

ASQ:SE and SEAM: A perfect pair

When it comes to screening the social-emotional aspects of development, the **Ages & Stages Questionnaires®: Social-Emotional (ASQ:SE)** (<http://bit.ly/ProdASQSE-2>) is the best choice for kids in those critically important first years of life. The screener helps early childhood professionals identify children who are at risk for social or emotional problems and who would benefit from further assessment and possibly early intervention.

And now there's a new tool that can be used independently or as a complement to the ASQ:SE. It's called the **Social-Emotional Assessment/Evaluation Measure, or SEAM™** (<http://bit.ly/ChooseSEAM>).

Learn how this new tool can add more value to your screening program.

Developed by the ASQ author group, SEAM is a user-friendly, two-part assessment. First it gathers in-depth information about a child's social-emotional skills that can be used to identify strengths and potential difficulties and to help set goals around particular areas of focus or concern. Then, the Family Profile portion assesses the skill level of parents and caregivers for providing a nurturing home environment.

"We saw a need for a tool that even providers and parents without a mental health background could use to enhance children's social and emotional competence," said Jane Squires, Ph.D., University of Oregon, one of the SEAM developers. "It's easy to use and allows providers and families to work together to promote healthy interactions, improved communication, and better self-regulation."

Who should use SEAM?

While ASQ:SE is a highly effective quantitative tool for pinpointing kids at risk for social or emotional difficulties, SEAM paints a more qualitative picture and helps users of all types plan the steps needed to address any real or potential concerns.

And unlike ASQ:SE, which can be used to screen any young child and is initially completed by the parent or primary caregiver, SEAM is specifically designed to be used by programs that interact with children on an ongoing basis and need an assessment and curriculum guide for improving social-emotional skills. Home visiting, early intervention, Head Start, and early education programs can use SEAM with children 2 to 66 months of age.

"If you're already using ASQ:SE, you should incorporate SEAM as part of a 'linked system,'" explains Dr. Squires. "Screening with ASQ:SE is the first step to determining whether a child's social-emotional behaviors are on target. Then SEAM can follow up to further identify areas of family strength and concern and to help select goals for



When parental input on ASQ:SE suggests concerns about, for instance, bedtime routines, SEAM can be used to develop a more complex picture of the child and family.

intervention activities.”

When included as a supplement to ASQ:SE, SEAM is not needed for all children, but is most useful for kids with borderline or slightly elevated ASQ:SE scores, or with a few noted areas of concern.

Incorporating SEAM into your program

If you’re an ASQ:SE user, you may find SEAM to be an ideal follow-up tool in a variety of scenarios:

- For children whose ASQ:SE score is near the cutoff point. These scores indicate the potential for social-emotional or behavioral delays or difficulties, and SEAM can be used as a preventive assessment to target improvement in particular areas.
- As a tool for parents/providers who don’t have evaluation and intervention resources in their community. If ASQ:SE identified particular challenges, but the parent or caregiver doesn’t have access to the appropriate intervention sources, SEAM can be used to develop appropriate intervention activities.
- For children with developmental delays and disabilities. In these cases ASQ:SE can help identify particular areas of concern that caregivers have about their child’s behavior and then SEAM results can be used to develop intervention activities for these children and caregivers.

A home visiting program that works with parents and their young children may find that adding the SEAM helps to address parents’ concerns about children’s behavior and select topics for instruction in future home visits. For example, a regional home visiting program uses ASQ:SE to regularly screen children’s social-emotional development. If a child scores above the ASQ:SE cut-off, the program refers to a local mental health agency for a complete evaluation. But, if a child scores close to the ASQ:SE cut-off or if a parent indicates concern about a particular behavior, the program uses SEAM for a more in-depth look at the child’s social-emotional development.

SEAM is unique in that it serves both as a measure of social-emotional competence, and as a foundation for an activity-based system that links goals, intervention, and evaluation.

ASQ:SE and SEAM together

Consider a situation where a mother has concern about her 25-month old daughter’s bedtime routines. On the 24-month ASQ:SE interval, the mother marked Rarely or Never for several items related to sleeping and calming down.

To learn more, the home visitor completes the SEAM Toddler form during the next home visit. The child’s mother gives input about the various skills on the form, and **Item 10.3 Toddler falls and remains asleep with few problems.** and **Item 3.3 Toddler can calm self when upset.** are answered as Not Yet and marked as concerns. The home visitor also helps the mother complete the Family Profile form, in which the mother gives information about how she and her husband respond to their daughter’s needs and their daily routines.

The home visitor reviews all the information gathered with SEAM to develop a more complete picture of the child and family. Working with the mother, the home visitor decides to focus the next several home visits on sharing strategies for establishing a consistent bedtime routine and helping the toddler self-soothe. In between visits, the mother tries different strategies and monitors her daughter’s responses to determine what works best.

After a couple months, the home visitor and mother complete the SEAM and Family Profile again and are pleased to see that the behaviors have improved.

“By creating in parents an awareness of the types of activities that can support and strengthen their child’s behavioral skills, we are not only helping develop those skills, but we’re helping parents become more competent and confident as they interact with their young children,” says Misti Waddell, M.S., also part of the development team for the SEAM.

Following up after SEAM

When using SEAM, providers should follow the tool’s recommended post-assessment steps: discussing results with parents, identifying areas of concern or focus, setting goals, and planning interventions and next steps.

When using ASQ:SE and SEAM together as a linked system, providers should continue to rely on ASQ:SE as the quantitative measure of social-emotional success. Particularly when SEAM was used as a follow-up to address borderline cutoff scores on ASQ:SE, it’s important to continue rescreening with ASQ:SE at an interval that makes sense depending on available community resources and the developmental-behavioral profile of the child.

Want to know more? Download a [SEAM sample form](http://bit.ly/SEAMForm) (<http://bit.ly/SEAMForm>).

Ready to get started? Order your copy of [SEAM](http://bit.ly/SEAMProd) (<http://bit.ly/SEAMProd>).

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