

# Iowa Social-Emotional Learning Competencies and DESSA Crosswalk

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The Iowa Social-Emotional Learning Competencies, published in 2022, provides districts, schools, and those that partner with them, a set of information and resources that can be used to implement social-emotional learning, thus preparing all learners at every step of their educational journey to be future ready.

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 12<sup>th</sup> 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, their abbreviations, and their definitions are listed here:

- **Self-Awareness (SA):** The ability to understand emotions, thoughts, and values and how they influence one's behavior; recognize strengths and limitations; and develop healthy identities and a sense of purpose.
- **Self-Management (SM):** The ability to manage emotions and behaviors across different situations and environments and to demonstrate agency as one works to set and achieve personal and collective goals.
- **Social Awareness (SO):** The understanding of social norms for behavior; the ability to empathize with, respect, and take the perspectives of others; and the feeling of connection and belonging with family, peers, schools, and community groups.
- **Relationship Skills (RS):** The ability to establish and maintain healthy and positive relationships including effective communication, collaborative problem-solving, negotiating conflict, and demonstrating helpful and supportive behaviors.
- **Responsible Decision Making (RDM):** The ability to make careful, reliable, and constructive choices about personal and social behavior that are appropriate across diverse situations; to consider the personal, social, and collective impact of one's actions; and to demonstrate curiosity and an open-mindedness to learning.
- **Optimistic Thinking (OT):** The belief and demonstration of confidence, hopefulness, and positive thinking regarding oneself, others, and one's life situations in the past, present, and future.

This crosswalk highlights the alignment between the Iowa SEL Targets and DESSA assessment items across the six competencies. It demonstrates how the DESSA assessments can be used by districts and schools to help prepare Iowa students for their future, ensuring students have the foundational knowledge and skills needed to be successful, not only during every step of their educational journey, but far beyond.

## Alignment between the Iowa SEL Targets and DESSA Items

<b>Self-Awareness</b>	
Involves understanding one's emotions, personal identity, goals and experiences. This includes accurately assessing one's strengths and limitations, having positive mindsets, possessing a well-grounded sense of self-efficacy and optimism. High levels of self-awareness require the ability to understand the links between one's personal and sociocultural identities and to recognize how thoughts, feelings, and actions are interconnected.	
<i>Learning Targets</i>	<i>DESSA Items</i>
Identifying Emotions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recognize their strengths (SA)</li> <li>• Describe an emotion they were feeling (SA)</li> <li>• Explain what caused their emotions (SA)</li> <li>• Know how their emotions influence their behavior (SA)</li> </ul>
<p>Accurate Self Perception</p> <p>Recognizing strengths as its own target was combined with accurate self-perception since the ability to recognize one's strengths is part of accurate self-perception.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Show an awareness of their personal strengths (SA)</li> <li>• Ask questions when they did not understand something (SA)</li> <li>• Demonstrate a sense of who they are and what is important to them (SA)</li> <li>• Work to develop their personal strengths (SA)</li> <li>• Comfortable being themselves in different situations (SA)</li> <li>• Listen to feedback so they can improve (SA)</li> </ul>
<p>Self-Confidence</p> <p>Specific self-efficacy refers to beliefs about one's ability to perform specific tasks (e.g., driving, public speaking, studying, etc.) Self-confidence refers to belief in one's personal worth and likelihood of succeeding. Self-confidence is a combination of self-esteem and general self-efficacy.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Seek out challenging tasks (OT)</li> <li>• Speak positively about their future potential (OT)</li> <li>• Express high expectations for themselves (OT)</li> <li>• Expect that they will be successful (OT)</li> <li>• Believe they can achieve their goals (OT)</li> <li>• Believe they can overcome setbacks (OT)</li> <li>• Believe their contributions to a group or team matter (OT)</li> <li>• Can make a positive difference in the world (OT)</li> </ul>

<b>Self-Management</b>	
Requires skills and attitudes that facilitate the ability to regulate emotions and behaviors. This includes the ability to delay gratification, manage stress, control impulses, and persevere through personal and group-level challenges in order to achieve personal and collective goals.	
<i>Learning Targets</i>	<i>DESSA Items</i>
<p>Impulse Control</p> <p>Indicators include more than managing strong emotions. Ex: not blurting out, not having negative self-talk before you make a mistake, etc. Impulse control - more in the moment/immediate vs Self-Discipline - more long term and/or goal oriented.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Stay focused despite a distraction (SM)</li> <li>Think before they acted (SM)</li> </ul>
Stress Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Stay calm when faced with a challenge (SM)</li> <li>Calm down when they're upset (SM)</li> <li>Adapt well to new situations (SM)</li> </ul>
Self-Discipline and Self-Motivation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Can motivate themselves when they don't want to do something (SM)</li> <li>Keep trying when unsuccessful (SM)</li> <li>Persist to achieve a goal (SM)</li> </ul>
Goal Setting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Set goals for themselves (SM)</li> <li>Take action to solve problems (SM)</li> <li>Contribute to group or team goals (SM)</li> </ul>
Organizational Skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Work carefully on projects and schoolwork (SM)</li> </ul>

<b>Social Awareness</b>	
Includes the capacities to feel compassion for others, understand broader social norms for behavior in different settings, and recognize family, school, and community resources and supports.	
<i>Learning Targets</i>	<i>DESSA Items</i>
Perspective-Taking and Empathy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Recognize others' emotions (SO)</li> <li>Respect a person's right to have a different perspective (SO)</li> <li>Respond to others' feelings in kind and safe ways (SO)</li> </ul>
Appreciating Diversity and Respect for Others	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Show appreciation for others (SO)</li> <li>Make others feel welcome or included (SO)</li> </ul>

<p><b>Civic Engagement</b></p> <p>Includes the capacities to feel compassion for others, understand broader social norms for behavior in different settings, and recognize family, school, and community resources and supports.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Contribute to creating a positive learning environment (SO)</li> <li>• Help make their class a place where everyone can learn (SO)</li> <li>• Feel like they belong in their school</li> <li>• Can adjust their behavior to match different settings (SO)</li> <li>• Agree to and follow expectations for their behavior (SO)</li> </ul>
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<b>Relationship Skills</b>	
<p>The ability to establish and maintain healthy and supportive relationships and to effectively navigate settings with diverse individuals and groups. This includes the capacities to communicate clearly, listen actively, cooperate, work collaboratively to problem solve and negotiate conflict constructively, navigate settings with differing social and cultural demands and opportunities, provide leadership, and seek or offer help when needed.</p>	
Communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Listen to others (RS)</li> </ul>
<p><b>Social Engagement</b></p> <p>Social Engagement is working together for the greater good, even if it doesn't directly benefit the individual.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Stand up for a friend or classmate (RS)</li> <li>• Do nice things for people (RS)</li> <li>• Can make a positive difference in the world (OT)</li> </ul>
Relationship Building	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Get along well with different types of people (RS)</li> <li>• Interact positively with classmates (RS)</li> <li>• Encourage others (RS)</li> <li>• Compliment or congratulate others (RS)</li> <li>• Good at making and keeping friends (RS)</li> </ul>
<p><b>Teamwork</b></p> <p>Social Engagement is working together for the greater good, even if it doesn't directly benefit the individual.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cooperate with others to solve a problem (RS)</li> <li>• Resolve conflicts positively (RS)</li> <li>• Believe working with others leads to greater success (OT)</li> <li>• Believe their contributions to a group or team matter (OT)</li> </ul>

<b>Responsible Decision-Making</b>	
Requires the knowledge, skills, and attitudes to make caring, constructive choices about personal behavior and social interactions across diverse situations. It requires the ability to critically examine ethical standards and safety concerns, and to evaluate the benefits/consequences of various actions for personal, social, and collective well-being.	
Identifying Problems	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prepare for school, activities, or upcoming events (<i>RDM</i>)</li> <li>• Ask questions when learning new things (<i>RDM</i>)</li> <li>• Ask for advice when needed (<i>RDM</i>)</li> </ul>
Analyzing Situations and Solving Problems	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Demonstrate openness to new situations, experiences, and people (<i>RDM</i>)</li> <li>• Gather information before making an important decision (<i>RDM</i>)</li> <li>• Believe they can overcome setbacks (<i>OT</i>)</li> <li>• Believe they can achieve their goals (<i>OT</i>)</li> <li>• Expect that they will be successful (<i>OT</i>)</li> </ul>
Evaluating and Reflecting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Show a willingness to update their thinking (<i>RDM</i>)</li> <li>• Accept that making mistakes is a part of learning (<i>OT</i>)</li> <li>• View negative outcomes as a learning opportunity (<i>OT</i>)</li> </ul>
Ethical Responsibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Do the right thing in a difficult situation (<i>RDM</i>)</li> <li>• Accept responsibility for their actions (<i>RDM</i>)</li> <li>• Compromise for the good of the group (<i>RDM</i>)</li> </ul>



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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).