

Arkansas G.U.I.D.E for Life Goals and DESSA Crosswalk

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The Arkansas Department of Education has identified five guiding principles that support educators, business leaders, communities and students in their efforts to help all Arkansans develop these critical skills. Each principle represents a set of skills needed to thrive at home, school, on the job and in the community. The five principles, Growth, Understanding, Interaction, Decisions, and Empathy, compose the G.U.I.D.E. for Life program, which students can follow to achieve personal success.

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 G.U.I.D.E. for Life program goals and DESSA assessment items. It demonstrates how the DESSA assessments can support instilling these “real-world” skills for success in all Arkansas students.

Alignment between the G.U.I.D.E. Goals and DESSA Items

Growth: Manage Yourself. <ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ Develop problem-solving skills.✓ Practice mindfulness.✓ Persevere.	
As an Arkansas Graduate, I am: <i>Reflective about my personal needs and manage my emotions effectively</i>	
<i>The Goals:</i>	<i>DESSA Items:</i>
I am able to identify and take care of personal wellness needs and emotional health.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Demonstrate a sense of who they are and what is important to them• Set goals for themselves
I can act on my personal needs accordingly in varying situations and locations.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Feel comfortable being themselves in different situations• Adapt well to new situations
I can express emotions constructively.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Describe the emotion they were feeling• Explain what caused their emotions
I am able to practice stress management techniques.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Stay calm when faced with a challenge• Calm down when they're upset
I am fully capable of asking for help when needed.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ask questions when they did not understand something• Ask for advice when needed

As an Arkansas Graduate, I am: <i>An effective choice maker and am able to demonstrate increasing levels of independence in setting goals and achieving them for college, career and community engagement</i>	
<i>The Goals:</i>	<i>DESSA Items:</i>
I am able to identify steps for problem solving.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gather information before making an important decision
I apply strategies and skills to solve complex problems.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do the right thing in a difficult situation • Cooperate with others to solve a problem • Believe they can overcome setbacks
I use rational steps to determine a solution or conclusion.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Think before they acted
I am an active participant in my learning.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seek out challenging tasks • Express high expectations for themselves • Believe they can achieve their goals • Work to develop their personal strengths
As an Arkansas Graduate, I am: <i>Able to manage time in order to set tasks and goals and achieve them</i>	
<i>The Goals:</i>	<i>DESSA Items:</i>
I am punctual, prepared and ready to be engaged daily.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prepare for school, activities, or upcoming events • Motivate themselves even when they don't want to do something
I am able to set checkpoints for follow-through on a goal.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Persist to achieve a goal • Believe they can achieve their goals
I can plan and organize my time and projects in order to accomplish tasks and/or goals.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Take action to solve problems • Expect that they will be successful

Understanding: Know Yourself.	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Increase self-awareness. ✓ Know your strengths and weaknesses. ✓ Develop critical thinking skills. 	
As an Arkansas Graduate, I am: <i>Able to clearly articulate information I want to share</i>	
<i>The Goals:</i>	<i>DESSA Items:</i>
I can articulate how I feel in various situations.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Describe the emotion they were feeling • Explain what caused their emotions
I am aware of and can clearly articulate my personal strengths and areas in which I want to grow.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Show an awareness of their personal strengths • Seek out things that challenge them • Work to develop their personal strengths • Listen to feedback so they can improve

I can articulate data, findings and thoughts through oral and written communication.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Update their thinking as they learn more about something • Gather information before making an important decision
As an Arkansas Graduate, I am: <i>Growth-minded, curious and inquisitive</i>	
<i>The Goals:</i>	<i>DESSA Items:</i>
I can identify my personal aspirations and how dedication and hard work will help me achieve them.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Speak positively about their future potential • Express high expectations for themselves • Believe they can achieve their goals
I am aware of my personal characteristics and how they impact and/or influence my behavior.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrate a sense of who they are and what is important to them • List the personal traits that are most important to them
As an Arkansas Graduate, I am: <i>Reflective</i>	
<i>The Goals:</i>	<i>DESSA Items:</i>
I am aware of what I know and how I learn best.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ask questions when learning new things • Prepare for school, activities, or upcoming events
I am willing to accept constructive feedback for continuous improvement.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Listen to feedback so they can improve • Work to develop their personal strengths • Ask for advice when needed
I take responsibility for my actions and am aware of how they impact others.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accept responsibility for their actions • Respond to others' feelings in kind and safe ways • Think before they acted
As an Arkansas Graduate, I am: <i>Resourceful</i>	
<i>The Goals:</i>	<i>DESSA Items:</i>
I ask questions, investigate and explore new topics of learning.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Show a willingness to update their thinking • Demonstrate openness to new situations, experiences, and people
I can identify resources both in and out of school and seek help when needed.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ask questions when they did not understand something • Believe working with others leads to greater success • Ask for advice when needed

<p style="text-align: center;">Interaction: Build Relationships.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Treat others with respect. ✓ Communicate effectively. ✓ Seek out and offer help when needed. 	
<p style="text-align: center;">As an Arkansas Graduate, I am: <i>An effective cross-cultural communicator</i></p>	
<i>The Goals:</i>	<i>DESSA Items:</i>
I use positive communication skills to interact effectively with others.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interact positively with classmates • Respond to others' feelings in kind and safe ways
I can articulate thoughts, information and feelings through oral and written communication.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explain what caused their emotions • Compliment or congratulate others • Listen to others • Encourage others
I engage in positive relationships with individuals and groups from diverse backgrounds or with different perspectives.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Get along well with different types of people • Respect a person's right to have a different opinion
<p style="text-align: center;">As an Arkansas Graduate, I am: <i>An active listener</i></p>	
<i>The Goals:</i>	<i>DESSA Items:</i>
I understand that I can prevent, manage and/or resolve interpersonal conflicts in constructive ways.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Resolve conflicts positively • Stand up for a friend or classmate • Cooperate with others to solve a problem
I engage in healthy, rewarding relationships with peers and adults.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Show appreciation of others • Good at making and keeping friends • Get along well with different types of people
I can engage in conversation, being thoughtful and respectful even when I disagree.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Respect a person's right to have a different opinion • Compromise for the good of the group • Listen to others
<p style="text-align: center;">As an Arkansas Graduate, I am: <i>A supporter of others</i></p>	
<i>The Goals:</i>	<i>DESSA Items:</i>
I can work with others to develop, implement and evaluate goals.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage others • Contribute to group or team goals
I can make constructive choices about personal behavior and social interactions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make others feel welcome or included

Decisions: Make Responsible Choices. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Consider personal beliefs, safety & the situation. ✓ Think through potential consequences. ✓ Put your best self forward. 	
As an Arkansas Graduate, I am: <i>A self-directed learner</i>	
<i>The Goals:</i>	<i>DESSA Items:</i>
I take on projects and work independently.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seek out things that challenge them • Set goals for themselves
I am able to organize my time and manage personal responsibilities effectively.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prepare for school, activities, or upcoming events
I seek ideas and support from peers and adults when making decisions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ask for advice when needed • Listen to others • Cooperate with others to solve a problem • Gather information before making an important decision
As an Arkansas Graduate, I am: <i>A responsible citizen</i>	
<i>The Goals:</i>	<i>DESSA Items:</i>
I am able to take ownership for the decisions I make.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accept responsibility for their actions
I am able to demonstrate responsible behavior including the ability to say "No" to negative peer pressure.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do the right thing in a difficult situation • Think before they acted
I am a contributing member of my community.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make positive contributions to their class, school, or community
As an Arkansas Graduate, I am: <i>Able to identify, set and accomplish goals</i>	
<i>The Goals:</i>	<i>DESSA Items:</i>
I use effective decision-making skills to set and achieve goals for college, career and community engagement.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Express high expectations for themselves • Speak positively about their future potential • Persist to achieve a goal • Believe they can achieve their goals
I consider multiple factors in decision making, including ethical, health and safety factors, as well as personal and community responsibilities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contribute to group or team goals • Show appreciation of others • Agree to and follow expectations for their behavior • Contribute to creative a positive learning environment

Empathy: Be Aware of Others. ✓ See other perspectives. ✓ Value the feelings of others. ✓ Appreciate diversity.	
As an Arkansas Graduate, I am: <i>Empathetic to others' feelings</i>	
<i>The Goals:</i>	<i>DESSA Items:</i>
I am aware of the roles, thoughts, feelings and perspective of others.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recognize others' emotions
I am able to value the perspectives of others and empathize.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Respect a person's right to have a different perspective Show appreciation of others
As an Arkansas Graduate, I am: <i>Socially aware of cultural issues and differences</i>	
<i>The Goals:</i>	<i>DESSA Items:</i>
I am aware of cultural issues that exist in my world and exhibit a respect for human dignity and differences.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Make others feel welcome or included Demonstrate openness to new situations, experiences, and people
I work with others to achieve common goals.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Contribute to group or team goals Believe working with others leads to greater success Believe their contributions to a group or team matter
I have the ability to read and respond to individual and environmental cues.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Respond to others' feelings in kind and safe ways Adjust their behavior to match different settings
As an Arkansas Graduate, I am: <i>A collaborative team player</i>	
<i>The Goals:</i>	<i>DESSA Items:</i>
I am able to evaluate options and make connections while working with others.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gather information before making an important decision Cooperate with others to solve a problem
I am able to understand that I can make a lasting impact on the way people think, act or behave by my actions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stand up for a friend or classmate Help make their class a place where everyone can learn
I can identify ways in which I can positively contribute to my community.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Make positive contributions to their class, school, or community
I can recognize and utilize family, school and community resources and supports.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ask for advice when needed Ask questions when they did not understand something
I can compromise and work effectively with others.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Compromise for the good of the group



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.