The Center for Epidemiological Studies Depression Scale for Children (CES-DC) is a 20-item self-report depression inventory with possible scores ranging from 0 to 60. Each response to an item is scored as follows:

0 = “Not At All”
1 = “A Little”
2 = “Some”
3 = “A Lot”

However, items 4, 8, 12, and 16 are phrased positively, and thus are scored in the opposite order:

3 = “Not At All”
2 = “A Little”
1 = “Some”
0 = “A Lot”

Higher CES-DC scores indicate increasing levels of depression. Weissman et al. (1980), the developers of the CES-DC, have used the cutoff score of 15 as being suggestive of depressive symptoms in children and adolescents. That is, scores over 15 can be indicative of significant levels of depressive symptoms.

Remember that screening for depression can be complex and is only an initial step. Further evaluation is required for children and adolescents identified through a screening process. Further evaluation is also warranted for children or adolescents who exhibit depressive symptoms but who do not screen positive.

See also
Tool for Families: Symptoms of Depression in Adolescents, p. 126.
Tool for Families: Common Signs of Depression in Children and Adolescents, p. 147.

REFERENCES

Center for Epidemiological Studies
Depression Scale for Children (CES-DC)

INSTRUCTIONS
Below is a list of the ways you might have felt or acted. Please check how much you have felt this way during the past week.

DURING THE PAST WEEK
1. I was bothered by things that usually don’t bother me. Not At All A Little Some A Lot
2. I did not feel like eating, I wasn’t very hungry. Not At All A Little Some A Lot
3. I wasn’t able to feel happy, even when my family or friends tried to help me feel better. Not At All A Little Some A Lot
4. I felt like I was just as good as other kids. Not At All A Little Some A Lot
5. I felt like I couldn’t pay attention to what I was doing. Not At All A Little Some A Lot
6. I felt down and unhappy. Not At All A Little Some A Lot
7. I felt like I was too tired to do things. Not At All A Little Some A Lot
8. I felt like something good was going to happen. Not At All A Little Some A Lot
9. I felt like things I did before didn’t work out right. Not At All A Little Some A Lot
10. I felt scared. Not At All A Little Some A Lot
11. I didn’t sleep as well as I usually sleep. Not At All A Little Some A Lot
12. I was happy. Not At All A Little Some A Lot
13. I was more quiet than usual. Not At All A Little Some A Lot
14. I felt lonely, like I didn’t have any friends. Not At All A Little Some A Lot
15. I felt like kids I know were not friendly or that they didn’t want to be with me. Not At All A Little Some A Lot
16. I had a good time. Not At All A Little Some A Lot
17. I felt like crying. Not At All A Little Some A Lot
18. I felt sad. Not At All A Little Some A Lot
19. I felt people didn’t like me. Not At All A Little Some A Lot
20. It was hard to get started doing things. Not At All A Little Some A Lot

Number ____________________
Score ____________________

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