

Arizona Character Education: CHARACTER COUNTS!

Six Pillars of Character and DESSA Crosswalk

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The Six Pillars of Character are the core ethical values of CHARACTER COUNTS! These values were identified by a nonpartisan, secular group of youth development experts as core ethical values that transcend cultural, religious, and socioeconomic differences. The [Arizona Department of Education has supported CHARACTER COUNTS!](#) to provide a meaningful and measurable framework to help focus on character skills that shape a positive culture for students and prioritize character development.

The DESSA suite of assessments measures key social and emotional competencies essential for student success now and into the future. The DESSA assessments span kindergarten through 12th grade and can be completed by educators, students, and parents or guardians. The assessments are nationally standardized, norm-referenced, strength-based behavior rating scales, measuring the positive skills, behaviors, and mindsets necessary for students to thrive.

This crosswalk highlights the alignment between the Six Pillars of Character and DESSA assessment items. It demonstrates how the DESSA assessments can be used by districts and schools to achieve improvement in Arizona students' character, academic skills, and ensure their school is a safe and welcoming learning environment.

Alignment between the Six Pillars of Character and DESSA Items

Trustworthiness	
<i>Character Skills</i>	<i>DESSA Items</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Be honest. Don't deceive, cheat, or steal.• Have integrity. Do what you say you'll do.• Keep your promises.• Be loyal. Stand by your values.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Accept responsibility for their actions• Stand up for a friend or classmate• Do the right thing in a difficult situation• Agree to and follow expectations for their behavior• Persist to achieve a goal• Demonstrate a sense of who they are and what is important to them• Express high expectations for themselves• Feel comfortable being themselves in different situations

Respect	
<i>Character Skills</i>	<i>DESSA Items</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Follow the Golden Rule. • Be accepting of differences. • Be courteous to others. • Deal peacefully with anger, insults, and disagreements. • Be considerate of others' feelings. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Get along well with different types of people • Respect a person's right to have a different opinion • Respond to others' feelings in kind and safe ways • Do nice things for people • Encourage their friends or classmates • Resolve conflicts positively • Make others feel welcome or included

Responsibility	
<i>Character Skills</i>	<i>DESSA Items</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do what you are supposed to do. Try your best. • Persevere. Keep on trying. • Be self-disciplined. • Think before you act. Consider the consequences. • Be accountable for your words, actions, and attitudes. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agree to and follow expectations for their behavior • Keep trying when unsuccessful • Persist to achieve a goal • Believe they can overcome setbacks • Think before they acted • Can motivate themselves even when they don't want to do something • Seek out things that challenge them • Believe they can achieve their goals • Stay calm when faced with a challenge • Do the right thing in a difficult situation • Accept responsibility for their actions • Expect that they will be successful

Fairness	
<i>Character Skills</i>	<i>DESSA Items</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Play by the rules. • Take turns and share. • Be open-minded. Listen to others. • Don't take advantage of others. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agree to and follow expectations for their behavior • Do the right thing in a difficult situation • Listen to others • Demonstrate openness to new situations, experiences, and people • Get along well with different types of people • Compromise for the good of the group • Believe working with others leads to greater success • Encourage others • Interact positively with classmates • Get along well with different types of people • Express high expectations for themselves • Make others feel welcome or included

Caring	
<i>Character Skills</i>	<i>DESSA Items</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be kind. • Be compassionate. • Express gratitude. • Forgive others. • Be considerate of others' feelings. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do nice things for people • Encourage others • Recognize others' emotions • Respond to others' feelings in kind and safe ways • Show appreciation for others • Make others feel welcome or included • Interact positively with classmates • Resolve conflicts positively • Make positive contributions to their class, school, or community

Citizenship	
<i>Character Skills</i>	<i>DESSA Items</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do your share to make your home, school, and community better. • Cooperate. • Stay informed. Vote. • Be a good neighbor. • Make choices that protect the safety and rights of others. • Protect the environment. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Help make their class a place where everyone can learn • Make a positive difference in the world • Cooperate with others to solve a problem • Gather information before making an important decision • Stand up for a friend or classmate • Make others feel welcome or included • Make positive contributions to their class, school, or community



The DESSA System from Aperture Education: A Riverside Insights Company is a student resilience system that helps educators measure and strengthen social, emotional, and behavioral skills to reduce challenges that interfere with learning. The DESSA universal screening and supplemental assessments are widely used, practical, evidence-based measures of social and emotional competence of students in grades K-12. These powerful data analytic tools enable educators to identify trends, validate curriculum effectiveness, and drive positive academic and well-being outcomes for students. Robust reporting in the DESSA System provides insights for educators and staff to proactively differentiate instruction using DESSA-provided instructional strategies and tiered intervention resources. The DESSA System's strength-based approach is grounded in resilience theory and designed to bring the whole child into focus. To learn more, visit www.ApertureEd.com.