



Devereux Student Strengths Assessment (DESSA) Grades K-8

Scales and Associated Items

Self-Awareness: A child's realistic understanding of their strengths and limitations and consistent desire for self-improvement.

- 41. make accurate statements about events in their life?
- 49. teach another person to do something?
- 57. ask questions to clarify what they did not understand?
- 58. show an awareness of their personal strengths?
- 59. ask somebody for feedback?
- 62. describe how they were feeling?
- 63. give an opinion when asked?

Self-Management: A child's success in controlling their emotions and behaviors, to complete a task or succeed in a new or challenging situation.

- 43. pay attention?
- 44. wait for their turn?
- 46. focus on a task despite a problem or distraction?
- 48. act comfortable in a new situation?
- 51. perform the steps of a task in order?
- 53. think before they acted?
- 54. pass up something they wanted, or do something they did not like, to get something better in the future?
- 56. accept another choice when their first choice was unavailable?
- 60. stay calm when faced with a challenge?
- 67. adjust well to changes in plans?
- 72. adjust well when going from one setting to another?

Social-Awareness: A child's capacity to interact with others in a way that shows respect for their ideas and behaviors, recognizes their impact on them, and uses cooperation and tolerance in social situations.

- 8. cope well with insults and mean comments?
- 11. get along with different types of people?
- 17. act respectfully in a game or competition?
- 19. respect another person's opinion?
- 22. contribute to group efforts?
- 25. resolve a disagreement?
- 27. share with others?
- 31. cooperate with peers or siblings?
- 34. forgive somebody who hurt or upset them?

Relationship Skills: A child's consistent performance of socially acceptable actions that promote and maintain positive connections with others.

- 38. compliment or congratulate somebody?
- 40. do something nice for somebody?
- 45. show appreciation of others?
- 47. greet a person in a polite way?
- 50. attract positive attention from peers?
- 55. express concern for another person?
- 61. attract positive attention from adults?
- 64. make a suggestion or request in a polite way?
- 70. offer to help somebody?
- 71. respond to another person's feelings?

Goal-Directed Behavior: A child's initiation of, and persistence in completing, tasks of varying difficulty.

- 3. keep trying when unsuccessful?
- 9. take steps to achieve goals?
- 12. try to do their best?
- 13. seek out additional knowledge or information?
- 14. take an active role in learning?
- 15. do things independently?
- 18. ask to take on additional work or responsibilities?
- 26. show creativity in completing a task?
- 29. seek out challenging tasks?
- 33. work hard on projects?

Personal Responsibility: A child's tendency to be careful and reliable in their actions and in contributing to group efforts.

1. remember important information?
4. handle their belongings with care?
6. serve an important role at home or school?
20. encourage positive behavior in others?
21. prepare for school, activities, or upcoming events?
23. do routine tasks or chores without being reminded?
24. act as a leader in a peer group?
28. get things done in a timely fashion?
32. show care when doing a project or school work?
35. follow rules?

Decision Making: A child's approach to problem solving that involves learning from others and from their own previous experiences, using their values to guide their action, and accepting responsibility for their decisions.

37. follow the example of a positive role model?
39. accept responsibility for what they did?
42. show good judgment?
52. seek advice?
65. learn from experience?
66. follow the advice of a trusted adult?
68. show the ability to decide between right and wrong?
69. use available resources (people or objects) to solve a problem?

Optimistic Thinking: A child's attitude of confidence, hopefulness, and positive thinking regarding themselves and their life situations in the past, present, and future.

2. carry themselves with confidence?
5. say good things about themselves?
7. speak about positive things?
10. look forward to classes or activities at school?
16. say good things about their classmates?
30. say good things about the future?
36. express high expectations for themselves?