

# K–12 Components of SEL & Intellectual Habits and DESSA Crosswalk

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The Connecticut State Department of Education [Components of Social, Emotional, and Intellectual Habits: Kindergarten through Grade 12](#) are meant to serve as resources to teachers, administrators, and curriculum developers for integrating SEL into current curriculum documents. The areas of development, defined below, serve as a blueprint for college and career readiness to achieve academic success and social-emotional learning.

- Develop a positive self-concept: the way someone thinks about, evaluates, or perceives oneself; to be aware of oneself; and aware of one's place in the community.
- Develop a positive attitude toward learning: the ability to be grateful and cheerful and maintain a growth mindset; to approach one's circumstances with optimism and enthusiasm.
- Identify and understand emotions of self and others: the ability to recognize and label emotions in oneself and others (emotion knowledge); express one's feelings in contextually appropriate ways (emotion expression).
- Develop positive interpersonal relationships: a developed aptitude enabling a person to carry on effective interactions and relationships with others, such as the ability to communicate thoughts and feeling, or to assume appropriate social responsibilities.
- Develop executive functioning skills: the mental processes required to focus, plan, and control behavioral responses in service of a goal.
- Develop logic and reasoning: the ability to recognize and use multiple perspectives and approaches (e.g., negotiate the pros and cons of ideas and solutions, analyze options using if–then rationale, and recognize cause–effect relationships) to explore, negotiate, and analyze options.
- Develop modes of symbolic representation: a method of sense-making that entails an expression of meaning using options such as visual analogy, sketch, monologue, collage, cartoon, among others, to express meaning.

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. The six competencies measured by the DESSA and their abbreviations are listed here:

## DESSA Competency Key

SA: Self-Awareness	RS: Relationship Skills
SM: Self-Management	RDM: Responsible Decision Making
SO: Social Awareness	OT: Optimistic Thinking

## Alignment of the DESSA Competencies to CT K–3 Social, Emotional, and Intellectual Habits Framework

Note. Grayed-out areas indicate overlap with Aperture’s competencies. SA = Self-Awareness, SM = Self-Management, SO = Social Awareness, RS = Relationship Skills, RDM = Responsible Decision Making, OT = Optimistic Thinking

Kindergarten								
Area of Development	Learning Progression	Indicators	SA	SM	SO	RS	RDM	OT
Develop a positive self-concept	Self-awareness	Respond to the classroom environment with a positive sense of self, showing pride in own work and making positive statements about self						
		Recognize one’s own positive characteristics						
		Describe attributes of self and others, including relevant cultural characteristics of self						
	Sense of self as competent and capable	Attempt new activities and experiences with confidence and optimism						
		Express independent thoughts and feelings						
Develop a positive attitude toward learning	Sense of self as a learner	Distinguish between success and areas where they still need supports						
		Recognize own need for adult assistance and identify someone familiar who could help them						
		Share with eagerness and pride, increasingly complex work or projects						
	Curiosity and initiative	Demonstrate engagement through discussion of a growing range of topics, ideas, and tasks						
		Take on challenges willingly, exploring new knowledge with adult support						
	Cooperative during learning experiences	Use basic strategies for entering group play with adult support						
		Share materials with peers with adult support						
		Participate in group learning experiences using basic turn-taking and listening skills with adult support and guidance						
	Identify and understand emotions of self and others	Identifying and understanding emotions	Identify and appropriately label basic feelings in self and others (e.g., happy, sad, mad, scared)					
Discuss how some basic emotions impact behavior in self and others with adult support								
Empathy		Describe basic feelings or thoughts/perspectives of others with adult support						
		Respond when others display intense emotional reactions (e.g., crying, yelling, laughing loudly)						

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Kindergarten <i>(continued)</i>								
Area of Development	Learning Progression	Indicators	SA	SM	SO	RS	RDM	OT
Develop positive interpersonal relationships	Social awareness and interpersonal skills	Engage in practices that contribute to community well-being						
		Use basic social skills to ask to play with others, to share and take turns and to begin to work together with one or more peer on a game or activity with adult support						
		Develop and maintain trusting, healthy relationships with school-based adults						
		Learn to cooperate with classroom-based adults						
	Responsible decision making and social problem solving	Demonstrate beginning understanding of connections between choices and outcomes in familiar situations						
		Define decisions (e.g., choices) and identify in daily life in school and home						
		Identify social norms and safety considerations that guide behavior with adult support						
	Conflict resolution	Recognize and articulate conflict in personal and familiar contexts (e.g., “Johnny took my crayon”)						
		Resolve conflicts with peers with adult modeling and support using simple strategies (e.g., sharing, taking turns, apologizing)						

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Kindergarten <i>(continued)</i>								
Area of Development	Learning Progression	Indicators	SA	SM	SO	RS	RDM	OT
Develop executive functioning skills	Working memory and metacognition	Remember and follow directions that involve a sequence of 2-3 steps						
		Begin to use deliberate strategies (e.g., self-talk, song repetition) to organize thinking or to remember directions or sequence with adult support						
		Begin to monitor errors and/or progress, notice mistakes and make appropriate adjustments with adult support						
	Cognitive flexibility	Transition between different tasks or activities; use different ways of completing a task and shift attention as needed with adult prompting and support						
	Self-regulation of impulses and emotional reaction	Use basic strategies to manage intense or difficult feelings (e.g., deep breathing, take a break, draw a picture) with adult support						
		Initiate previously taught strategies to help delay gratification in a variety of contexts (e.g., choose an alternative activity while waiting a turn)						
		Identify simple and age-appropriate social norms and safety rules and use these to guide behavior						
		Name and typically follow basic rules related to privacy and personal boundaries						
	Managing attention and behavior	Sustain attention and complete developmentally appropriate tasks with adult support						
		Take responsibility, including planning and/or setting simple goals for own learning, while respecting the learning of others with adult support						
		Engage in basic planning and goal-setting, including planning topics for investigations, defining problems and considering sources of evidence with adult support						
		Begin to use basic strategies to maintain focus in the face of distractions with adult support						
Develop logic and reasoning	Critical and analytical thinking	Begin to use evidence and critical thinking to support claims; explain own thinking and listen to others with adult support						
	Applying known information to new experiences	Connect current and past relationships, experiences and knowledge to new situations, relationships and problem solving						
	Reasoning and problem solving	Describe a simple problem and propose one or more possible solutions						
		Analyze attributes to classify, compare and contrast objects, events and experiences (similarities, differences and associations)						

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Kindergarten <i>(continued)</i>								
Area of Development	Learning Progression	Indicators	SA	SM	SO	RS	RDM	OT
Develop modes of symbolic representation	Symbolic representation	Use objects, actions, drawings, and an increasing array of symbols to represent ideas						
	Pretend or symbolic play	Engage in mature play, using language to create a pretend scenario over an extended time frame with complex interwoven themes and rich multifaceted roles						

## Alignment of the DESSA Competencies to CT K–3 Social, Emotional, and Intellectual Habits Framework

Note. Grayed-out areas indicate overlap with Aperture’s competencies. SA = Self-Awareness, SM = Self-Management, SO = Social Awareness, RS = Relationship Skills, RDM = Responsible Decision Making, OT = Optimistic Thinking

Grade 1								
Area of Development	Learning Progression	Indicators	SA	SM	SO	RS	RDM	OT
Develop a positive self-concept	Self-awareness	Respond to the classroom environment with a positive sense of self and participate as a member of the school community						
		Recognize and express likes, dislikes, needs, and wants in a manner acceptable to school norms						
		Describe self as an individual and as a member of groups						
		Recognize the unique characteristics of their own family						
	Sense of self as competent and capable	Attempt new activities and experiences with confidence and optimism						
		Express independent thoughts and feelings						
Develop a positive attitude toward learning	Sense of self as a learner	Begin to appropriately ask for assistance from familiar sources						
		Share increasingly complex work or projects with eagerness and pride						
	Curiosity and initiative	Engage in preferred activities that match strengths, talents, and interests						
		Take risks to explore new knowledge with minimal adult support						
	Cooperative during learning experiences	Join and leave groups with ease as a leader or a follower as a situation demands						
		Share materials with peers with adult support						
		Use basic cooperation skills to engage in increasingly complex discussion/exploration of ideas						
Identify and understand emotions of self and others	Identifying and understanding emotions	Recognize and label feelings in self and others, beginning to use more sophisticated emotion words						
		Discuss emotions and the impact on behavior and begin to show awareness of the intensity of emotions (e.g., can recognize when their emotions are particularly strong and they might lose control; use words such as “furious” to describe intense anger)						
	Empathy	Recognize more complex feelings or thoughts/ perspectives of others						
		Offer comfort or assistance when others display indication of being hurt or upset						

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Grade 1 (continued)

Area of Development	Learning Progression	Indicators	SA	SM	SO	RS	RDM	OT
Develop positive interpersonal relationships	Social awareness and interpersonal skills	Engage in practices that contribute to community well-being						
		Use basic social skills independently and engage in positive, reciprocal relationships with peers (i.e., begin to form friendships with preferred peers)						
		Develop and maintain trusting, healthy relationships with school-based adults						
		Abide by the rules and expectations of the community						
	Responsible decision making and social problem solving	Describe the connections between choices (decisions) and consequences to self and use this information to make choices with adult support						
		Demonstrate beginning understanding of how social norms influence their decision making and behavior						
	Conflict resolution	Identify appropriate response to conflict						
		Use simple strategies to address interpersonal conflict independently and, with adult support, incorporate additional strategies (e.g., negotiating)						

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**Grade 1 (continued)**

Area of Development	Learning Progression	Indicators	SA	SM	SO	RS	RDM	OT
Develop executive functioning skills	Working memory and metacognition	Remember and follow multistep directions that involve more complex steps/sequences and update them with new information or changing plans						
		Use deliberate strategies (self-talk, song repetition) in familiar situations to remember directions or sequence						
		Show increasing independence in monitoring errors and/or progress, notice mistakes and make appropriate adjustments with adult support						
	Cognitive flexibility	Try different ways to complete a task or solve a problem, identify multiple ways to think about a situation, deliberately change thoughts or feelings in order to achieve goals						
	Self-regulation of impulses and emotional reaction	Use basic strategies with increasing independence to deal with upsetting emotions and seek help when necessary						
		Initiate previously taught strategies to help delay gratification in a variety of contexts (e.g., choose an alternative activity while waiting a turn)						
		Identify simple and age appropriate social norms and safety rules and use these to guide behavior						
		Name and typically follow basic rules related to privacy and personal boundaries						
	Managing attention and behavior	Sustain attention to an age appropriate task or activity individually and in small groups						
		Demonstrate increasing independence in taking responsibility, including planning and/or setting goals for own learning, while respecting the learning of others						
		Follow a task to completion with minimal support, even when it is challenging						
		Maintain focus with increasing independence, using more varied and sophisticated strategies						

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Grade 1 (continued)

Area of Development	Learning Progression	Indicators	SA	SM	SO	RS	RDM	OT
Develop logic and reasoning	Critical and analytical thinking	Use evidence and critical thinking to support claims, make simple arguments and critique the reasoning of others; explain own thinking and listen to others						
		Agree or disagree with others and give reason why						
	Applying known information to new experiences	Approach new situations, relationships and problem solving using information from prior experiences rather than through trial and error						
	Reasoning and problem solving	Demonstrate a willingness to try multiple strategies to solve a problem; check whether solution makes sense; may seek adult assistance						
		Analyze attributes to classify, compare and contrast objects, events and experiences (similarities, differences and associations)						
Develop modes of symbolic representation	Symbolic representation	Use objects, actions, drawings, and an increasing array of symbols to represent ideas						
	Pretend or symbolic play	Engage in mature play, using language to create a pretend scenario over an extended time frame with complex interwoven themes and rich multifaceted roles						

## Alignment of the DESSA Competencies to CT K–3 Social, Emotional, and Intellectual Habits Framework

Note. Grayed-out areas indicate overlap with Aperture’s competencies. SA = Self-Awareness, SM = Self-Management, SO = Social Awareness, RS = Relationship Skills, RDM = Responsible Decision Making, OT = Optimistic Thinking

Grade 2								
Area of Development	Learning Progression	Indicators	SA	SM	SO	RS	RDM	OT
Develop a positive self-concept	Self-awareness	See self as a valuable contributing member of family, school and other community groups						
		Recognize personal strengths, assets, limitations/ challenges						
		Describe characteristics of self and groups they belong to, including characteristics that are not concrete (personality, preferences, cultural norms or values)						
	Sense of self as competent and capable	Identify personal and academic goals						
		Practice self-advocacy skills (e.g., ask for a turn after waiting patiently for a couple of minutes, let teacher know when they cannot see or hear during lesson)						
		Explain and defend independent thoughts and feelings						
Develop a positive attitude toward learning	Sense of self as a learner	Identify and use available supports including familiar adults and other resources (e.g., books)						
		Share increasingly complex work or projects with eagerness and pride						
	Curiosity and initiative	Show enthusiasm for learning by asking questions and seeking meaningful information about a topic or idea						
		Take risks to explore new knowledge with peers						
	Cooperative during learning experiences	Share materials willingly with others in order to promote group learning						
		Use basic cooperation skills to engage in increasingly complex discussion/exploration of ideas						
Identify and understand emotions of self and others	Identifying and understanding emotions	Describe increasingly varied emotions and common situations that cause them						
		Discuss emotions and the impact on behavior and begin to show awareness of the intensity of emotions (e.g., can recognize when their emotions are particularly strong and they might lose control; use words such as “furious” to describe intense anger)						
	Empathy	Show ability to listen to and understand others’ feelings and consider how they impact their actions with adult support						
		Offer comfort or assistance when others display indication of being hurt or upset						

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Grade 2 (continued)

Area of Development	Learning Progression	Indicators	SA	SM	SO	RS	RDM	OT
Develop positive interpersonal relationships	Social awareness and interpersonal skills	Demonstrate cooperation in small and large groups						
		Demonstrate ability to read nonverbal social cues						
		Demonstrate the ability to compromise, negotiate and work together with others with adult support, in both child-initiated and adult-led activities						
		Develop and maintain trusting, healthy relationships with school-based adults						
		Identify and use skills to establish and maintain healthy interpersonal relationships						
	Responsible decision making and social problem solving	Analyze the outcomes and possible consequences of a set of given decisions						
		Distinguish between positive and negative peer pressure						
		Demonstrate concern for fairness and respect for the rights of others; respond appropriately when a rule is broken, with acceptance of responsibility and consequences						
	Conflict resolution	Distinguish between constructive and destructive ways to resolve conflicts						
		Demonstrate willingness and skill to independently resolve a problem or conflict, although may still need adult support and encouragement						

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**Grade 2 (continued)**

Area of Development	Learning Progression	Indicators	SA	SM	SO	RS	RDM	OT
<b>Develop executive functioning skills</b>	Working memory and metacognition	Remember and follow multistep directions that involve more complex steps/sequences and update them with new information or changing plans						
		Use deliberate strategies (self-talk, song repetition) in familiar situations to remember directions or sequence						
		Show increasing independence in monitoring errors and/or progress, notice mistakes and make appropriate adjustments with adult support						
	Cognitive flexibility	Consider multiple aspects of situations and/or changing circumstances to plan, make decisions and adjust thinking with adult guidance and support						
	Self-regulation of impulses and emotional reaction	Manage behavioral response to emotions most of the time, effectively using multiple strategies (e.g., utilizing skills to calm down, and applying the steps in problem solving to school and to social problems)						
		Apply strategies to help delay gratification for longer periods of time with increasing independence, building upon previously taught strategies						
		Respond increasingly well to rules outside of adult supervision						
		Demonstrate appropriate assertion of personal boundaries, rights and privacy needs						
	Managing attention and behavior	Sustain attention to an age appropriate task or activity individually and in larger groups						
		Demonstrate increasing independence in taking responsibility, including planning and/or setting goals for own learning, while respecting the learning of others						
		Follow a task to completion with minimal support, even when it is challenging						
		Maintain focus with increasing independence, using more varied and sophisticated strategies						
<b>Develop logic and reasoning</b>	Critical and analytical thinking	Use evidence and critical thinking to support claims, make arguments and critique the reasoning of others; decide if explanations make sense and ask appropriate questions						
	Applying known information to new experiences	Use prior relationships, experiences, and knowledge to expand understanding						
	Reasoning and problem solving	Plan out a simple problem-solving approach, considering multiple strategies; monitor and evaluate progress and change strategies as necessary with adult support						
		Analyze attributes to classify, compare and contrast objects, events and experiences (similarities, differences and associations)						

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Grade 2 (continued)								
Area of Development	Learning Progression	Indicators	SA	SM	SO	RS	RDM	OT
Develop modes of symbolic representation	Symbolic representation	Use standard or self-selected objects, actions, drawings and symbols to represent increasingly complex ideas						
	Pretend or symbolic play	Use role-play over an extended period of time to explore and expand knowledge and understanding						

## Alignment of the DESSA Competencies to CT K–3 Social, Emotional, and Intellectual Habits Framework

Note. Grayed-out areas indicate overlap with Aperture's competencies. SA = Self-Awareness, SM = Self-Management, SO = Social Awareness, RS = Relationship Skills, RDM = Responsible Decision Making, OT = Optimistic Thinking

Grade 3								
Area of Development	Learning Progression	Indicators	SA	SM	SO	RS	RDM	OT
Develop a positive self-concept	Self-awareness	Identify roles and responsibilities as a group member and contribute in a positive capacity						
		Identify personal values, attitudes and beliefs						
		Describe current characteristics of self and community and identify the source or history of these characteristics						
	Sense of self as competent and capable	Identify personal and academic goals						
		Practice self-advocacy skills (e.g., ask for a turn after waiting patiently for a couple of minutes, let teacher know when they cannot see or hear during lesson)						
		Explain and defend independent thoughts and feelings						
Develop a positive attitude toward learning	Sense of self as a learner	Identify multiple resources to assist in meeting learning goals						
		Share increasingly complex work or projects with eagerness and pride						
	Curiosity and initiative	Engage in and seek new experiences in learning independently						
		Take risks to explore new knowledge independently						
	Cooperative during learning experiences	Share materials willingly with others in order to promote group learning						
		Listen, discuss, and negotiate ideas in order to discover new learning with peers						
Identify and understand emotions of self and others	Identifying and understanding emotions	Communicate effectively about emotional experience with adults and peers using a variety of vocabulary related to emotions						
		Recognize the connections between emotions, thoughts and behavior						
	Empathy	Show ability to listen to and understand others' feelings and consider how they impact their actions with adult support						
		Acknowledge needs of others and act accordingly						

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**Grade 3 (continued)**

Area of Development	Learning Progression	Indicators	SA	SM	SO	RS	RDM	OT
<b>Develop positive interpersonal relationships</b>	Social awareness and interpersonal skills	Celebrate group successes						
		Demonstrate ability to read and appropriately act upon nonverbal social cues						
		Demonstrate the ability to compromise, negotiate and work together with others with adult support, in both child-initiated and adult-led activities						
		Develop and maintain trusting, healthy relationships with school-based adults						
		Identify and use skills to establish and maintain healthy interpersonal relationships						
	Responsible decision making and social problem solving	Take personal responsibility for one's own choices						
		Become aware when peer pressure is influencing a decision						
		Demonstrate awareness of principles of equality, fairness and respect for social norms						
	Conflict resolution	Demonstrate ability to remove oneself from a stressful situation						
		Demonstrate willingness and skill to independently resolve a problem or conflict, although may still need adult support and encouragement						

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**Grade 3 (continued)**

Area of Development	Learning Progression	Indicators	SA	SM	SO	RS	RDM	OT
<b>Develop executive functioning skills</b>	Working memory and metacognition	Demonstrate ability to remember and return to place in story, song or game if interrupted, or can reorder steps or change plans as needed to meet goal						
		Use deliberate strategies to remember information or organize thinking in new ways						
		Use previously modeled strategies to plan, monitor and evaluate thinking processes and try new and more sophisticated strategies with adult support						
	Cognitive flexibility	Become more independent in considering multiple aspects of situations, and/or changing circumstances, to plan, make decisions and adjust thinking						
	Self-regulation of impulses and emotional reaction	Self-monitor emotions and use strategies to manage emotions and behavioral reactions						
		Apply strategies to help delay gratification for longer periods of time with increasing independence, building upon previously taught strategies						
		Recognize rules and be able to generalize them to other situations						
		Demonstrate appropriate assertion of personal boundaries, rights and privacy needs						
	Managing attention and behavior	Demonstrate persistence to completion when working independently on age-appropriate tasks						
		Demonstrate increasing independence in taking responsibility, including planning and/or setting goals for own learning, while respecting the learning of others						
		Follow a task to completion with minimal support, even when it is challenging						
		Maintain focus with increasing independence, using more varied and sophisticated strategies						
<b>Develop logic and reasoning</b>	Critical and analytical thinking	Use evidence and critical thinking to support claims, make arguments and critique the reasoning of others; explain own thinking and respond to others' thinking						
	Applying known information to new experiences	Compare, contrast and evaluate experiences, tasks and events building on prior knowledge						
	Reasoning and problem solving	Consider multiple strategies and generate creative solutions to problem with peers; use an alternate method to check answers						
		Analyze attributes to classify, compare and contrast objects, events and experiences (similarities, differences and associations)						

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Grade 3 (continued)								
Area of Development	Learning Progression	Indicators	SA	SM	SO	RS	RDM	OT
Develop modes of symbolic representation	Symbolic representation	Use standard or self-selected objects, actions, drawings and symbols to represent increasingly complex ideas						
	Pretend or symbolic play	Use role-play over an extended period of time to explore and expand knowledge and understanding						

## Alignment of the DESSA Competencies to CT 4-12 Social, Emotional, and Intellectual Habits Framework

Note. Grayed-out areas indicate overlap with competencies measured by the DESSA 2. SA = Self-Awareness, SM = Self-Management, SO = Social Awareness, RS = Relationship Skills, RDM = Responsible Decision Making, OT = Optimistic Thinking

Late Elementary								
Area of Development	Learning Progression	Indicators	SA	SM	SO	RS	RDM	OT
Develop executive functioning skills	Working memory and metacognition	Attend to relevant information and goal-directed tasks while resisting distractions and shifting tasks when necessary						
		Break down tasks into small, manageable action steps						
		Use learned strategies to monitor progress on planned action steps						
		Use cognitive organizers and multisensory strategies that engage more than one sense at a time to organize one’s thinking						
		Demonstrate the ability to cognitively maintain and manipulate information over a short period of time						
		With adult guidance, break a project down into smaller pieces and develop a reasonable timeline for completing each piece						
	Cognitive flexibility	Demonstrate the ability to adjust one’s thinking in response to changes in one’s environment, new information or to changes in one’s goal(s)						
		Monitor progress on achieving a goal and make adjustments and amendments to plans and decisions						
	Self-regulation of emotions and reactions	Identify and articulate feelings when faced with a problem or challenge and work through the issue with adult support						
		Identify feelings and apply strategies to regulate emotions and manage behaviors						
	Managing attention and behavior	With adult guidance, work towards goals by using organizational skills and strategies to focus attention						
		Sustain attention and work to manage the behaviors that interfere with time on task						

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Late Elementary <i>(continued)</i>								
Area of Development	Learning Progression	Indicators	SA	SM	SO	RS	RDM	OT
Develop a positive self-concept	Self-awareness	Acknowledges challenges and behaviors and is able to identify and use voice to advocate for self and others						
		Understand that emotions may vary based on the situation, including people and places in school and the community while identifying healthy ways to advocate for self						
		Recognize how one’s interactions with a trusted adult or peer can provide social or emotional support or assistance for self						
		Understand one’s personal values, attitudes, and beliefs						
	Sense of self as competent and capable	Identify a range of tasks and address challenges while expressing a positive attitude toward self						
		Acknowledges and welcomes constructive feedback from others that addresses challenges and builds resilience, and identifies strengths and areas for growth						
	Courageously explore new knowledge independently and interdependently	Recognize the importance of working independently and interdependently						
		Identify skill sets and ways to advocate for academic, personal and emotional support respectfully to work towards resiliency						
Develop logic and reasoning	Critical and analytical thinking	Demonstrate a personal understanding of problems by asking questions to better understand material and information						
	Applying known information to new experiences	Apply new strategies based on lessons learned from feedback						
	Reasoning and problem solving	Consider multiple strategies and use different methods to check answers to solve problems						
		Generate possible solutions or responses to a problem or needed decision recognizing that there may be more than one perspective						
		Demonstrate the ability to respect the rights of self and others when resolving problems						
Develop modes of symbolic representation	Conceptual models of representation	Use drawings, diagrams, analogies, metaphors, and objects to access one’s own mental models to understand abstract concepts						
		Create and use visual models (e.g., decision tree or t-chart and informative/explanatory texts) when working through the problem-solving or decision-making process						
	Applying conceptual models to real-life situations	Participate in class discussions and role-play, about real-world scenarios that occur in the school and classrooms to examine different scenarios						

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Late Elementary <i>(continued)</i>								
Area of Development	Learning Progression	Indicators	SA	SM	SO	RS	RDM	OT
Develop a positive attitude toward learning	Sense of self as a learner	Describe how a trusted adult can provide academic support for self and others						
		Seek appropriate support from a trusted adult when help is needed academically						
		Recognize that one’s unique abilities and strengths are key factors in success						
		Explore how one’s own cultural experiences influence learning and understanding						
	Curiosity and initiative	Seek out new opportunities to expand personal knowledge and experiences						
		Explore new things with openness, and identify strategies and make use of resources to support learning						
	Cooperation during learning experiences	Understand and perform different roles in cooperative groups (e.g., leader, recorder, timekeeper, reporter)						
		Demonstrate cooperation and teamwork to promote group effectiveness						
		Consider various perspectives and sources of information when participating in group decision-making						
		Identify and demonstrate personal behaviors (e.g., listening, consensus seeking, empathy, compassion, group leadership, knowing how to support group efforts) to promote communication and social engagement						
		Participate in cross-cultural activities and understand that individual and group differences may complement each other						

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Late Elementary (continued)								
Area of Development	Learning Progression	Indicators	SA	SM	SO	RS	RDM	OT
Develop positive interpersonal skills	Social awareness and interpersonal skills	Compromise and negotiate how words, social cues, voice tone, and body language communicated can positively or negatively impact relationships						
	Responsible decision-making and social problem-solving	With the guidance of an adult, demonstrate an understanding of the steps in the decision-making process, generate possible choices, and evaluate the consequences						
		Identify and demonstrate strategies to problem-solve and to handle peer pressure with the help of an adult; be able to distinguish options from a range of choices						
	Conflict resolution	Recognize one's own limitations to problem-solve, and seek support from peers and adults to resolve conflict as needed						
		Identify ways to resolve a conflict and work through disagreements by listening, discussing solutions, compromising, and restoring relationships.						
Identify and understand emotions of self and others	Emotional awareness	Identify triggers and ways to solve problems; actively listen and process emotions with others independently or with the guidance of a trusted adult						
		Understand and label the nuances of complex emotions, behaviors, and thoughts and the impact on self and others in a situation or setting with the guidance of a trusted adult						
	Empathy	Understand others' perspectives and emotions and express empathy in response to others' feelings and emotions						
		Identify appropriate responses and select effective responses which reflect empathic concern						
		Identify individual similarities and differences and how this contributes positivity to the community						

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Middle School								
Area of Development	Learning Progression	Indicators	SA	SM	SO	RS	RDM	OT
Develop executive functioning skills	Working memory and metacognition	Evaluate steps taken to accomplish a task and identify areas for growth to achieve further success						
		Use reflective thinking practices (i.e., think about one’s own learning, think more deeply, gain insight into thoughts and feelings about ideas)						
		Demonstrate a deep and personal understanding of material and information by asking questions						
		Reframe a current challenge or setback by reflecting on successes, and monitor how responsible decision-making impacts progress						
		With adult support, develop specific, measurable, achievable, realistic, time-oriented (SMART) goals for long-term action planning						
	Cognitive flexibility	Reflect on unanticipated outcomes and develop new strategies and adaptive approaches that lead toward meeting goals						
		Begin to practice ways to be flexible and adaptable as one moves from familiar to unfamiliar tasks						
		Look at issues from multiple perspectives to encourage creative ways of thinking about a situation						
	Self-regulation of emotions and reactions	Apply effective strategies to cope with disappointment, setbacks and failure, and persist toward goals						
		Apply effective self-monitoring strategies to reframe thoughts and behaviors and regulate emotions						
	Managing attention and behavior	Identify and use organizational skills and strategies independently and with peers, to focus attention to complete multistep tasks						
		Demonstrate the capacity to use effective strategies to maintain concentration on a task and ignore unnecessary and outside distractions						

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Middle School <i>(continued)</i>								
Area of Development	Learning Progression	Indicators	SA	SM	SO	RS	RDM	OT
Develop a positive self-concept	Self-awareness	Understand, express, explain, and reflect on challenges faced and be aware that behaviors can influence decisions, and impact learning (while continuing to identify and use voice to advocate for self and others)						
		Understand that all emotions are valid, even if others feel differently in that environment						
		Know when to utilize a trusted adult or peer when help is needed, socially or emotionally						
		Understand the values that are part of one’s own culture and the benefits these values bring.						
	Sense of self as competent and capable	Manage tasks and challenges, while reframing negative thoughts and engaging in positive self-talk						
		Accepts constructive feedback, reflects and understands personal choices and sense of agency to develop and implement a plan of action that addresses challenges despite difficulties, mistakes, delays, or failure with persistence and resilience while understanding strengths and areas for growth						
	Courageously explore new knowledge independently and interdependently	Demonstrate confidence to work independently and interdependently and explore new learning						
		Demonstrate self-advocacy skills with self-reflection academically, personally, and behaviorally and be able to adapt in the face of adversity						
Develop logic and reasoning	Critical and analytical thinking	Understand how a hypothesis helps in the critical thinking process and begin to develop an informed hypothesis for problems in the learning environment						
	Applying known information to new experiences	Integrate prior experience and knowledge of outcomes to inform decisions						
	Reasoning and problem solving	Identify and ask systematic questions that clarify various points of view and lead to an informed solution						
		Demonstrate critical thinking skills when solving problems or making decisions, recognizing there may be more than one perspective or solution						
		Demonstrate the ability to respect the rights of self and others when resolving problems						

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Middle School <i>(continued)</i>								
Area of Development	Learning Progression	Indicators	SA	SM	SO	RS	RDM	OT
Develop modes of symbolic representation	Conceptual models of representation	Develop, use, and make necessary changes to one’s mental models to examine and understand increasingly complex information and abstract concepts (i.e., big ideas, important understandings)						
		Use mapping activities (e.g., vocabulary maps, definition maps, semantic maps) to demonstrate a strong understanding of a concept or idea (e.g., how other people might feel about an experience or situation)						
		Examine topics and choose a method (e.g., create visual models, informative/explanatory texts) to convey ideas						
		Examine topics and develop conceptual models (e.g., visual models, informative/explanatory texts) to convey ideas and explain the relationships among ideas						
	Applying conceptual models to real-life situations	Reflect and discuss scenarios (real-world examples/ current events), including engaging in role-play, and how behavior impacted another person(s) to expand one’s thinking; engage in reflection and discussions to help broaden perspectives, understand different perspectives, see multiple options, or increase empathy						

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Middle School <i>(continued)</i>								
Area of Development	Learning Progression	Indicators	SA	SM	SO	RS	RDM	OT
Develop a positive attitude toward learning	Sense of self as a learner	Utilize support from trusted adults, as well as resources and agencies that provide academic support						
		Identify the cause of a challenge or setback; develop a plan of action						
		Identify something one would like to be able to do better and take appropriate action steps to improve or access resources to support growth						
		Understand how one’s personal strengths connect to academic learning						
		Participate in and contribute to cross-cultural activities, and reflect on the experiences and how those experiences contribute to one’s personal learning and growth						
	Curiosity and initiative	Explore opportunities to develop personal strengths and assets to support academic achievement						
		Embrace productive struggle as an opportunity for personal growth						
	Cooperation during learning experiences	Recognize one’s own contributions, and demonstrate support for others’ contributions to a group/team effort						
		Participate with team/group members to problem-solve and contribute to group outcomes						
		Demonstrate the ability to actively listen, understand, and consider multiple perspectives to increase cooperation and build relationships						
		Become increasingly aware of others’ cultural norms, perspectives, and ways of communicating, and demonstrate respectful behavior and consideration of others						
		Participate in cross-cultural activities and demonstrate respect for individuals from different social and cultural groups						

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Middle School (continued)								
Area of Development	Learning Progression	Indicators	SA	SM	SO	RS	RDM	OT
Develop positive interpersonal skills	Social awareness and interpersonal skills	Recognize others' thoughts, feelings, and reactions in various social situations while recognizing verbal and nonverbal, social cues that indicate how others may react based on perceptions; build on relationship skills to confirm cues by observation, inquiry, and questioning						
	Responsible decision-making and social problem-solving	Demonstrate the ability and ask for assistance from an adult to seek, identify, and evaluate relevant information and factors for assisting in decision-making and consider the impact of those decisions on others						
		Recognize how social norms may influence decisions, and be able to demonstrate analytical skills to problem-solve and handle peer pressure in a positive way						
	Conflict resolution	Identify resources and supports to help respond appropriately using positive conflict resolution skills independently or with help						
		Demonstrate active listening skills, respond constructively to defuse, de-escalate, and negotiate solutions to resolve conflict						
Identify and understand emotions of self and others	Emotional awareness	Practice active and reflective listening skills to express emotions in a constructive manner (coping skills) and use safe spaces and appropriate times to process emotions for self and others, recognize triggers, and ask for help						
		Apply self-monitoring strategies to reframe behaviors, emotions, and thoughts and adjust depending on the situation and environment						
	Empathy	Demonstrate empathy through the understanding of others' emotions and feelings and recognition of others' distress and perspective						
		Recognize and select potential ways to respond that center on empathic concerns (e.g., reflecting, asking for help, giving verbal reassurance) when viewpoints or perceptions differ across school, community, both in-person and virtually						
		Demonstrate connectedness and empathy by understanding the importance of contributions from others						

Note. Grayed-out areas indicate overlap with competencies measured by the DESSA. SA = Self-Awareness, SM = Self-Management, SO = Social Awareness, PR = Personal Responsibility, RDM = Responsible Decision Making, OT = Optimistic Thinking  
On the DESSA High School Student Self-Report, the competencies of Self-Awareness and Optimistic Thinking are combined into one competency, Self-Awareness/Optimistic Thinking.

High School								
Area of Development	Learning Progression	Indicators	SA	SM	SO	RS	RDM	OT
Develop executive functioning skills	Working memory and metacognition	Modify behavioral responses in service of attaining a longer-term goal						
		Apply focused attention practices to help regulate one’s attention and focus						
		Search for strategies to overcome barriers and mistakes						
		Work through challenges, and value effort as a learning experience						
		Develop specific, measurable, achievable, realistic, time-oriented (SMART) goals for long-term action planning						
	Cognitive flexibility	Identify the pros and cons of possible solutions and implement solutions, generate alternative solutions, and evaluate potential consequences for a range of academic and social situations						
	Self-regulation of emotions and reactions	Apply effective strategies to express emotions when challenged and continue to persist and maintain motivation						
		Use effective regulatory strategies when upset or experiencing setbacks, and apply self-monitoring strategies to reframe and process thoughts and behaviors						
	Managing attention and behavior	Use organizational skills and strategies to focus attention by independently applying effective, goal-directed behaviors						
		Demonstrate the ability to shift focus between tasks and maintain concentration on one’s goal for a single priority, or multiple priorities.						

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High School <i>(continued)</i>								
Area of Development	Learning Progression	Indicators	SA	SM	SO	RS	RDM	OT
Develop a positive self-concept	Self-awareness	Identify the skills and assets needed for adulthood and be able to examine strengths and growth opportunities necessary for social-emotional, academic learning, and employability skills						
		Understand the ways emotions impact social, family, and community environments while developing and maintaining a coherent sense of self						
		Apply support from trusted adults, peers, and other resources that provide social, emotional, or health-related support						
		Identify how personal values, attitudes, and beliefs affect interactions with others; understand and evaluate problems in the community, and identify how one’s actions lead to success or challenges						
	Sense of self as competent and capable	Set short-term, post-secondary and life goals with confidence in the ability to be successful while positively addressing challenges						
		Reflect on feedback, actions and address personal challenges, and build on individual strengths over time and with persistence and resiliency while enhancing strengths and areas for growth						
	Courageously explore new knowledge independently and interdependently	Demonstrate self-directed learning and the importance of taking responsibility for independent and interdependent thinking and learning						
		Demonstrate self-advocacy in context-specific situations and be able to maneuver through difficult situations and resolve issues						
Develop logic and reasoning	Critical and analytical thinking	Engage in constructive discussion or intellectual argument by supporting one’s opinion/hypothesis giving and receiving constructive feedback						
	Applying known information to new experiences	Evaluate and revise prior understandings through new experiences; seek connections to inform future decisions						
	Reasoning and problem solving	Identify problems, analyze situations, decide on solutions, and reflect upon and evaluate the process						
		Explain one’s thinking when solving problems and making decisions and respond effectively to others’ thinking						
		Demonstrate the ability to respect the rights of self and others when resolving problems						

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High School <i>(continued)</i>								
Area of Development	Learning Progression	Indicators	SA	SM	SO	RS	RDM	OT
Develop modes of symbolic representation	Conceptual models of representation	Develop, use, and make necessary changes to one’s mental models to examine and understand increasingly complex information and abstract concepts (i.e., big ideas, important understandings)						
		Use conceptual models to look at issues from multiple perspectives to stretch one’s thinking and encourage creative ways of thinking about a situation						
		Use conceptual models to guide the development and application of creative strategies and novel approaches when faced with problems or learning tasks						
	Applying conceptual models to real-life situations	Role-play scenarios to help add an experiential element of perspective-taking to decision-making; reflect and discuss the impact of a choice						

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High School <i>(continued)</i>								
Area of Development	Learning Progression	Indicators	SA	SM	SO	RS	RDM	OT
Develop a positive attitude toward learning	Sense of self as a learner	Identify key mentors available to support life goals, and cultivate relationships with those individuals						
		Demonstrate confidence in the ability to independently address a challenge while expressing positive attitudes towards self						
		Recognize one’s strengths and growth areas in learning and processing information						
		Know how one organizes and processes information and uses internalized learning strategies in order to learn successfully						
		Develop and demonstrate personal, cultural, and linguistic assets that contribute to achieving academic goals						
	Curiosity and initiative	Demonstrate receptiveness to new and unfamiliar ideas and experiences to enhance personal strengths and growth to support learning						
		Generate unconventional ways to do or think about things by exploring and learning from unsuccessful attempts and insight						
	Cooperation during learning experiences	Learn to maintain an objective, non-judgmental tone during disagreements						
		Use positive problem-solving skills to balance personal and group needs and foster respectful group interactions						
		Evaluate one’s contribution in groups as a member and leader						
		Plan, implement, and evaluate one’s participation in a group project						
		Engage in processes of peer co-regulation (i.e., students supporting, coaching, and modeling for each other, the ability to modulate feelings, thoughts, and behaviors) to create positive group dynamics for optimal learning opportunities						
		Demonstrate an ability to co-exist in civility in the face of differing perspectives						
		Participate in cross-cultural activities, identify unique contributions and perspectives of various groups and how the experience may influence personal perspective						

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## High School *(continued)*

Area of Development	Learning Progression	Indicators	SA	SM	SO	RS	RDM	OT
<b>Develop positive interpersonal skills</b>	Social awareness and interpersonal skills	Respond, inquire for deeper understanding, and reflect on others' verbal, nonverbal, and social cues to assess the meaning, intention, and predictions of behavior; use this information to react in ways that support healthy relationships and protect personal boundaries						
	Responsible decision-making and social problem-solving	Demonstrate critical thinking skills to make informed decisions independently or with the help of a trusted adult, generate various alternatives, and promote the best solutions						
		Demonstrate adaptability, flexibility, and resilience when setbacks, unforeseen events, and/or obstacles arise; use a problem-solving approach to manage the situation and peer pressure by accepting the outcome if it is disappointing						
	Conflict resolution	Demonstrate the ability to seek advice from a trusted peer or adult to discuss and analyze a problem and take the initiative to resolve the conflict						
		Apply conflict resolution skills to defuse, de-escalate, and resolve conflicts, acknowledge differences of opinion and push on to find common ground independently or with help						
<b>Identify and understand emotions of self and others</b>	Emotional awareness	Demonstrate ways to predict situations that can cause triggers or strong emotions and to use developed skillsets to reflect and adjust communication style with others and constructively respond to feedback about improving communication; independently, and with others, be able to manage thoughts, feelings, and emotions						
		Employ self-management and monitoring strategies to regulate complex/simultaneous thoughts, feelings, emotions, and behaviors that impact responses related to a situation or environment (e.g., being nervous and excited at the same time)						
	Empathy	Identify and demonstrate empathy through compassion for self and others and contemporary issues.						
		Use active listening and interpersonal skills to elicit and understand the feelings and opinions of others across all settings when viewpoints or perceptions differ (e.g., asking probing questions, paraphrasing and reflecting, nodding, and leaning forward)						
		Understand the value of diversity and demonstrate empathy and personal reflection for others						



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](http://www.ApertureEd.com).