

**SCERTS** is a comprehensive, multidisciplinary approach to enhancing communication and social-emotional abilities of children with ASD. The acronym refers to the primary developmental dimensions targeted and stands for the models core domains.

**Social Communication** – This domain addresses goals to help a child increase competence, confidence, and active participation in social activities. Emphasis is placed on joint attention and symbol use.

**Emotional Regulation** – Focus on supporting a child’s ability to regulate emotional arousal.

**Transactional Support** – TS helps a child to learn within the social context of everyday activities. It includes supports that are interpersonal, for learning, families, and professionals.

**Social Partner Stage:** SCERTS divides assessment and intervention into three developmental stages including the social partner, language partner, and conversational partner. For each stage, there are detailed descriptions of domains, objectives, and criteria to be used during the assessment process. The following pages are abbreviated content for the **Social Partner Stage** to be used in a small group activity (Source pages 166-188, Volume I). The content will help the reader to begin to understand the SCERTS assessment process. It is not meant to be a stand-alone document and review of the SCERTS manuals is highly recommended.

**Small group activity:** First define how you will write objectives to be included in IFSPs/IEPs. Discuss how you will write statements that describe what the family wants for their child, using words they understand and using strategies that can take place in natural settings and can be carried out by the family.

Use the following charts to learn about the priorities that the SCERTS model believes to be the most important for young children diagnosed or suspected of having autism. Try to meld the family desires and situations with the model of intervention. Write examples of new wording for goals and objectives.

**SCERTS Social Partner – Components, Objectives, and Assessment Criteria (Abbreviated)- Social Communication**

<i>Component</i>	<i>Objective</i>	<i>Assessment Criteria</i>
Joint Attention (JA) JA 1 Engages in	Responds to bids for interaction	response is nonverbal or verbal, immediate (within 5 seconds), and contingent (maintains attention on the topic).
reciprocal interaction	Initiates bid for interaction	must be directed at another person by proximity, physical contact, or gaze
	Engages in brief reciprocal interaction	in two consecutive exchanges
	Engages in extended reciprocal interaction	four exchanges between child and partner
JA 2 Shares attention	Looks toward people	Spontaneous gaze without prompting
	Shifts gaze between people and objects	At least 3 times gaze, is directed to a person's face, smooth and immediate, 3- or 4-point gaze
	Follows contact point	Follows a person's index finger by directing gaze, at least 2 times, instruction "look" or "give me" can be used
	Follows distal point	Follows a person's point to object or picture 3-5 feet away, turns head and gazes at least 2 times
JA 3 Shares emotion	Shares negative emotion using facial expressions or vocalizations	Vocal or facial expression of distress or frustration accompanied by a gesture or change in posture and shares with another person by look, approach, or gesture
	Shares positive emotion using facial expressions or vocalizations	Pleasure or excitement accompanied by vocalization and shares by directing gaze toward a person
	Responds to changes in partner's expression of emotion	Change in child's behavior (e.g., pause, focus on face, drop toy, move away)
	Attunes to changes in partner's expression of emotion	Mirrors emotional tone (e.g., frowns if adult frowns)
JA 4 Shares intentions to regulate behavior of others	Requests desired food or objects	Child directs nonverbal or verbal signals (e.g., reaches) to get another person to give a desired object
	Protests/refuses undesired food or objects	(e.g., pushes away) to remove undesired thing
	Requests help or other actions	Directs nonverbal or verbal signals to get help carrying out an action
	Protests undesired actions or activities	(e.g., cries paired with gaze)

Source: Prizant, BM, Wetherby, AM, Rubin, E, Laurent, AC, & Rydell, PJ. (2006). The SCERTS Model: A Comprehensive Educational Approach for Children with Autism Spectrum Disorders, Volume I Assessment. Baltimore: Paul H. Brookes. P 166-188.

JA 5 Shares intentions for social interaction	Requests comfort	Child directs nonverbal or verbal signals to seek another's attention from distress, frustration, or fear/wariness
	Requests social game	Seeks attention to begin or continue
	Takes turns	At least 2 times, involves waiting for the partner to take turn
	Greets	(e.g., waves)
	Calls	(e.g., touch an arm followed by a reach, vocalize followed by point)
	Shows off	Attracts attention (e.g., making a face, going down a slide)
JA 6 Shares intentions for joint attention	Comments on object	Must be directed at another person, nonverbal or verbal signals to notice or look at an entity
	Comments on action or event	To get person's attention to notice an action or spectacle
JA 7 Persists and repairs communication breakdowns	Uses appropriate rate of communication for context	Directs signals (e.g., 1 time per minute during 1 to 1 interaction, 1 time per 3 minutes for small group, or 1 time every 5-10 minutes during large group interaction)
	Repeats communication to repair breakdowns	Child repeats all or part of communication signal to persist in achieving goal
	Modifies communication to repair	Shifts communication (e.g., different gesture, sound), changes quality of signal (e.g., loudness), or repeats to different person

<i>Component</i>	<i>Objective</i>	<i>Assessment Criteria</i>
<b>Symbol Use (SU)</b> SU 1 Learns by imitation of	Takes turns by repeating own actions or sounds	(e.g., child rolls ball, partner rolls, child rolls again)
familiar actions and sounds	Imitates familiar actions or sounds when elicited immediately after a model	Child accurately or closely approximates a familiar action after adult directs (e.g., "Do this") using at least 2 different behaviors
	Spontaneously imitates familiar actions or sounds immediately after a model	At least 2 different behaviors
	Spontaneously imitates familiar actions or sounds at a later time	At least 3 turns or at least a minute after the model, can be within the same activity or later
SU 2 Understands nonverbal cues in	Anticipates another person's familiar actions in familiar routines	Child anticipates another person's actions in at least 2 familiar routines hesitating, shifting body, requesting expected behavior (e.g., tickle game waits, watches, giggles)
familiar activities	Follows situational cues in familiar activities	Follows a simple instruction when partner uses at least 2 situational cues (e.g., partner says "wash hands" when standing at sink)
	Follows gestural cues other than a point	Follows a simple instruction with at least 2 different gestural cues other than a point (e.g., partner says "come here" with open arms)
	Follows a contact point	Follows a partner's touch or point by looking, at least 2 times
	Follows a distal point	3-5 feet away, can be accompanied by saying "look" or "give me"
	Responds to visual cues (photographs or pictures)	(e.g., partner says "get the ball" and shows picture of ball and then the child holds out hands ready to play)
	Responds to facial expression and intonation cues	At least 2 different facial expressions of intonation cues (e.g., partner says "no no don't touch" and stern intonation and then child puts object down)
SU 3 Uses familiar objects conventionally in play	Uses exploratory actions on objects	At least 5 different exploratory actions on objects (e.g., rolls, squeezes, drops, bangs, shakes)

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	Uses familiar objects in constructive play	At least 3 objects in combination to construct at least 2 products (e.g., stacks tower of blocks, puts puzzle together, lines up cars to make train)
	Uses familiar objects conventionally toward self	(e.g., drinks from cup, pours with pitcher, puts on shoes, combs hair, telephone to ear)
	Uses familiar object conventionally toward other	(e.g., hugs, feeds, or rolls in blanket a stuffed animal; rolls ball or car to a person)
SU 4 Uses gestures and nonverbal means to share intentions	Uses proximity	Moves or positions self near another person
	Uses facial expressions	Uses smile or frown to indicate pleasure or distress
	Uses simple motor actions	At least 3 simple motor actions to signal others (e.g., pull on leg, lead a person to the door)
	Uses conventional contact gestures	At least 3 of the following: give, push away, show, reach/touch, point/touch
	Uses conventional distal gestures	At least 3 of the following: wave, distal reach, distal point, clap, head shake, head nod
	Uses reenactment or symbolic distal gestures	At least 3 different, reenactment gesture is replication/representation of action or event used at a later time and symbolic gesture is a pantomime action like a word (e.g., a flying motion to indicate an airplane)
	Uses sequence of gestures or nonverbal means	Uses a sequence of 2 or more gestures or nonverbal means to signal
	Coordinates gestures and gaze	Gazes with at least 3 different gestures
SU5 Uses vocalizations to share intentions	Uses different vocalizations	At least 2, must include a vowel (not a whine, not raspberries)
	Uses a variety of consonant + vowel combinations	At least 5, as communicative signals (e.g., /b/ as in "bye, bye", /g/ as in "gone, gone")
	Uses words bound to routines	At least 3 different words, also called a protoword/ early word-like form (e.g., "uh oh" when dropping, "baba" for bottle)
	Coordinates vocalizations with gaze & gestures	Looking at people's faces or gaze shifts
SU 6 Understands a few familiar words	Responds to own name	At least 2 times, within 2 seconds
	Responds to a few words in familiar social games	At least 3 different words in familiar social games
	Responds to a few familiar person, body part, or object names	With at least 2 different person or object names (e.g., partner says "Where's mommy?" "Where are your feet?")
	Responds to a few frequently used phrases in familiar routines	Responds correctly to 2 simple instructions, at least 2 different phrases (e.g., "time for a bath" and child runs up stairs)

**SCERTS Social Partner – Components, Objectives, and Assessment Criteria (Abbreviated)- Emotional Regulation**

<i>Component</i>	<i>Objective</i>	<i>Assessment Criteria</i>
<b>Emotional Regulation (MR)</b> MR 1 Expresses range of emotions	Expresses happiness	(e.g., smile or laugh)
	Expresses sadness	(e.g., frown, pout, cry)
	Expresses anger	(e.g., whine, fuss, cry)
	Expresses fear	(e.g., wide eyes with tense lower eyelids)
MR 2 Responds to assistance offered by partners	Soothes when comforted by partners	Calms within 30 seconds when offered comfort, with exception of extreme dysregulation, fear, or violations of expectations
	Engages when alerted by partners	When partners introduce an alerting and organizing stimulus
	Responds to bids for interaction	Immediate and contingent
	Responds to changes in partners' expression of emotion	(e.g., pauses, focuses on face of partner)
	Attunes to changes in partners' expression of emotion	Mirrors emotional tone
	Makes choices when offered by partners	Signals to make choice when offered by partner at least 2 times
MR 3 Requests partners' assistance to regulate state	Shares negative emotion to seek comfort	Displays negative emotion and looks or approaches adult
	Shares positive emotion to seek interaction	Displays positive emotion and looks, approaches, or touches adult
	Requests help when frustrated	
	Protests when distressed	
MR 4 Recovers from extreme dysregulation with support from partners	Responds to partners' efforts to assist with recovery by moving away from activity	Child responds to partner's attempts by moving away from activity
	Responds to partners' use of behavioral strategies	Responds to use of behavioral strategies (i.e., simple motor actions or sensory-motor actions)
	Responds to partners' attempts to reengage in interaction or activity	Returns to a well-regulated state with help
	Decreases amount of time to recover from extreme dysregulation due to support from partners	Noticed over time
	Decreases intensity of dysregulated state due to support from partners	Noticed over time

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<i>Component</i>	<i>Objective</i>	<i>Assessment Criteria</i>
Self Regulation (SR) SR 1 Demonstrates	Notices people and things in the environment	Child looks, tracks eyes, and approaches
availability for learning and interacting	Shows interest in a variety of sensory and social experiences	Child looks, touches, moves
	Seeks and tolerates a variety of sensory experiences	Child tastes, rubs, climbs, etc.
	Initiates bids for interaction	Directed to another person by proximity, initiated by the child
	Engages in brief reciprocal interaction	At least 2 consecutive exchanges
	Engages in extended reciprocal interaction	At least 4 consecutive exchanges, at least 1 initiated by child
	Responds to sensory and social experiences with differentiated emotions	(e.g., shows happiness, excitement for fun activities)
SR 2 Uses behavioral strategies to regulate arousal	Uses behavioral strategies to regulate arousal level during solitary activities	Child increases or decreases activity level (e.g., sucking thumb or hide under pillows to calm, repeating sounds or jumping to arouse)
level during familiar activities	Uses behavioral strategies to regulate arousal level during social interactions	Child uses simple motor or sensory motor strategies during social interactions (e.g., rubbing a soft blanket, mouthing, approaching another person to play of movement game)
	Uses behavioral strategies modeled by partners to regulate arousal	(e.g., squeezing hands, jumping)
	Uses behavioral strategies to engage productively in an extended activity	Engages for at least 10-15 minutes and uses strategies to regulate own arousal (e.g., fidget toy)
SR 3 Regulates emotion during new and changing situations	Anticipates another person's actions in familiar routines	Anticipates another person's actions in at least 2 different familiar routines (e.g., tickle game) by hesitating, shifting body orientation, or requesting the expected behavior

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	Participates in new and changing situations	Does more than tolerate new situations or unexpected features, unpredictable events, or terminated activities
	Uses behavioral strategies to regulate arousal level in new & changing situations	Regulates activity level and emotional response in new or changing situations
	Uses behavioral strategies to regulate arousal during transitions	Uses strategies in response to transitions between activities
SR 4 Recovers from extreme dysregulation by self	Removes self from over-stimulating or undesired activity	Child moves away
	Uses behavioral strategies to recover from extreme dysregulation	Uses simple motor or sensory motor strategies to recover
	Reengages in interaction or activity after recovery from extreme dysregulation	Brings self back to an interaction after recovery
	Decrease amount of time to recover from extreme dysregulation	Returns to or recovers more quickly over time
	Decreases intensity of dysregulated state	Emotional response and changes in state of arousal during episodes decrease over time

**SCERTS Social Partner – Components, Objectives, and Assessment Criteria (Abbreviated) - Transactional Support**

<i>Component</i>	<i>Objective</i>
Interpersonal Support (IS) IS 1 Partner is responsive to child	Follows child's focus of attention
	Attunes to child's emotion and pace
	Responds appropriately to child's signals to foster a sense of communicative competence
	Recognizes and supports child's behavioral strategies to regulate arousal
	Recognizes signs of dysregulation and offers support
	Imitates child
	Offers breaks from interaction or activity as needed
	Facilitates reengagement in interactions and activities following breaks
IS 2 Partner fosters initiation	Offers choices nonverbally and verbally
	Waits for and encourages initiations
	Provides a balance of initiated and respondent turns
IS 3 Partner respects child's independence	Allows child to initiate and terminate activities
	Allows child to take breaks to move about as needed
	Provides time for child to solve problems or complete activities at own pace
	Interprets problem behavior as communicative and /or regulatory
IS 4 Partner sets stage for engagement	Honors protests, rejections, or refusals when appropriate
	Gets down on child's level when communicating
	Secures child's attention before communicating
	Uses appropriate proximity and nonverbal behavior to encourage interaction
	Uses appropriate words and intonation to support optimal arousal level and engagement

IS 5 Partner provides developmental support	Encourages imitation
	Encourages interaction with peers
	Attempts to repair breakdowns verbally and nonverbally
	Provides guidance and feedback as needed for success in activities
	Expands on child's play and nonverbal communication
IS 6 Partner adjusts language input	Uses nonverbal cues to support understanding
	Adjusts complexity of language input to child's developmental level
	Adjusts quality of language input to child's arousal level
IS 7 Partner models appropriate behaviors	Models appropriate nonverbal communication and emotional expressions
	Models a range of communication functions - behavioral regulation, social interaction, and joint attention
	Models appropriate play
	Models appropriate behavior when child uses inappropriate behavior
	Models "child-perspective" language

<i>Component</i>	<i>Objective</i>
Learning Support (LS) LS 1 Partner structures activity for active participation	Defines clear beginning and ending to activity
	Creates turn-taking opportunities and leaves spaces for child to fill in
	Provides predictable sequence to activity
	Offers repeated learning opportunities
LS 2 Partner uses augmentative communication (AC) to foster development	Offers varied learning opportunities
	Uses AC support to enhance child's understanding of language and expressive language
	Uses AC support to enhance child's understanding of language and behavior
	Uses AC support to enhance child's expression and understanding of emotion
LS 3 Partner uses visual and organizational support	Uses AC support to enhance child's emotional regulation
	Uses support to define steps within a task
	Uses support to define steps and time for completion of activities
	Uses visual support to enhance smooth transitions between activities
	Uses support to organize segments of time across the day
	Uses visual support to enhance attention in group activities
LS 4 Partner modifies goals, activities, and learning environment	Uses visual support to foster active involvement in group activities
	Adjusts social complexity to support organizational and interaction
	Adjusts task difficulty for child success
	Modifies sensory properties of learning environment
	Arranges learning environment to enhance attention
	Arranges learning environment to promote child initiation
	Designs and modifies activities to be developmentally appropriate
	Infuses motivating materials and topics in activities
Provides activities to promote initiation and extended interaction	
Alternated between movement and sedentary activities as needed	
	"Ups the ante" or increases expectations appropriately

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