

## Devereux Early Childhood Assessment (DECA)

The Devereux Foundation is a non-profit behavioral healthcare organization with a primary focus on the adolescent population. In 1996, the foundation launched the Devereux Early Childhood Initiative (DECI) with the mission of promoting healthy social/emotional growth and encouraging resilience in young children. Out of the DECI, the Devereux Early Childhood Assessment (DECA) Program, a strength-based assessment and planning system, has emerged. The DECA Program leads to goal setting and planning positive and measurable outcomes for preschool aged children. Central to the DECA Program is a nationally standardized, norm-referenced assessment tool, the DECA, which measures **within-child protective factors**, specifically **initiative, self-control and attachment**. The DECA Program works to strengthen these within-child protective factors through implementation of strategies in the school and home environments.

As a strength-based assessment tool, the DECA is appropriate for **all** children ages 2-5. In best practice, both teachers and parents administer the assessment so that a comparison of the child's behavior in the school and home environment can be made. The assessment results are then used to create plans and implement strategies designed to promote any of the within-child protective factors that were identified as low and of concern. In addition to individualized plans designed for particular children with low protective factors scores, the DECA Program also emphasizes the importance of classroom-wide plans that are focused on promoting the overall quality of the classroom so as to optimize all children's social and emotional growth.

The DECA Program is a comprehensive five step system including: 1) Collecting Information; 2) Administering the DECA; 3) Summarizing Results; 4) Developing and Implementing Plans; 5) Evaluating Progress. Family involvement is encouraged within each step of the comprehensive system. The following crosswalk illustrates how the DECA Program addresses three components of the Pennsylvania Early Learning Standards: Approaches to Learning; Personal-Social and Program Partnerships. For questions or additional information about the DECA Program, please contact the Devereux Early Childhood Initiative at (866) 872-4687 or email us at [deca@devereux.org](mailto:deca@devereux.org)

Devereux Early Childhood Assessment (DECA)

**Table 1: Complete or Partial Coverage shown at the Standard Level of the Early Learning Standards for each Key Learning Area**

<u>Standards</u>	<u>Coverage</u>
<b>Approaches to Learning</b>	
1.1 – 1.4 Initiative and Curiosity	Complete
2.1 – 2.3 Engagement and Persistence	Complete
3.1 – 3.5 Reasoning and Problem Solving	Partial
4.1 – 4.3 Flexibility, Risk Taking, and Responsibility	Partial
5.1 – 5.2 Imagination, Creativity and Invention	
<b>Creative Arts</b>	
1.1 – 1.4 Visual Art Form	
2.1 – 2.4 Expressing Self Through Movement & Music	
3.1 – 3.5 Dramatic Play	
4.1 – 4.5 Appreciation	
<b>Language and Literacy</b>	
<b>Receptive Language</b>	
1.1 – 1.7 Listening and Understanding	
<b>Expressive Language</b>	
1.1 – 2.8 Communicating ideas, experiences & feeling	
<b>Comprehension</b>	
1.1 – 3.8 Comprehending written and oral stories	
<b>Literacy</b>	
1.1 – 1.8 Phonological Awareness	
2.1 – 2.9 Print Awareness	
3.1 – 3.5 Book Knowledge and Appreciation	
4.1 – 4.4 Letter Knowledge	
5.1 – 5.5 Using Forms of Writing	
6.1 – 6.3 Writing as Communication	

Devereux Early Childhood Assessment (DECA)

**Table 1 Continued**

<b><u>Standards</u></b>		<b><u>Coverage</u></b>
<b>Logical-Mathematical</b>		
1.1 – 1.7	Numbers, Numerical Representation and Numerical Operations	
2.1 – 2.7	Understanding Patterns, Relations and Functions	
3.1 – 3.6	Concepts of Space and Shape	
4.1 – 4.3	Measurement Concepts	
5.1 – 5.4	Represent and Interpret Data	
6.1 – 6.6	Reason, Predict and Problem Solve	
<b>Personal Social</b>		
1.1 – 1.5	Self Concept	Partial
2.1 – 2.9	Self Regulation	Partial
3.1 – 3.11	Social Interactions	Partial
4.1 – 4.4	Self Care and Self Reliance	Partial
<b>Physical Motor</b>		
1.1 – 1.8	Gross Motor	
2.1 – 2.4	Fine Motor	
3.1 – 3.4	Engage in Physical Activity	
4.1 – 4.4	Health and Safety	

Devereux Early Childhood Assessment (DECA)

**Table 1 Continued**

<u>Standards</u>	<u>Coverage</u>
<b>Program Partnerships</b>	
1.1 – 1.5 Help Parents Advance Child’s Learning	Complete
2.1 – 2.5 Connecting Parents with Community Services	Partial
3.1 – 3.5 Helping Parents Transition their Children	Partial
4.1 – 4.6 Parents and Program Governance	Partial
<b>Science</b>	
1.1 – 1.7 Scientific Method	
2.1 – 2.4 Physical World	
3.1 – 3.6 Earth and Space	
4.1 – 4.6 Living Things	
<b>Social Studies</b>	
1.1 – 1.5 Community	
2.1 – 2.3 Past, Present and Future	
3.1 – 3.3 The Role of Consumers	

**Table 2: Item Correlation at the Indicator Level of the Early Learning Standards**

Pennsylvania Early Learning Standards for Pre-Kindergarten	DECA
<b>Approaches to Learning</b>	
<b><i>Demonstrate initiative and curiosity</i></b>	
AL 1.1 Choose to participate in an increasing variety of experiences	DECA Item #19: Try or ask to try new things or activities
AL 1.2 Develop increased ability to make independent choices	DECA Item #36: Make decisions for himself/herself
AL 1.3 Demonstrate growing eagerness and delight to learn about and discuss a growing range of topics, ideas and tasks	DECA Item #19: Try or ask to try new things or activities
AL 1.4 Use multiple strategies and all available senses to explore and learn from the environment	DECA Item #12: Keep trying when unsuccessful (act persistent) DECA Item #16: Try different ways to solve a problem
<b><i>Demonstrate engagement and persistence</i></b>	
AL 2.1 Grow in abilities to persist in and complete a variety of tasks, activities, projects and experiences	DECA Item #12: Keep trying when unsuccessful (act persistent) DECA Item #16: Try different ways to solve a problem
AL 2.2 Demonstrate increasing ability to set goals and develop and follow through on plans	DECA Item #36: Make decisions for himself/herself DECA Item #2: Do things for himself/herself
AL 2.3 Show growing capacity to maintain concentration over time on a task, question, set of directions or interactions, despite distractions and interruptions	DECA Item #24: Focus his/her attention or concentrate on a task or activity
<b><i>Demonstrate reasoning and problem solving skills</i></b>	
AL 3.1 Demonstrate a growing ability to predict possible outcomes related to cause and effect	DECA Item #16: Try different ways to solve a problem

Devereux Early Childhood Assessment (DECA)

<p><b>Pennsylvania Early Learning Standards for Pre-Kindergarten</b></p>	<p><b>DECA</b></p>
<p>AL 3.2 Develop increasing ability to find more than one solution to a question, task or problem</p>	<p>DECA Item #16: Try different ways to solve a problem DECA Item #30: Accept another choice when her/his first choice was unavailable</p>
<p>AL 3.3 Seek and/or accept help from others when encountering a problem</p>	<p>DECA Item #31: Seek help from children/adults when necessary</p>
<p>AL 3.4 Grow in recognizing and solving problems through observation, active exploration, trial and error, and interactions and discussions with peers and adults</p>	<p>DECA Item #16: Try different ways to solve a problem DECA Item #30: Accept another choice when her/his first choice was unavailable</p>
<p>AL 3.5 Develop increasing abilities to classify, compare and contrast objects, events and experiences</p>	
<p>AL 3.6 Demonstrate skills in representation and symbolic thinking</p>	<p>DECA Item #7: Participate actively in make-believe play</p>
<p><b><i>Demonstrate flexibility, risk taking and responsibility</i></b></p>	
<p>AL 4.1 Demonstrate increasing ability to differentiate between appropriate and inappropriate (or dangerous) risk-taking</p>	
<p>AL 4.2 Demonstrate willingness to choose a variety of familiar and new experiences</p>	<p>DECA Item #19: Try or ask to try new things or activities DECA Item #30: Accept another choice when her/his first choice was unavailable</p>
<p>AL 4.3 Accept responsibility for learning through active participation verbally or nonverbally</p>	<p>DECA Item #32: Ask other children to play with him/her DECA Item #20: Start or organize play with other children DECA Item #7: Participate actively in make-believe play DECA Item #22: Ask adults to read to him/her</p>

Devereux Early Childhood Assessment (DECA)

Pennsylvania Early Learning Standards for Pre-Kindergarten	DECA
<b><i>Demonstrate imagination, creativity and invention</i></b>	
AL 5.1 Approach tasks and experiences with increased flexibility, imagination and inventiveness	
AL 5.2 Use or combine materials/strategies in novel ways to explore and solve problems	

The DECA Program Classroom Strategies guide is a resource for teachers that provides valuable information for promoting children’s overall social and emotional well-being. Chapters 4 -8 discuss specific strategies that support children’s overall development and would be very informative to teachers in their work to address all of the indicators under the *Approaches to Learning* section.

Pennsylvania Early Learning Standards for Pre-Kindergarten	DECA
<b>Personal-Social</b>	
<b><i>Develop self concept</i></b>	
PS 1.1 Is aware of self and one's own preferences	DECA Item #10: Show affection for familiar adults DECA Item #36: Make decisions for himself/herself DECA Item #19: Try or ask to try new things or activities
PS 1.2 Show independence in a wide range of activities	DECA Item #2: Do things for himself/herself
PS 1.3 Know and state independent thoughts and feelings	DECA Item #36: Make decisions for himself/herself
PS 1.4 Attempt new experiences with confidence and independence	DECA Item #3: Choose to do a task that was challenging for her/him
PS 1.5 Show pride in accomplishments	
<b><i>Develop self-regulation</i></b>	
PS 2.1 Recognize and label feelings	

Devereux Early Childhood Assessment (DECA)

<p><b>Pennsylvania Early Learning Standards for Pre-Kindergarten</b></p>	<p><b>DECA</b></p>
<p>PS 2.2 Express feelings, needs, opinions, and wants that are appropriate to the situation</p>	<p>DECA Item #5: Control his/her anger DECA Item #21: Shows patience DECA Item #13: Handle frustration well DECA Item #6: Respond positively to adult comforting when upset</p>
<p>PS 2.3 Understand consequences of own behavior</p>	<p>DECA Item #5: Control his/her anger DECA Item #21: Shows patience DECA Item #13: Handle frustration well</p>
<p>PS 2.4 Follow rules and routines in classroom and other settings</p>	<p>DECA Item #33: Cooperate with others DECA Item #4: Listen to or respect others</p>
<p>PS 2.5 Use materials with purpose, safety, and respect</p>	<p>DECA Item #4: Listen to or respect others DECA Item #25: Share with other children</p>
<p>PS 2.6 Pay attention as required by the task</p>	<p>DECA Item #24: Focus his/her attention or concentrate on a task for activity</p>
<p>PS 2.7 Make transitions between activities</p>	<p>DECA Item #4: Listens to or respect others DECA Item #30: Accept another choice when his/her first choice was unavailable</p>
<p>PS 2.8 Follow adult directions</p>	<p>DECA Item #4: Listens to or respect others</p>
<p>PS 2.9 Able to wait before acting in required situations</p>	<p>DECA Item #21: Show patience DECA Item #13: Handle frustration well</p>
<p><b><i>Develop social interactions</i></b></p>	
<p>PS 3.1 Trust familiar adults and close peers</p>	<p>DECA Item #29: Trust familiar adults and believe what they say</p>
<p>PS 3.2 Enter into and initiates play with peers</p>	<p>DECA Item #32: Ask other children to play with him/her DECA Item #20: Start or organize play with other children</p>
<p>PS 3.3 Enjoy playing with a specific other child in a variety of activities</p>	<p>DECA Item #20: Start or organize play with other children</p>

Devereux Early Childhood Assessment (DECA)

<p><b>Pennsylvania Early Learning Standards for Pre-Kindergarten</b></p>	<p><b>DECA</b></p>
<p>PS 3.4 Respond with empathy to children are upset and in need</p>	
<p>PS 3.5 Seek help from peers and adults when needed</p>	<p>DECA Item #31: Seek help from children/adults when necessary</p>
<p>PS 3.6 Respect the feelings, rights, and belongings of others</p>	<p>DECA Item #4: Listen to or respect others DECA Item #33: Cooperate with others</p>
<p>PS 3.7 Cooperate in small and large group activities</p>	<p>DECA Item #5: Control his/her anger DECA Item #21: Shows patience DECA Item #13: Handle frustration well DECA Item #33: Cooperate with others</p>
<p>PS 3.8 Play cooperatively with 2-3 peers for a sustained time</p>	<p>DECA Item #33: Cooperate with others</p>
<p>PS 3.9 Take turns in games and tasks</p>	<p>DECA Item #33: Cooperate with others DECA Item #25: Share with other children</p>
<p>PS 3.10 Share materials when appropriate</p>	<p>DECA Item #25: Share with others DECA Item #33: Cooperate with others</p>
<p>PS 3.11 Show increasing abilities to resolve conflicts with peers</p>	<p>DECA Item #5: Control his/her anger DECA Item# 21 Show patience DECA Item #16: Try different ways to solve a problem</p>
<p><b><i>Develop self-care and self-reliance</i></b></p>	
<p>PS 4.1 Choose materials and activities independently</p>	<p>DECA Item #36: Make decisions for himself/herself</p>
<p>PS 4.2 Put away materials on own</p>	<p>DECA Item #2: Do things for himself/herself</p>
<p>PS 4.3 Show increasing self-reliance in self-care activities. (e.g., toileting, grooming, dressing, eating)</p>	<p>DECA Item #2: Do things for himself/herself</p>

Devereux Early Childhood Assessment (DECA)

Pennsylvania Early Learning Standards for Pre-Kindergarten	DECA
PS 4.4 Recognize situations that are unsafe and behaves accordingly	

The DECA Program Classroom Strategies guide is a resource for teachers that provides valuable information for promoting children’s overall social and emotional well-being. Chapters 4 -8 discuss specific strategies that support children’s overall development and would be very informative to teachers in their work to address all of the indicators under the *Personal-Social* section.

Pennsylvania Early Learning Standards for Pre-Kindergarten	DECA
<b>Program Partnerships</b>	
<b>Quality ECE Programs must work closely with parents to advance their child's development and learning in the program and at home, as well as help parents gain confidence and competence as their child's primary teacher. Programs must have written procedures that are consistently implemented to assure that the objectives are met.</b>	
PP 1.1 Programs must provide parents with opportunities to share information about their child including their child's stage of development, interests and skill levels.	Parents are encouraged to administer the DECA on their child.  Parent meetings are held to discuss assessment results.
PP 1.2 Programs must work collaboratively with parents to prepare their child for the age appropriate screening process.	During the intake process and ongoing throughout the year, program shares all appropriate information about the DECA Program with families.
PP 1.3 Programs must conduct, within 45 calendar days of the child's entry, an age appropriate screening to identify strengths and concerns. The screening must be sensitive to the child's cultural background and delivered in the language spoken by the child.	The DECA includes 27 strength-based items to assess within-child protective factors as well as a 10 item behavioral concerns screener. The DECA is available in both English and Spanish and has been reviewed by Culturally and Linguistically Appropriate Services (CLAS).

Devereux Early Childhood Assessment (DECA)

<p><b>Pennsylvania Early Learning Standards for Pre-Kindergarten</b></p>	<p><b>DECA</b></p>
<p>PP 1.4 Programs must use the information gathered from the screening process, and in collaboration with parents, set goals for the child and determine how best to provide appropriate programming.</p>	<p>The DECA Program includes strategy guides for both teachers and parents to assist in setting goals and implementing strength-based plans for the school and home.</p>
<p>PP 1.5 Programs must provide parents with opportunities to enhance their parenting skills, their knowledge and understanding of the developmental needs and activities of their children, their child observation skills, and their ability to provide nurturing/supportive environments and relationships.</p>	<p>The DECA Program parent guide, <i>For Now and Forever</i>, provides parents with information about the importance of social and emotional health and concrete, easy-to-use strategies for the home that enhance within-child protective factors.</p> <p>The Partnership with Parents Reflective Checklist is completed by teaching staff to ensure that appropriate activities are in place to promote strong family involvement. In addition, an entire chapter of the <i>Classroom Strategies guide</i> is devoted to promoting strong family involvement.</p> <p>Parents administer the DECA and meet to discuss results and plan for improvements.</p>
<p><b>Quality ECE programs must connect parents to necessary and appropriate community services that may help the child and/or the family. Programs must have written procedures that are consistently implemented to assure that the objectives are met.</b></p>	
<p>PP 2.1 Programs must have current information about community resources and services available to young children and their families.</p>	
<p>PP 2.2 Programs must provide parents with information on medical, dental, nutrition, and mental health education programs in the community.</p>	
<p>PP 2.3 Programs must identify, through family and staff observation and dialogue, the family/child's need for and interest in additional services.</p>	<p>DECA Program training emphasizes skill building so that programs are able to effectively dialogue with parents about observations, assessment results and appropriate next steps.</p>

Devereux Early Childhood Assessment (DECA)

<p><b>Pennsylvania Early Learning Standards for Pre-Kindergarten</b></p>	<p><b>DECA</b></p>
<p>PP 2.4 Program personnel must connect families with resources and services appropriate to their needs and interests, including Early Intervention, Mental Health Services, Physical Health Services (including medical, dental, vision and hearing), Social Services, Adult Education Services (including family literacy), and Cultural Resources (such as libraries, museums and parks).</p>	
<p>PP 2.5 Program personnel must support families in evaluating the effectiveness of the services received, and in identifying next steps.</p>	<p>Evaluating Progress is an essential step in the implementation of the DECA Program. Pre-test / post-test assessment results are compared to determine whether a child has made statistically significant progress. In addition, multiple other ways of evaluating progress are offered in the resources and accompanying training.</p>
<p><b>Quality ECE programs must work with parents to identify strengths and needs of their child to facilitate successful transition for the child from one setting to another. Programs must have written procedures that are consistently implemented to assure that the objectives are met.</b></p>	
<p>PP 3.1 Programs must offer parents an individual meeting, in addition to the regular parent conference, to provide written information about their child's strengths and needs related to transitioning to another classroom or educational setting.</p>	<p>The DECA Program resources and training offer several tools, including a strength-based planning form, to help teachers and parents discuss the areas of growth as well as a child's strengths related to social and emotional health.</p>
<p>PP 3.2 Programs must assist parents as they prepare their children for the new educational setting.</p>	<p>Because the DECA is designed for children ages 2-5 (up to their 6<sup>th</sup> birthday), it is an ideal tool to help children transition from preschool to kindergarten.</p>
<p>PP 3.3 Programs must work collaboratively with the receiving program to enhance continuity of experiences for the child.</p>	

Devereux Early Childhood Assessment (DECA)

<p><b>Pennsylvania Early Learning Standards for Pre-Kindergarten</b></p>	<p><b>DECA</b></p>
<p>PP 3.4 Programs must work collaboratively with the receiving program to determine content and format of transition information to be documented.</p>	
<p>PP 3.5 Programs must transfer relevant child records, with consent of the parents, to the receiving school or program.</p>	
<p><b>Quality ECE programs must work with parents to participate in governance of the program, being informed of early childhood education services and establishing effective services for children in the community. Programs must have written procedures that are consistently implemented to assure that the objectives are met.</b></p>	
<p>PP 4.1 Provide parents with opportunities to have input on program policies and procedures at least annually.</p>	<p>Requesting that parents complete the Partnerships with Parents reflective checklist is an ideal opportunity to collect their feedback and use the information to guide policies and procedures.</p>
<p>PP 4.2 Provide parents with opportunities to participate in annual assessment of program progress.</p>	<p>In best practice, parents are invited to administer the DECA as a post-test to determine progress made.</p>
<p>PP 4.3 Provide information about the program philosophy, curriculum, operating procedures, volunteer and governance opportunities.</p>	
<p>PP 4.4 Provide information about quality improvement initiatives (such as Keystone Stars).</p>	<p>Several Devereux Early Childhood staff are TQAS trainers and can therefore provide information on quality initiatives happening throughout the state such as Keystone Stars.</p>
<p>PP 4.5 Provide information about proposed or final regulatory or policy changes affecting the program for their child through newsletters, newspaper articles, bulletin boards, etc.</p>	
<p>PP 4.6 Provide a means of expressing early concerns and/or resolving concerns about differences between program implementation and parent.</p>	

# Devereux Early Childhood Assessment (DECA)