescent Version is a student self-report measure of self-determination designed primarily for use by, and normed with, adolescents with cognitive and developmental disabilities. The scale has two primary purposes:

- To provide students and educators a tool that assists them to identify student strengths and areas of support and instructional need in self-determination; and
- To provide a research tool to examine the relationship between and among self-determination and factors that promote/inhibit self-determined behavior, to evaluate the efficacy of interventions to promote self-determination, and for use with related research activities

The scale has 72 items and is divided into four sections. Each section examines a different essential characteristic of self-determined behavior: autonomy, self-regulation, psychological empowerment, and self-realization.

Each section has unique directions that should be read before completing the relevant items. Scoring the scale results in a total self-determination score and subdomain scores in each of the four essential characteristics of self-determined behavior.

The scale should not be used until the administrator is thoroughly familiar with these issues.

The Arc's Self-Determination Scale-Adolescent Version was developed by Michael Wehmeyer and Kathy Kelchner at The Arc of the United States with funding from the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP), under Cooperative Agreement #H023J20012. Questions used in Section One (Autonomy) were adapted, with permission from the authors, from the Autonomous Functioning Checklist. Questions used in Section Four (Self-Realization) were adapted, with permission from the author, from the short form of the Personal Orientation Inventory. Appropriate citations for both instruments are available in The Arc's Self-Determination Scale Procedural Guidelines. The Arc gratefully acknowledges the generosity of these researchers.

Section one: Autonomy

Directions: Check the answer to each question that BEST tells how you act in that situation. There are no right or wrong answers. Check only one answer for each question. (If you have a disability that limits you from actually performing the activity, but you have control over the activity by using a personal care attendant, answer like you performed the activity.)

1A Independence: Routine personal care and family-oriented functions
1. I make my own meals or snacks.
<div><input type="radio"/> I do not even if I have the chance</div> <div><input type="radio"/> I do sometimes when I have the chance</div> <div><input type="radio"/> I do most of the time I have the chance</div> <div><input type="radio"/> I do every time I have the chance</div>
2. I care for my own clothes.
<div><input type="radio"/> I do not even if I have the chance</div> <div><input type="radio"/> I do sometimes when I have the chance</div> <div><input type="radio"/> I do most of the time I have the chance</div> <div><input type="radio"/> I do every time I have the chance</div>
3. I do chores in my home.
<div><input type="radio"/> I do not even if I have the chance</div> <div><input type="radio"/> I do sometimes when I have the chance</div> <div><input type="radio"/> I do most of the time I have the chance</div> <div><input type="radio"/> I do every time I have the chance</div>
4. I keep my own personal items together.
<div><input type="radio"/> I do not even if I have the chance</div> <div><input type="radio"/> I do sometimes when I have the chance</div> <div><input type="radio"/> I do most of the time I have the chance</div> <div><input type="radio"/> I do every time I have the chance</div>
5. I do simple first aid or medical care for myself.
<div><input type="radio"/> I do not even if I have the chance</div> <div><input type="radio"/> I do sometimes when I have the chance</div> <div><input type="radio"/> I do most of the time I have the chance</div> <div><input type="radio"/> I do every time I have the chance</div>
6. I keep good personal care and grooming.
<div><input type="radio"/> I do not even if I have the chance</div> <div><input type="radio"/> I do sometimes when I have the chance</div> <div><input type="radio"/> I do most of the time I have the chance</div> <div><input type="radio"/> I do every time I have the chance</div>
1A Subtotal:

1B. Independence: Interaction with the environment

7. I make friends with other kids my age.

I do not even if I have the chance
I do sometimes when I have the chance
I do most of the time I have the chance
I do every time I have the chance

8. I use the post office.

I do not even if I have the chance
I do sometimes when I have the chance
I do most of the time I have the chance
I do every time I have the chance

9. I keep my appointments and meetings.

I do not even if I have the chance
I do sometimes when I have the chance
I do most of the time I have the chance
I do every time I have the chance

10. I deal with salespeople at stores and restaurants.

I do not even if I have the chance
I do sometimes when I have the chance
I do most of the time I have the chance
I do every time I have the chance

1B Subtotal:

1C. Acting on the basis of preferences, beliefs, interests, and abilities: Recreational and leisure

11. I do free time activities based on my interests.

I do not even if I have the chance
I do sometimes when I have the chance
I do most of the time I have the chance
I do every time I have the chance

12. I plan weekend activities that I like to do.

I do not even if I have the chance
I do sometimes when I have the chance
I do most of the time I have the chance
I do every time I have the chance

1C. Acting on the basis of preferences, beliefs, interests, and abilities: Recreational and leisure

13. I am involved in school-related activities.

I do not even if I have the chance
I do sometimes when I have the chance
I do most of the time I have the chance
I do every time I have the chance

14. My friends and I choose activities that we want to do.

I do not even if I have the chance
I do sometimes when I have the chance
I do most of the time I have the chance
I do every time I have the chance

15. I write letters, and notes, or talk on the phone to friends and family.

I do not even if I have the chance
I do sometimes when I have the chance
I do most of the time I have the chance
I do every time I have the chance

16. I listen to music that I like.

I do not even if I have the chance
I do sometimes when I have the chance
I do most of the time I have the chance
I do every time I have the chance

1C Subtotal:

1D. Acting on the basis of preferences, beliefs, interests and abilities: Community Involvement and interaction

17. I volunteer in things that I am interested in.

I do not even if I have the chance
I do sometimes when I have the chance
I do most of the time I have the chance
I do every time I have the chance

18. I go to restaurants that I like.

I do not even if I have the chance
I do sometimes when I have the chance
I do most of the time I have the chance
I do every time I have the chance

1D. Acting on the basis of preferences, beliefs, interests and abilities: Community Involvement and interaction

19. I go to movies, concerts, and dances.

I do not even if I have the chance
I do sometimes when I have the chance
I do most of the time I have the chance
I do every time I have the chance

20. I go shopping or spend time at shopping centers or malls.

I do not even if I have the chance
I do sometimes when I have the chance
I do most of the time I have the chance
I do every time I have the chance

21. I take part in youth groups (like 4-H, scouting, church groups).

I do not even if I have the chance
I do sometimes when I have the chance
I do most of the time I have the chance
I do every time I have the chance

1D Subtotal:

1E. Acting on the basis of preferences, beliefs, interests and abilities: Post-school directions

22. I do school and free time activities based on my career interests.

I do not even if I have the chance
I do sometimes when I have the chance
I do most of the time I have the chance
I do every time I have the chance

23. I work on schoolwork that will improve my career chances.

I do not even if I have the chance
I do sometimes when I have the chance
I do most of the time I have the chance
I do every time I have the chance

24. I make long-range career plans.

I do not even if I have the chance
I do sometimes when I have the chance
I do most of the time I have the chance
I do every time I have the chance

1E. Acting on the basis of preferences, beliefs, interests and abilities: Post-school directions**25. I work or have worked to earn money.**

I do not even if I have the chance
I do sometimes when I have the chance
I do most of the time I have the chance
I do every time I have the chance

26. I am in or have been in career or job classes or training.

I do not even if I have the chance
I do sometimes when I have the chance
I do most of the time I have the chance
I do every time I have the chance

27. I have looked into job interests by visiting work sites or talking to people in that job.

I do not even if I have the chance
I do sometimes when I have the chance
I do most of the time I have the chance
I do every time I have the chance

1E Subtotal:**1F. Acting on the basis of preferences, beliefs, interests and abilities: Personal expression****28. I choose my clothes and the personal items I use every day.**

I do not even if I have the chance
I do sometimes when I have the chance
I do most of the time I have the chance
I do every time I have the chance

29. I choose my own hairstyle.

I do not even if I have the chance
I do sometimes when I have the chance
I do most of the time I have the chance
I do every time I have the chance

30. I choose gifts to give to family and friends.

I do not even if I have the chance
I do sometimes when I have the chance
I do most of the time I have the chance
I do every time I have the chance

1F. Acting on the basis of preferences, beliefs, interests and abilities: Personal expression**31. I decorate my own room.**

I do not even if I have the chance
I do sometimes when I have the chance
I do most of the time I have the chance
I do every time I have the chance

32. I choose how to spend my personal money.

I do not even if I have the chance
I do sometimes when I have the chance
I do most of the time I have the chance
I do most of the time I have the chance

1F Subtotal:

Section two: Self-regulation

Directions: Each of the following questions tells the beginning of a story and how the story ends. Your job is to tell what happened in the middle of the story and to connect the beginning and the end. Read the beginning and ending for each question, then fill in the BEST answer for the middle of the story. There are no right or wrong answers. Remember, fill in the answer that you think BEST completes the story.

2A. Interpersonal cognitive problem-solving

33.

Beginning: You are sitting in a planning meeting with your parents and teachers. You want to take a class where you can learn to work as a cashier in a store. Your parents want you to take the Family and Child Care class. You can only take one of the classes.

Middle:

Ending: The story ends with you taking a vocational class where you will learn to be a cashier.

Story score:

34.

Beginning: Your friends are acting like they are mad at you. You are upset about this.

Middle:

Ending: The story ends with you and your friends getting along just fine.

Story score:

35.

Beginning: You hear a friend talking about a new job opening at the local bookstore. You love books and want a job. You decide you would like to work at the bookstore.

Middle:

Ending: The story ends with you working at the bookstore.
Story score:
36.
Beginning: You go to your English class one morning and discover your English book is not in your backpack. You are upset because you need that book to do your homework.
Middle:
Ending: The story ends with you using your English book for homework
Story score:
37.
Beginning: You are in a club at school. The club advisor announces that the club members will need to elect new officers at the next meeting. You want to be the president of the club.
Middle:
Ending: The story ends with you being elected as the club president.
Story score:
38.
Beginning: You are at a new school and you don't know anyone. You want to have friends.
Middle:
Ending: The story ends with you having many friends at the new school.
Story score:

2B. Goal setting and task performance

Directions: The next three questions ask about your plans for the future. Again, there are no right or wrong answers. For each question, tell if you have made plans for that outcome and, if so, what those plans are and how to meet them.

39. Where do you want to live after you graduate?

I have not planned for that yet.

I want to live:

List four things you should do to meet this goal:

1.

2.

3.

4.

40. Where do you want to work after you graduate?

I have not planned for that yet.

I want to work:

List four things you should do to meet this goal:

1.

2.

3.

4.

41. What type of transportation do you plan to use after graduation?

I have not planned for that yet.

I plan to use:

List four things you should do to meet this goal:

1.

2.

3.

4.

Section three: Psychological empowerment

Directions: Check the answer that BEST describes you. Choose only one answer for each question. There are no right or wrong answers

42.	I usually do what my friends want...or I tell my friends if they are doing something I don't want to do.
43.	I tell others when I have new or different ideas or opinions...or I usually agree with other peoples' opinions or ideas.
44.	I usually agree with people when they tell me I can't do something...or I tell people when I think I can do something that they tell me I can't.
45.	I tell people when they have hurt my feelings...or I am afraid to tell people when they have hurt my feelings.
46.	I can make my own decisions...or Other people make decisions for me.
47.	Trying hard at school doesn't do me much good...or Trying hard at school will help me get a good job.
48.	I can get what I want by working hard...or I need good luck to get what I want.
49.	It is no use to keep trying because that won't change things...or I keep trying even after I get something wrong.
50.	I have the ability to do the job I want...or I cannot do what it takes to do the job I want
51.	I don't know how to make friends...or I know how to make friends.
52.	I am able to work with others...or I cannot work well with others.
53.	I do not make good choices...or I can make good choices.

54. If I have the ability, I will be able to get the job I want...or
I probably will not get the job I want even if I have the ability.

55. I will have a hard time making new friends...or
I probably will not get the job I want even if I have the ability

56. I will be able to work with others if I need to...or
I will not be able to work with others if I need to.

57. My choices will not be honored...or
I will be able to make choices that are important to me.

Section 3 subtotal:

Section four: Self-realization

Directions: Tell whether each of these statements describes how you feel about yourself or not. There are no right or wrong answers. Choose only the answer that BEST fits you.

Statement	Agree	Disagree
58. I do not feel ashamed of any of my emotions.		
59. I feel free to be angry at people I care for.		
60. I can show my feelings even when people might see me.		
61. I can like people even if I don't agree with them.		
62. I am afraid of doing things wrong.		
63. It is better to be yourself than to be popular.		
64. I am loved because I give love.		
65. I know what I do best.		
66. I don't accept my own limitations		
67. I feel I cannot do many things.		
68. I like myself.		
69. I am not an important person.		
70. I know how to make up for my limitations.		
71. Other people like me.		
72. I am confident in my abilities.		
Section 4 Subtotal:		

Score sheet

Scoring step 1: Record the raw scores from each section:

Autonomy	
1A =	1B =
1C =	1D =
1E =	1F =
Domain total:	
Self-regulation	
2A =	2B =
Domain total:	
Psychological empowerment	
3 =	
Domain total:	
Self-realization	
4 =	
Domain total:	

Scoring step 2: Sum each domain total for a total score:

Self-determination total =

Scoring step 3: Using the conversion tables in Appendix A, convert raw scores into percentiles scores for comparison with the sample norms (norm sample) and the percentage of positive responses (positive scores):

Autonomy	Norm sample	Positive scores
1A =		
1B =		
1C =		
1D =		
1E =		
1F =		
Domain total:		

Self-regulation	Norm sample	Positive scores
2A =		
2B =		
Domain total:		
Psychological empowerment	Norm sample	Positive scores
3 =		
Domain total:		
Self-realization	Norm sample	Positive scores
4 =		
Domain total:		
Self-determination	Norm sample	Positive scores
Total:		

Scoring step 4: Fill in the graph for the percentile scores from the norming sample. From the appropriate percentile down, darken the complete bar graph (See example in Scoring Manual):

Indep: Self-care												One A
Indep: Community												One B
Choice: Leisure												One C
Choice: Community												One D
Choice: PostSchool												One E
Choice: Personal												One F
Autonomy												One
SelfReg: Prob Solve												Two A
SelfReg: Goal Set												Two B
Self-Regulation												Two
Psych Empower												Three
Self-Realization												Four
Self-Determination												Total
	10	20	30	40	50	60	70	80	90	100	%	

Scoring step 5: Fill in the graph for the percentile scores indicating the percent positive responses.

Autonomy												One
Self-Regulation												Two
Psych Empower												Three
Self-Realization												Four
Self-Determination												Total
	10	20	30	40	50	60	70	80	90	100	%	

Scoring

Section one: Autonomy

The questions in the Autonomy domain use a common response method. Students respond to each statement with a response from one of four choices:

- I do not even if I have the chance
- I do sometimes when I have the chance
- I do most of the time when I have the chance
- I do every time I have the chance

Students should respond to only one of these choices on each question. The student is assigned a score based on the response category as follows:

- **0:** I do not even if I have the chance
- **1:** I do sometimes when I have the chance
- **2:** I do most of the time when I have the chance:
- **3:** I do every time I have the chance

Section two: Self-regulation

The self-regulation section consists of two subdomains, with questions that require students to write (or dictate) answers.

Section I

This section involves story-based items, where the student identifies what he or she considers the best solution to a problem. Student responses are scored on a scale of 0 to 2 points, depending on the effectiveness of the solution in resolving the problem.

A "0" score means that the student either gave no answer or the solution the student gave would fail to achieve the indicated ending to the story. A "1" score indicates that the answer the student provided was okay but might have limited utility to achieve the ending identified. A "2" score indicates that the answer provided was an acceptable, adequate way to achieve the indicated ending

Due to the nature of this process, scorers must use some judgment on the appropriateness of students' answers, including how they relate to geographic, cultural, and socioeconomic differences among students. A score of "2" does not represent an "optimal" answer but simply an answer that would achieve the ending.

To facilitate the scoring process for this section, each question from the Interpersonal Cognitive Problem-Solving subdomain (questions 33-38) will be addressed individually:

Question 33

- **0 points:** Student does not address the problem, offers no means to resolve differences, or simply restates given information without resolving the situation.
- **1 point:** Response indicates an action on the part of a student or another but does not suggest how to resolve differences, such as supply stating that "I will take the class I want"
- **2 points:** The answer addresses conflict resolution, possibly through compromise. and negotiation, and identifies actions on both sides.

Question 34

- **0 points:** Student does not offer means to get a job; restates given information.
- **1 point:** Response indicates action only on the part of one party.
- **2 points:** The answer provides actions to pursue a job and actions by the employers in hiring.

Question 35

- **0 points:** Restating given information, no effort to address conflict.
- **1 point:** Limited attempt to initiate contact with friends or counselor.
- **2 points:** Initiation of discussion/dialogue with some aspect of working out a resolution and getting along afterward.

Question 36

- **0 points:** Restating given information, no effort to address finding or borrowing a book.
- **1 point:** Stating possible locations, with no follow-up, stating possible consequences.
- **2 points:** Finding, borrowing, or other means of obtaining a book to use in completing the assignment.

Question 37

- **0 points:** Restating given information, no actions to indicate running for office, nomination, or election by others.
- **1 point:** Response indicates action by student indicating a desire for office or action by others to choose him or her for office.
- **2 points:** Answer indicates a desire for office and action by others in electing or choosing the student.

Question 38

- **0 points:** Restating given information, stating why they want friends with no means to achieve this, stating activities with no interactions indicated.
- **1 point:** Response indicates action by the student to initiate interactions or responses of others to the student.
- **2 points:** Response indicates action by the student to initiate interactions and responses of others to the student.

Section II

This section of the self-regulation domain asks students to identify goals in several life areas and identify steps they need to take to achieve these goals. Points are accumulated based on the presence of a goal and the number of steps identified to reach that goal. If a student responds to the initial inquiry about the presence of a goal with the "I have not planned for that yet" response, he or she is awarded 0 points. If the student identifies a goal, but no steps to reach that goal, he or she is awarded 1 point.

For a goal with 1 or 2 steps, the student receives 2 points, and students who identify a goal and 3 or 4 steps receive 3 points. Goals are not judged on the probability that the student can achieve them, but simply on their presence or absence. Steps to achieve the goal are, however, judged based on whether they are viable steps in the process or unrelated to achieving the goal.

Question 39

- **0 points:** No plan or goal is unrelated to where the student would live after graduation.
- **1 point:** Some living goal with no steps to indicate how. to achieve that goal.
- **2 points:** Goal stated; plus one or two steps that would lead to achieving the goal.
- **3 points:** Goal stated, plus three or four steps that would lead to achieving the goal.

Question 40

- **0 points:** No plan or goal is unrelated to where the student would work after graduation.
- **1 point:** Some work or continuing education goal with no steps to indicate how to achieve that goal.
- **2 points:** Goal stated, plus one or two steps that would lead to achieving the goal.
- **3 points:** Goal stated, plus three or four steps that would lead to achieving the goal.

Question 41

- **0 points:** No plan or goal is unrelated to what type of transportation the student plans to use after graduation.
- **1 point:** Some transportation goals have no steps to indicate how to achieve those goals.
- **2 points:** Goal stated, plus one or two steps that would lead to achieving the goal.
- **3 points:** Goal stated, plus three or four steps that would lead to achieving the goal.

Section three: Psychological empowerment

This domain consists of 16 questions asking students to 'choose which best describes them. Answers that reflect psychological empowerment (e.g., beliefs in ability, perceptions of control, and expectations of success) are scored with a 1. Answers that do not reflect a psychologically empowered belief or attitude are scored with a 0. The total points available are 16, and higher scores indicate that students are more psychologically empowered.

The following provides a scoring key for this section:

42.	0 points: I usually do what my friends want...or 1 point: I tell my friends if they are doing something I don't want to do.
43.	0 points: I tell others when I have new or different ideas or opinions...or 1 point: I usually agree with other people's opinions or ideas.
44.	0 points: I usually agree with people when they tell me I can't do something...or 1 point: I tell people when I think I can do something that they tell me I can't.
45.	0 points: I tell people when they have hurt my feelings...or 1 point: I am afraid to tell people when they have hurt my feelings.
46.	0 points: I can make my own decisions...or 1 point: Other people make decisions for me.
47.	0 points: Trying hard at school doesn't do me much good...or 1 point: Trying hard at school will help me get a good job.
48.	0 points: I can get what I want by working hard...or 1 point: I need good luck to get what I want.

49.	0 points: It is no use to keep trying because that won't change things...or 1 point: I keep trying even after I get something wrong.
50.	0 points: I have the ability to do the job I want...or 1 point: I cannot do what it takes to do the job I want
51.	0 points: I don't know how to make friends...or 1 point: I know how to make friends.
52.	0 points: I am able to work with others...or 1 point: I cannot work well with others.
53.	0 points: I do not make good choices...or 1 point: I can make good choices.
54.	0 points: If I have the ability, I will be able to get the job I want...or 1 point: I probably will not get the job I want even if I have the ability.
55.	0 points: I will have a hard time making new friends...or 1 point: I probably will not get the job I want even if I have the ability
56.	0 points: I will be able to work with others if I need to...or 1 point: I will not be able to work with others if I need to.
57.	0 points: My choices will not be honored...or 1 point: I will be able to make choices that are important to me.

Section four: Self-realization

The final section of The Arc's Self-Determination Scale measures individual self-knowledge and self-awareness. Like the previous section, answers are scored with either 0 or 1 points based on the direction of the answer. That is, answers reflect a positive self-awareness and self.

The following provides a scoring key for this section:

Statement	Agree	Disagree
58. I do not feel ashamed of any of my emotions.	1	0
59. I feel free to be angry at people I care for.	1	0
60. I can show my feelings even when people might see me.	1	0
61. I can like people even if I don't agree with them.	1	0
62. I am afraid of doing things wrong.	0	1
63. It is better to be yourself than to be popular.	1	0
64. I am loved because I give love.	1	0
65. I know what I do best.	1	0
66. I don't accept my own limitations	0	1
67. I feel I cannot do many things.	0	1

Statement	Agree	Disagree
68. I like myself.	1	0
69. I am not an important person.	0	1
70. I know how to make up for my limitations.	1	0
71. Other people like me.	1	0
72. I am confident in my abilities.	1	0

Once raw scores are entered into the protocol, the next step in the scoring process is to convert these raw scores into percentile scores for comparison with the sample norms and to determine the percentage of positive responses.

Each table provides conversion information for one subdomain/domain area or the total score and provides percentile scores for the sample norms and the positive scores. Identify the raw score appropriate for each domain/subdomain or total and record the appropriate percentage scores on the protocol at Scoring Step 3.

It is rarely justifiable to interpret findings based on raw scores alone. There are a number of reasons for this, among them the fact that there are usually different “points” possible for any given subscale, and comparing between two subscales, one with a total of 12 points and another with a total of 18 points, is like comparing apples and oranges. Additionally, some topics are much more difficult than others, and a low raw score might be more the norm than high scores.

The Arc's Self-Determination Scale should be interpreted using the converted percentile scores described above. These include:

- (1) a percentage score for the sample norms and
- (2) individual percentage positive scores.

Scoring Step 4 and Scoring Step 5 provide graphs into which converted scores can be entered to ease the interpretation process. The graphs provide an easy way to view a student's overall progress.

Once raw scores are converted, and Scoring Step 3 is filled in, the teacher and student should fill in the graphs. For example, if the converted norm sample score for 1A (Autonomy, Independence: Self and Family care) was 70, this point should be identified in Scoring Step 4 under graph column “One A” and the boxes below the 70% mark filled.

Percentage scores for comparison with the sample norms indicate the percent of scores from the norm sample, which were equal to or less than the student's score. Thus, a 70 indicates that 70% of the scores from the sample norms were the same or lower than the student's score. The individual percent positive scores indicate the percentage positive for each domain.

The total points available for the Autonomy domain is 96. A student who scored 72 will have a 75% positive score conversion, where a score of 96 reflects 100% positive and 0 indicates 0% positive.