

# Modified Checklist for Autism in Toddlers (M-CHAT)\*

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\*The full text may be obtained through the Journal of Autism and Developmental Disorders.

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**PLEASE NOTE: The M-CHAT was not designed to be scored by the person taking it. In the validation sample, the authors of the M-CHAT scored all checklists. If parents are concerned, they should contact their child's physician .**

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## Abstract

*Autism, a severe disorder of development, is difficult to detect in very young children. However, children who receive early intervention have improved long-term prognoses. The Modified – Checklist for Autism in Toddlers (M-CHAT), consisting of 23 yes/no items, was used to screen 1076 children. Thirty of 44 children given a diagnostic/developmental evaluation were diagnosed with a disorder on the autism spectrum. Nine items pertaining to social relatedness and communication were found to have the best discriminability between children diagnosed with and without autism/PDD. Cutoff scores were created for the best items and the total checklist. Results indicate that the M-CHAT is a promising instrument for the early detection of autism.*

## Background

The M-CHAT is an expanded American version of the original CHAT from the U.K. The M-CHAT has 23 questions using the original nine from the CHAT as its basis. Its goal is to improve the sensitivity of the CHAT and position it better for an American audience.

The M-CHAT has been steadily expanding its radius of usage in the state of Connecticut and surrounding New England states. Its authors are still collecting data on the initial study, awaiting final outcomes for sensitivity and specificity after the subjects return for their 3.5 year well-child visit by 2003. The authors have applied for funding of an expanded study on 33,000 children. The M-CHAT tests for autism spectrum disorders against normally developing children.

## M-CHAT Scoring Instructions

A child fails the checklist when 2 or more critical items are failed OR when any three items are failed. Yes/no answers convert to pass/fail responses. Below are listed the failed responses for each item on the M-CHAT. Bold capitalized items are CRITICAL items.

Not all children who fail the checklist will meet criteria for a diagnosis on the autism spectrum. However, children who fail the checklist should be evaluated in more depth by the physician or referred for a developmental evaluation with a specialist.

1. No	6. No	11. Yes	16. No	21. No
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2. <b>NO</b>	7. <b>NO</b>	12. No	17. No	22. Yes
3. No	8. No	13. <b>NO</b>	18. Yes	23. No
4. No	9. <b>NO</b>	14. <b>NO</b>	19. No	
5. No	10. No	15. <b>NO</b>	20. Yes	

## M-CHAT

Please fill out the following about how your child usually is. Please try to answer every question. If the behavior is rare (e.g., you've seen it once or twice), please answer as if the child does not do it.

1. Does your child enjoy being swung, bounced on your knee, etc.? Yes No
2. Does your child take an interest in other children? Yes No
3. Does your child like climbing on things, such as up stairs? Yes No
4. Does your child enjoy playing peek-a-boo/hide-and-seek? Yes No
5. Does your child ever pretend, for example, to talk on the phone or take care of a doll or pretend other things? Yes No
6. Does your child ever use his/her index finger to point, to ask for something? Yes No
7. Does your child ever use his/her index finger to point, to indicate interest in something? Yes No
8. Can your child play properly with small toys (e.g. cars or blocks) without just mouthing, fiddling, or dropping them? Yes No
9. Does your child ever bring objects over to you (parent) to show you something? Yes No
10. Does your child look you in the eye for more than a second or two? Yes No
11. Does your child ever seem oversensitive to noise? (e.g., plugging ears) Yes No
12. Does your child smile in response to your face or your smile? Yes No
13. Does your child imitate you? (e.g., you make a face-will your child imitate it?) Yes No
14. Does your child respond to his/her name when you call? Yes No
15. If you point at a toy across the room, does your child look at it? Yes No
16. Does your child walk? Yes No
17. Does your child look at things you are looking at? Yes No
18. Does your child make unusual finger movements near his/her face? Yes No
19. Does your child try to attract your attention to his/her own activity? Yes No
20. Have you ever wondered if your child is deaf? Yes No
21. Does your child understand what people say? Yes No
22. Does your child sometimes stare at nothing or wander with no purpose? Yes No
23. Does your child look at your face to check your reaction when faced with something unfamiliar? Yes No