

## Supports Intensity Scale (SIS®) Frequently Asked Questions

### 1. **What does the SIS® determine?**

The SIS® is a validated assessment tool for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities, specifically designed to measure the pattern and intensity of supports needed by people with disabilities to be successful in areas of life, similar to their peers without disabilities in the community.

### 2. **I was recently called by Ascend about an interview. Who is Ascend?**

Ascend is the agency with which the state has a contract to complete the SIS® assessments across the state. This was done to assure there is no conflict of interest between the interviewers and your Support Coordinator. Ascend interviewers are all endorsed by the American Association on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (AAIDD), the organization that developed the SIS®, for administering both the adult and children's SIS®.

### 3. **What do the scores and the percentages listed on the SIS® report mean?**

Each section of the SIS® is scored to reflect a person's current support needs. The higher the scores on the chart, the higher the support needs. The same with the percentiles - the higher the percentile from 0% to 100%, the more support a person needs.

### 4. **I keep hearing about levels and tiers; what are these?**

Funding for some DD waiver services is set based on how much support a person needs. This information is gathered through the SIS® and additional questions asked at the interview. Support needs are then categorized into seven support needs levels and funding tiers (with 1 being low support needs and higher numbers for significant support needs).

### 5. **When will I know my level and tier?**

Your Support Coordinator should provide this information to you and your supporters once it is posted in the Waiver Management System (WaMS). Levels and tiers are updated in WaMS approximately every 2 weeks. If you have not been notified of the level and tier a month or more after the interview you are welcome to contact your support coordinator for this information.

### 6. **I just had my SIS® interview and received my interview report. What should I do with it?**

Your report is designed to assist you and your supporters in the DD waiver service planning process. Please bring the report to your next planning meeting as your person-centered Individual Support Plan will include information gathered from the SIS® interview.

### 7. **The individual ratings on the SIS® do not agree with what I said in the interview.**

SIS® interviewers are given extensive training on how to score the SIS®. The scores in the SIS® are based on the interviewer's assignment of the correct rating based on the information you, your family, and/or your paid service providers provided to the interviewer.

### 8. **Why wouldn't the interviewer include the historical information I shared about my son/daughter?**

While information about a person's whole life is important, the intent of the SIS® is to capture information regarding the current support needs of your son/daughter over the past 6 months. The SIS® is a snapshot in time. Feel free to bring historical information to the person-centered Individual Support Plan (ISP) meeting.

9. **My son/daughter has made a lot of progress with the help of his/her current DD waiver provider. I am concerned that this support won't be counted during his/her next SIS® interview.**

All supports currently provided are considered during the SIS® assessment. The SIS® interviewer will ask questions about activities and tasks your son or daughter can complete on his/her own and with help.

10. **The interviewer would not count the supports we reported for each item on the SIS®. She said the support had already been counted by another item. This is not fair and does not reflect his/her complete support needs.**

Generally, the same activity is not rated in more than one item. The SIS® is designed to be conducted by interviewers endorsed by AAIDD. SIS® endorsed interviewers follow required steps for assigning ratings that may not always be apparent to respondents.

11. **Is the SIS® optional?**

No. The SIS® is required for anyone who receives DD waiver services. Adult SIS® assessments are required every 3 years. The Children's SIS® is required every 2 years.

12. **If I speak for myself do I need respondents during my SIS® interview?**

Your participation is valued and critical in creating an accurate picture of your support needs. The observations of those who provide you with supports, such as family members or paid service providers, are equally important to create a whole picture of the type, duration, and frequency of your support needs.