



CIS-S Survey Information for Parents

What is the CIS-S survey?

The CIS-S stands for Common Instrument Suite-Student. It is a youth self-report survey developed by Dr. Gil Noam at PEAR: Partnerships in Education and Resilience and out-of-school time (OST) practitioners and educators from major organizations like Girls Inc. and 4-H. The purpose of the survey is to better understand how informal STEM programming impacts students' perceptions/attitudes towards STEM. The CIS-S typically takes between 5 and 20 minutes to complete depending on the number of scales included in the survey and the age of youth. Students may complete the survey electronically or on paper.

Who is Dr. Gil Noam?

Dr. Noam is an internationally recognized developmental psychologist, an Associate Professor at Harvard Medical School and McLean Hospital, and trains Child and Adolescent Psychiatric Residents at Mass General Hospital. He is an associate professor at Harvard Medical School focusing on prevention and resilience and leads the Institute for the Study of Resilience in Youth (ISRY) at McLean Hospital. He served as the director of the Risk and Prevention Program and is the founder of the RALLY Prevention Program, a Boston-based intervention that bridges social and academic support in school, afterschool, and community settings.

What is PEAR?

Partnerships in Education and Resilience (PEAR) has contributed to the social-emotional and STEM education fields for the past 20 years. The organization was founded in 1999 by Dr. Gil Noam while he was a professor at Harvard Graduate School of Education (HGSE) and Harvard Medical School's psychiatric teaching hospital, McLean Hospital where it was called the Program in Afterschool, Education, and Research (PAER). In 2007, PEAR moved from its primary location at HGSE to McLean Hospital and became The PEAR Institute. In the fall of 2020, PEAR spun off from McLean Hospital and became a Benefit Corporation.

PEAR has developed three widely used tools to quantify STEM outcomes: a self-report survey for students called the Common Instrument Suite-Student (CIS-S), a self-report survey for educators called the Common Instrument Suite-Educator (CIS-E), and a program quality observation tool called Dimensions of Success (DoS). Together, these tools form the PEAR STEM Toolkit.

How will this help my child?

At PEAR, we value the use of data to support afterschool and school-based STEM programs in providing positive STEM experiences to all youth. In a national study conducted amongst state afterschool networks (Allen et al., 2019), PEAR found that higher quality programming was associated with more growth among youth – underscoring the necessity of investing in quality. Data collected using PEAR's STEM tools provides a common language around STEM outcomes to guide policy decisions, professional development, and continuous improvement efforts so that programs can strengthen the quality of services provided to youth and promote positive youth outcomes.



When I give my permission for my child to take the CIS-S, what exactly am I giving my consent to?

Designated staff from the program collecting the survey data will have access to your child’s survey results. This information can help staff evaluate the effectiveness of their program and improve the program for children who participate in the future. The program may decide to collect children’s names as part of the survey for purposes such as ensuring every eligible child has taken the survey, or whether a child has taken the survey over multiple program cycles. Occasionally, PEAR will use data from our program partners for research and educational work. Your child’s name and identifying information will never be used as part of this research and the program may opt out of being included in research studies.

What does the CIS-S measure?

Programs and schools may choose from a set of standard survey versions based on outcomes of interest and grade-level recommendations, but the full suite looks at youth interest in STEM, STEM career-related interest and knowledge, and 21st-Century Skills (see table below).

Outcome Measures for the CIS-S		
STEM-Related Attitudes	STEM Engagement	Interest and excitement in participating in STEM and STEM activities
	STEM Identity	Understanding of oneself as a “STEM person”
	STEM Career Interest	Motivation to pursue a career in STEM
	STEM Career Knowledge	Knowledge of STEM-related careers and the steps to attain them
	STEM Activity Participation	Pursuit of STEM activities in one’s everyday life
21st-Century Skills / Social-Emotional Learning (SEL)	Relationships with Adults	Positive connections and attitudes toward interactions with adults
	Relationships with Peers	Positive and supportive social connections with friends and classmates
	Perseverance	Persistence in work and problem-solving despite obstacles
	Critical Thinking	Examination of information, exploration of ideas, and independent thought