

**ИЗСЛЕДОВАТЕЛСКИ ПРОЦЕС И ИНСТРУМЕНТИ В ИЗУЧАВАНЕТО
НА ОТНОШЕНИЯТА МЕЖДУ ЗДРАВО ДЕТЕ И НЕГОВИТЕ /
НЕЙНИТЕ СИБЛИНГИ С УВРЕЖДЕНИЯ В РАЗВИТИЕТО**

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***Резюме:** Да се изберат най-добрите инструменти за събиране на информация за семейните отношения е сериозно научно предизвикателство. Тук се представят *The Sibling Inventory of Behavior*, *The Matson Evaluation of Social Skills with Youngsters (MESSY)*, *Family Adaptability and Cohesion Evaluation Scale*, *Adaptive Behavior Assessment System, 2 nd Edition (ABAS-II)* и изследователската процедура, която осигурява коректни резултати. Всички представени изследователски инструменти имат добри психометрични характеристики.*

***Ключови думи:** Изследователски инструменти, семейни отношения, отношения между деца, изследователската процедура*

**RESEARCH PROCESS AND INSTRUMENTS IN STUDYING
RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN A HEALTHY CHILD AND HIS/HER
DEVELOPMENTALLY DISABLED SIBLING**

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***Abstract:** It is a serious scientific challenge to select best instruments for gathering information about family relations. Here are presented *The Sibling**

Inventory of Behavior, The Matson Evaluation of Social Skills with Youngsters (MESSY), Family Adaptability and Cohesion Evaluation Scale, Adaptive Behavior Assessment System, Second Edition (ABAS-II) and the research procedure that ensures correct results. All of the presented research instruments have good psychometric characteristics.

Key words: *Research instruments, family relations, children's relationships, research procedure*

Research Procedure

The research families were identified through “Krembo Wings”, which is a youth movement that is leading social change for children with and without special needs. It is the first and only such movement in Israel and in the world. The movement operates more than 64 branches in Israel, and more than 1500 participants aged 7-22 and more than 3,600 mentors aged 12-18 from general education are found in it. In the first stage, contact was created with the mothers of the participants, according to a list that was obtained from the movement (first only with participants with autism), so as to examine whether they are willing to participate in the research. In these conversations, there was high willingness of more than 150 mothers who consented to participate in the research, and 100 of them consented to receive the questionnaires by mail. However, in the end only two mothers and their healthy children completely filled out the questionnaires. A similar process was undertaken with a list open to all types of disabilities of the participants, when following it only eight filled out the questionnaires in actuality. In the next stage, a computerized station was established in a hotel where the families stayed during a vacation hosted by “Krembo Wings” in the north. This process resulted in the participation of 28 mothers and their healthy children. An

additional four mothers and their children were identified through personal acquaintance of the Krembo manager. In addition to the mothers who participated in the research, three mothers began to fill out the questionnaires but stopped in the middle, apparently because of its length. The mothers in the families of healthy children were identified through friends and acquaintances on Facebook. With the exception of eight manual questionnaires that the mothers filled out during the annual family vacation organized by the “Krembo Wings” movement in the community of Hispin in the north of the country, all the rest of the questionnaires were filled out on the Internet on a computer. When the questionnaire was filled out manually, the mothers first filled out a form of informed consent, in which they confirmed their participation in the research study before they began to fill out the questionnaires. In the computerized questionnaire, they read the informed consent form and confirmed their participation by clicking. In the two groups, the filling out of the questionnaire took about 30 minutes for the mothers and about 5-7 minutes for the healthy children (who only filled out the questionnaire on social skills).

Research Instruments

The research study used the following research questionnaires:

The Sibling Inventory of Behavior

The Sibling Inventory of Behavior (Schaefer & Edgerton, 1981) was translated into Hebrew by Yechezkel (2014). The questionnaire includes 32 statements (for instance: “he teaches (the child) new skills”, “he tattles on his siblings”), which address the six main dimensions: companionship (6 statements), empathy (6 statements), learning (4 statements), rivalry (7 statements), aggression (5 statements), and avoidance (5 statements). It is important to note that in the research studies described above use was made of an earlier version of this questionnaire, which included only four dimensions, one of which was kindness. In

the present research study, this dimension was changed and is now called companionship, and therefore this is the concept used in the continuation of the work. In this questionnaire, the parent is asked to rank on a Likert scale of five levels (from 1, never, to 5, always) the frequency at which the behavior occurs between the siblings. For the original version in English the internal reliability of Cronbach's alpha was measured, ranging from .67 to .88 in the different indices (Schaefer & Edgerton, 1981). For the Hebrew version, an internal reliability according to Cronbach's alpha was measured from .77 to .91 in the different indices (Yechezkeli, 2014). In the present research study, for this questionnaire in the full sample the internal reliability according to Cronbach's alpha was found as .80 for companionship, .62 for empathy, .84 for learning, .80 for rivalry, .86 for aggression, and .87 for avoidance. In the families of children with special needs, the internal reliability according to Cronbach's alpha was found as .73 for companionship, .61 for empathy, .82 for learning, .74 for rivalry, .79 for aggression, and .84 for avoidance. In the families of healthy children, the internal reliability according to Cronbach's alpha was found as .88 for companionship, .66 for empathy, .86 for learning, .81 for rivalry, .91 for aggression, and .90 for avoidance.

The Matson Evaluation of Social Skills with Youngsters (MESSY)

This questionnaire was authored by Matson, Rotatori, and Helsel (1983) and translated into Hebrew by an English speaker and then translated back into English by the researcher, to compare the translation to the original questionnaire. The questionnaire was intended to examine the social skills of children aged 4-18 through observations of their adaptive and non-adaptive behaviors. The questionnaire includes 62 items, and the healthy child is asked to rank them on a Likert scale of 1 (not at all) to 5 (very greatly) according to the extent to which the sentence describes him correctly. For each one of the scales – adaptive behaviors (for example, “I help a friend who is in distress”) and non-adaptive behaviors (for example, “I am angry or jealous when somebody else succeeds”), a score was

calculated through the sum of the rankings that were given to the items. This questionnaire was found to have high internal reliability according to Cronbach's alpha and high re-test reliability (Matson et al., 1983). In the present research study, for the scale of adaptive behaviors the internal reliability according to Cronbach's alpha was found to be .75 and for non-adaptive social skills it was .73. In families of children with special needs, for the scale of adaptive behaviors the internal reliability according to Cronbach's alpha was found to be .76 and for non-adaptive skills it was .75. In families of healthy children, for the scale of adaptive behaviors the internal reliability according to Cronbach's alpha was found to be .74 and for non-adaptive social skills .75.

Family Adaptability and Cohesion Evaluation Scale

The questionnaire was authored by Olson et al. (1979) and translated into Hebrew by Teichman and Navon (1990). The questionnaire includes 20 items (for instance, "the family members seek help from one another") and examines two dimensions – family cohesion and adjustment to changes. For each one of the items, the parents were asked to rank on a Likert scale of five levels from 1 (almost never) to 5 (almost always) the extent to which the sentence correctly describes their family. The research study of Findler (2009) found for the scale of family cohesion an internal reliability according to Cronbach's alpha of .78 and for the index of adjustment to changes 0.72. In the present research study, in the full sample for the scale of family cohesion an internal reliability according to Cronbach's alpha of .75 was found and for the index of adjustment to changes a Cronbach's alpha of .62. In families of children with special needs, for the scale of family cohesion the internal reliability of Cronbach's alpha is .70 and for the index of adjustment to changes the Cronbach's alpha is .68. In families of healthy children, for the scale of family cohesion the internal reliability of Cronbach's alpha was found to be .79 and for the index of adjustment to changes the Cronbach's alpha is .46.

Adaptive Behavior Assessment System, Second Edition (ABAS-II)

This questionnaire is taken from the system for the assessment of adaptive behavior that was built by Harrison and Oakland (2003), so as to measure everyday practices and skills necessary to meet the requirements of the environment. The ABAS-II provides a comprehensive assessment, which is based on national norms and is according to ages. The system was translated into Hebrew, was validated in Israel in collaboration with the Ministry of Welfare and the social services, and provides information about the adjustment skills for individuals from birth to the age of 21. The scale used in the present research study is that of communication skills and it included 24 items (for instance, "S/he listens during the family conversation as necessary"). For each one of the items in the questionnaire, the mothers were asked to rank on a Likert scale the frequency that their child with special needs expresses what is said in the item, from never to always. The internal reliability according to Cronbach's alpha of this sub-scale in the research of Harrison and Oakland (2003) was .91. In the present research study, for the questionnaire the internal reliability according to Cronbach's alpha was found to be .97 in the full sample, when in the families of children with special needs it was .96 and in the families of healthy children .89.

The objective of the present research study was to examine the correlation between the quality of the relations existing between the healthy child and his sibling who suffers from a developmental disorder and his social skills in comparison to that in the relation between normative siblings.

Good psychometrics of these research instruments confirm that they are reliable tools for gathering information.

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