

**Devereux Center for Resilient Children (DCRC) Assessment Tools:  
The Devereux Early Childhood Assessment Clinical Form (DECA-C)  
Summary Table**

**Devereux Early Childhood Assessment Clinical Form (DECA-C)**

<b>Description</b>	The Devereux Early Childhood Assessment Clinical Form (DECA-C) is a behavior rating scale that is completed by parents and/or early childhood or mental health professionals which provides an assessment of within-child protective factors central to social and emotional health and resilience, as well as social and emotional concerns, in children ages 2 through 5 (i.e., up to the sixth birthday).
<b>Authors</b>	Paul A. LeBuffe and Jack A. Naglieri
<b>Publisher and ordering link to webpage</b>	Kaplan Early Learning Company, Lewisville, NC: <a href="http://www.kaplanco.com/devereux">www.kaplanco.com/devereux</a>
<b>Publication date</b>	2002
<b>Age range</b>	Ages 2 through 5 (i.e., up to the sixth birthday)
<b>Qualifications of Raters/Users</b>	Parents and Early Childhood or Mental Health professionals rate the child. Observation of the child over a 4 week period is necessary to complete the assessment. No specific training required to rate the child. DECA-C Users are those who score and interpret results. DECA-C Users should be certified or licensed professionals with a thorough knowledge of test interpretation protocol ( <a href="#">Level B Users</a> ). If not a Level B User, one can attend training and pass a competency assessment in order to be able to use the DECA-C.
<b>Scale titles and description Number of items</b>	<p><i>Total Protective Factors (TPF) – 27 items</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Initiative</i>: The child’s ability to use independent thought and action to meet his/her needs – 11 items</li> <li>• <i>Self-Control</i>: The child’s ability to experience a range of feelings and express them using words and actions that society considers appropriate – 8 items</li> <li>• <i>Attachment</i>: The mutual, strong and long-lasting relationship between a child and significant adults, such as parents, family members, and teachers – 8 items</li> </ul> <p><i>Total Behavioral Concerns – 35 items</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Attention Problems</i>: Difficulties a child may have in focusing on a task and ignoring competing environmental stimuli – 7 items</li> <li>• <i>Aggression</i>: Hostile and destructive acts directed at other persons or things – 7 items</li> <li>• <i>Emotional Control Problems</i>: Difficulties a child has in modifying the overt expression of negative emotions – 8 items</li> <li>• <i>Withdrawal/Depression</i>: Behaviors related to emotional and social withdrawal in which the child is self-absorbed and</li> </ul>

	<p>often attends to his or her own thoughts or play rather than engaging in reciprocal interactions – 9 items</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Increased Concern Items</i>: While not comprising a scale, these items provide critical information about high risk behaviors seen in some young children – 4 items</li> </ul> <p>Total items on DECA-C – 62</p>
<b>Reading level</b>	Sixth-grade
<b>Used as an assessment and/or screening tool?</b>	The DECA-C is an assessment tool that provides in-depth information about a child’s behavior that is clinical in nature. The DECA-C provides parents and professionals with results that can be used to plan for the child, and also to contribute to a multi-faceted evaluation to help a child receive additional support services.
<b><u>Psychometrics</u></b>	<p><b><u>Reliability:</u></b></p> <p><b>Internal reliability/Consistency</b> – Total Protective Factor (TPF) coefficients for parent raters (.91) and teacher raters (.94). Total Behavioral Concerns (TBC) coefficients for parent raters (.88) and teacher raters (.93) also meet or exceed recommended minimum standards – see User’s Manual for details.</p> <p><b>Test-retest reliability</b> – TPF coefficients for parent raters (.74) and teacher raters (.94). TBC coefficients for parent raters (.88) and teacher raters (.86) also meet or exceed recommended minimum standard.</p> <p><b>Inter-rater reliability</b> – Correlations on all scales for teachers are significant (<math>p &lt; .05</math>). TPF coefficients are .69 and TBC coefficients are .66.</p> <p><b><u>Validity:</u></b></p> <p><b>Content validity</b> – High, based on a thorough review of literature in developmental psychology, focus groups with parents as well as with early care and education professionals, and the childhood version of the Devereux Scales of Mental Disorders (DSMD).</p> <p><b>Criterion validity</b> – The DECA-C has shown significant differences between scores of preschoolers in an “identified sample” (those with emotional and behavioral disturbance) versus the “community sample” (their non-identified peers).</p> <p><b>Construct validity</b> – The DECA-C has strong convergent validity with the total scale scores for both the Preschool Emotional and Behavioral Rating Scale (PreBERS) and Conners Early Childhood (EC). A plethora of detailed information on identification of specific behavioral disorders within the standardization sample is included in the User’s Guide. (<i>DECA-C User’s Guide</i>, page 41-50)</p>
<b><u>Standardization sample</u></b>	Final sample for protective factor scales included 2,000 children ages 2-5. Final sample of behavioral concerns items included 1,108 children. Both groups were representative of US Population ages 2-5 based on the following factors: age, gender, geographic region of residence, race ethnicity, and socioeconomic status.
<b>Administration Time</b>	The assessment items take approximately 10-15 minutes to complete in the paper version. Time is reduced to 5 minutes with use of the web-based version. Visit <a href="http://www.e-deca2.org">www.e-deca2.org</a> for more information.

<b>Results and Basic Interpretation Descriptions, Standard scores provided</b>	Percentile ranks and T-scores are provided for each scale ( <i>Initiative, Self-Control, Attachment, Withdrawal/Depression, Emotional Control Problems, Attention Problems, Aggression</i> ) and for Total Protective Factors and Total Behavioral Concerns. Unless <i>Increased Concern Items</i> are ranked “Never”, they are included in the report and discussed during follow-up. Scale score results range from Area of Need (T-scores 40 and below), Typical (T-scores 41-59), and Strengths (T-scores 60 and above) for Protective Factor scales. For the Behavioral Concerns scales, results range from Area of Need (T-scores 60 and above) or Typical (T-scores 59 and below).
<b>Advanced Interpretation</b>	Individual Item Analysis allows for identification of specific behaviors that can be leveraged (Strengths) or improved (Areas of Need) though use of specific strategies or interventions. Additional interpretation provided on the following: Comparisons Across Raters; Pretest-Posttest Comparison; Treatment Outcome Evaluation; Eligibility Guidelines; Percentage Delay.
<b>Strategies/Planning</b>	Results from the DECA-C would ideally lead to strength-based planning at the Child level. The Devereux Center for Resilient Children offers many useful planning resources, primarily <i>Promoting Resilience in Preschoolers: A Strategy Guide for Early Childhood Professionals</i> and <i>Promoting Resilience For Now and Forever: A Family Guide for Supporting the Social and Emotional Development of Young Children</i> . For two year olds receiving the DECA-C assessment, our Infant/Toddler resources are also useful in planning, primarily the <i>Infant and Toddler Strategies Guide</i> and <i>For Now and Forever: A Family Guide for Supporting the Social and Emotional Development of Infants and Toddlers</i> . Visit <a href="http://www.centerforresilientchildren.org">www.centerforresilientchildren.org</a> for more information on strategies and planning resources.
<b>Languages</b>	English, Spanish online only; culturally appropriate items (interpret results with child’s culture in mind)
<b>Web-based (electronic) version</b>	The web-based version of the DECA-C is part of the e-DECA web-based platform. Assessment options include per administration or per child. Visit <a href="http://www.e-deca2.org">www.e-deca2.org</a> for more information.
<b>Cost per Assessment</b>	Approximately \$2.00 per assessment, or approximately \$1 per assessment
<b>Cost per Kit (all items may be purchased separately)</b>	Cost of Kit: \$125.95. Kit includes: DECA-C record forms (30), <i>DECA-C Manual</i> , and DECA-C Norms Reference Card.
<b>Resources for families</b>	<i>Promoting Resilience For Now and Forever: A Family Guide for Supporting the Social and Emotional Development of Young Children</i> is offered to help families understand resilience and social and emotional health, as well as how to build these skills in their child. <i>Promoting Resilience in Preschoolers</i> , teachers’ guide, offers many strategies and tips on creating and maintaining family partnerships. <i>Socially Strong Emotionally Secure</i> provides 50 activities designed to promote resilience in preschoolers. For infants and toddler, useful resources include the <i>Infant and Toddler Strategies Guide</i> and <i>For Now and Forever: A Family Guide for Supporting the Social and Emotional Development of Infants and Toddlers</i> . Additional projects and resources for families are in development, specifically within DCRC’s Child Welfare Initiative. In addition, DCRC’s website provides information as well as many free activities and strategies for families to use to promote resilience. Contact: <a href="mailto:dcrc@devereux.org">dcrc@devereux.org</a>
<b><u>Professional Development available</u></b>	DECA-C Users should be certified or licensed professionals with a thorough knowledge of test interpretation protocol ( <a href="#">Level B Users</a> ). If not a Level B User, one can attend training and pass a competency assessment in order to be able to use the DECA-C.

Available at no cost:

Pre-recorded overview of the DECA-C: [www.youtube.com/watch?v=8poNguvOF2E](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8poNguvOF2E)

For Fee In-depth Webinars on the DECA-C:

[www.centerforresilientchildren.org/preschool/professional-development/webinars/](http://www.centerforresilientchildren.org/preschool/professional-development/webinars/)

Half-day and Full-day sessions available:

This professional development session is designed for mental health professionals, social workers, and other child-serving professionals who work with children already identified as having challenging behaviors. In this session, participants will learn:

- How to use the DECA-C to understand the needs of children who display challenging behavior over time
- How to administer and interpret the DECA-C assessment results
- How to effectively incorporate the assessment results into a positive support behavior plan

DCRC staff trains on many other topics related to preschoolers' social and emotional health including: Adult Resilience, Challenging Behavior, Reflective Practice, Quality Teaching Practices, Observation, and much more. Contact:

[dmahler@devereux.org](mailto:dmahler@devereux.org)

**References:**

- Conners, C.K. (2009). *Conners early childhood manual*. Toronto, Canada: Multi-Health Systems.
- Epstein, M.H. & Synhorst, L. (2009). *Preschool behavioral and emotional rating scale, examiner's manual*. Austin, TX: Pro-Ed.
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