

**DECA & Head Start
Devereux Early Childhood Assessment
Program as it relates to Head Start
Performance Standards
Revised, August 2012**

The Devereux Early Childhood Assessment (DECA-P2) Preschool Program, Second Edition is a strength-based system designed to promote resilience in children ages 3-5. Through the program, early childhood professionals and families learn specific strategies to support young children's social and emotional development, thus enhancing the overall quality of early childhood programs.

Head Start Performance Standards	Devereux Early Childhood Assessment (DECA-P2) Preschool Program
<p>1304.20 (b) (1) (b) Screening for developmental, sensory, and behavioral concerns. (1) In collaboration with each child's parent, and within 45 calendar days of the child's entry into the program, grantee and delegate agencies must perform or obtain linguistically and age appropriate screening procedures to identify concerns regarding a child's developmental, sensory (visual and auditory), behavioral, motor, language, social, cognitive, perceptual and emotional skills (see 45 CFR 1308.6 (b) (3) for additional information). To the greatest extent possible, these screening procedures must be sensitive to the child's cultural background.</p>	<p>The DECA-P2 is a standardized, valid and reliable instrument for children ages 3-5 that measures child protective factors as well as screens for behavioral concerns. The DECA, to be completed by both staff and parents, provides a tool to better understand a child's behavioral and social strengths and needs as well as determine when further assessment is necessary.</p> <p>Having been normed on a representative sample of children in the United States, the instrument is sensitive to children's cultural backgrounds. The instrument is available in English and Spanish. Requests for versions in other languages should be forwarded to Devereux, see contact information at the end of this document.</p>
<p>1304.20 (b) (2) (2) Grantee and delegate agencies must obtain direct guidance from a mental health or child development professional on how to use the findings to address identified needs.</p>	<p>The scoring mechanism of the DECA-P2 is one source of information that may be relayed to a mental health professional or child development specialist, when appropriate, and with parental consent. Available to program staff is phone support or electronic access to an early childhood/mental health specialist. Many professional development opportunities</p>

	<p>including distance learning and onsite technical assistance is also available. These services provide staff with immediate feedback and help facilitate the referral process.</p>
<p>1304.20 (b) (3) (3) Grantee and delegate agencies must utilize multiple sources of information on all aspects of each child's development and behavior, including input from family members, teachers, and other relevant staff who are familiar with the child's typical behavior.</p>	<p>The Devereux model emphasizes that both staff and parents administer the DECA-P2 and then jointly develop consistent plans for the home and school environments that promote children's resilience, based on multiple sources of information. Step One in the DECA Preschool Program, <i>Collect Information</i>, helps teachers understand why and how to gather information on children that will help guide planning.</p>
<p>1304.20 (d) Ongoing care. (d) In addition to assuring children's participation in a schedule of well child care, as described in section 1304.20 (a) of this part, grantee and delegate agencies must implement ongoing procedures by which Early Head Start and Head Start staff can identify any new or recurring medical, dental, or developmental concerns so that they may quickly make appropriate referrals. These procedures must include: periodic observations and recordings, as appropriate, of individual children's progress, changes in physical appearance (e.g., signs of injury or illness) and emotional and behavioral patterns. In addition, these procedures must include observations from parents and staff.</p>	<p>The Devereux model guides classroom personnel in conducting observations that are accurate, objective, and complete. The DECA Preschool Program is supported by training from Early Childhood Specialists on how to conduct quality running records observations. Step Five of the DECA Program, <i>Evaluate Progress</i>, indicates that the program is ongoing and should be used to gather information for measurable outcomes and accountability</p>
<p>1304.20 (e) (1) (e) Involving parents. (1) Consult with parents immediately when child health or developmental problems are suspected or identified;</p>	<p>The DECA Preschool Program encourages and supports teachers in their outreach efforts to involve parents in the assessment and planning procedures for their children. Many options from parent books to free downloads are available to include families in the process of identifying and building their child's strong social and emotional</p>

		health, protective factors, and resilience.
1304.20 (e) (3) (3) Talk with parents about how to familiarize their children in a developmentally appropriate way and in advance about all of the procedures they will receive while enrolled in the program;		<i>Promoting Resilience For Now and Forever: A family guide to support social and emotional development</i> , offers parents information about appropriate social and emotional development. The parent guide is easy-to-read, written on a 5th-grade reading level, and offers specific suggestions for parents to encourage their child's development.
1304.20 (f) (1) (f) Individualization of the program. (1) Grantee and delegate agencies must use the information from the screenings for developmental, sensory, and behavioral concerns, the ongoing observations, medical and dental evaluations and treatments, and insights from the child's parents to help staff and parents determine how the program can best respond to each child's individual characteristics, strengths and needs.		The DECA Preschool Program is a strength-based system that incorporates insight from parents and classroom staff regarding every child's social and emotional strengths and concerns. This information is gathered from multiple sources including assessment and observation, and is used for daily and weekly planning to meet children's individual needs.
1304.21 (a) (1) (iii) (iii) Provide an environment of acceptance that supports and respects gender, culture, language, ethnicity and family composition;		The <i>Promoting Resilience in Preschoolers</i> is another DECA Preschool Program resource. Five chapters are devoted to implementing teaching practices that promote children's social and emotional health and resilience. Through a developmentally appropriate environment, specific strategies are offered for encouraging Initiative, Self-Regulation, and Attachment/Relationships in individual children and groups of children.
1304.21 (a) (1) (iv) (iv) Provide a balanced daily program of child-initiated and adult-directed activities, including individual and small group activities; and		The classroom guide contains a chapter specifically devoted to using activities and experiences to promote resilience in children. Through developmentally appropriate activities and experiences, specific strategies are offered for encouraging Initiative, Self-Regulation, and Attachment/Relationships in individual children and groups of children.
1304.21 (a) (2) (ii)		The DECA Preschool Program is supported

<p>(ii) Provide opportunities to increase their child observation skills and to share assessments with staff that will help plan the learning experiences;</p>	<p>by observations that are accurate, objective and complete. Children and staff will both benefit from these quality observations and insights into children's behaviors, strengths, likes and dislikes. Training for the DECA Preschool Program includes an intensive module on improving child observation skills.</p>
<p>1304.21 (a) (3) (I) (A) (A) Grantee and delegate agencies must support social and emotional development by: Encouraging development which enhances each child's strengths by: Building trust;</p>	<p>The primary focus of the DECA Preschool Program is to promote protective factors in preschoolers. These protective factors will help the child grow into a resilient adult. One of the three protective factors that the DECA Preschool Program will assess in children and work to build is: Attachment/Relationships, or, a child's ability to promote and maintain mutual, positive connections with other children and significant adults.</p>
<p>1304.21 (a) (3) (I) (B) (B) Fostering independence;</p>	<p>Another protective factor the DECA Preschool Program will assess and build in children is: Initiative, or, a child's ability to use independent thoughts or actions to meet his or her needs.</p>
<p>1304.21 (a) (3) (I) (C) (C) Encouraging self-control by setting clear, consistent limits, and having realistic expectations;</p>	<p>Another protective factor the DECA Preschool Program will assess and build in children is: Self-Regulation, or, a child's ability to express emotions and manage behaviors in healthy ways.</p>
<p>1304.21 (a) (3) (I) (D) (D) Encouraging respect for the feelings and rights of others; and</p>	<p>The classroom guide contains a chapter that focuses specifically on caring connections between the teacher and the children, as well as between the children themselves. Through developmentally appropriate practices, specific strategies are offered for encouraging Initiative, Self-Regulation, and Attachment/Relationships in individual children and groups of children.</p>
<p>1304.21 (a) (3) (I) (E)</p>	<p>The classroom guide contains a chapter</p>

<p>(E) Supporting and respecting the home language, culture, and family composition of each child in ways that support the child's health and well-being;</p>	<p>devoted to strengthening partnerships with families. Through appropriate involvement of families, specific strategies are offered for encouraging Initiative, Self-Regulation, and Attachment/Relationships in individual children and groups of children.</p>
<p>1304.21 (a) (3) (ii) (ii) Planning for routines and transitions so that they occur in a timely, predictable and unrushed manner according to each child's needs.</p>	<p>The classroom guide contains a chapter that focuses on the daily program. Through a developmentally appropriate daily routines, specific strategies are offered for encouraging Initiative, Self-Regulation, and Attachment/Relationships in individual children and groups of children by planning for routines and transitions.</p>
<p>1304.21 (a) (4) (I) (I) Supporting each child's learning, using various strategies including experimentation, inquiry, observation, play, and exploration;</p>	<p>The classroom guide offers strategies to guide teachers in how they will allow children to learn and develop through play and positive interactions with adults and other children.</p>
<p>1304.21(c) (1) (iv) (iv) Ensures that the program environment helps children develop emotional security and facility in social relationships;</p>	<p>The focus of the DECA Preschool Program is to promote healthy social and emotional development in children and to help foster resilience. The classroom guide offers strategies that are specifically designed to help children develop healthy attachment/relationships, an important factor in a child's development of emotional security.</p>
<p>1304.21 (c) (1) (v) & (vi) (v) Enhances each child's understanding of self as an individual and as a member of a group; (vi) Provides each child with opportunities for success to help develop feelings of competence, self-esteem, and positive attitudes toward learning;</p>	<p>The classroom guide offers guidance that will help teachers understand the importance of children developing sense-of-self, as well as specific strategies to foster this growth. Opportunities are discussed to allow children to explore and express their feelings, as well as experience a sense of belonging, both in small- group and large-group activities.</p>
<p>1304.21 (c) (2) (2) Staff must use a variety of strategies to promote and support children's learning and developmental progress based on the</p>	<p>In the DECA Preschool Program, individual child observations and classroom observations are encouraged throughout the program year. Results are used to plan for</p>

<p>observations and ongoing assessment of each child.</p>		<p>individuals and for the classroom.</p>
<p>1304.24 (a) (1) (I) (a) Mental Health Services (1) Grantee and delegate agencies must work collaboratively with parents for issues related to parents education by: (I) Soliciting parental information, observations, and concerns about their child's mental health.</p>		<p>Because the DECA-P2 is completed by both parents and staff, communication about the child can be accomplished through completing and discussing its results. This communication can occur through both formal and informal methods.</p>
<p>1304.24 (a) (1) (ii) (ii) Sharing staff observations of their child and discussing and anticipating with parents their child's behavior and development, including separation and attachment issues.</p>		<p>Observation and collecting information about children and their environment is a key step in the DECA Preschool Program. Staff learns the importance of appropriate observation, how to share this information with families, and how to use these observations to plan with families to promote children's Initiative, Self-Regulation, and Attachment/Relationships. The parent guide, <i>Promoting Resilience For Now and Forever: A family guide to support social and emotional development</i>, includes a chapter on how to foster attachment/relationships in preschoolers.</p>
<p>1304.24 (a) (1) (iii) (iii) Discussing and identifying with parents appropriate responses to their child's behaviors</p>		<p>The parent guide includes positive techniques of guidance for parents and staff to increase a child's Initiative, Self-Regulation, and Attachment/Relationships. Rather than focus on negative behaviors, the model identifies protective factors that parents and teachers can support and enhance together.</p>
<p>1304.24 (a) (1) (iv) (iv) Discussing how to strengthen nurturing, supportive environments and relationships in the home and at the program</p>		<p>DECA Preschool Program resources are designed to assist staff and parents in helping children develop Initiative, Self-Regulation, and Attachment/Relationships by focusing on the areas of environment, daily routines, caring connections, activities and experiences, and partnerships between teachers and families.</p>
<p>1304.24 (a) (1) (v)</p>		<p>The parent guide includes activities that</p>

<p>(v) Helping parents to better understand mental health issues</p>	<p>assist parents in learning about and promoting children's resilience. With teacher's involvement in the DECA Preschool Program, staff will be better prepared to discuss these sensitive mental health issues with parents.</p>
<p>1304.24 (a) (1) (vi) (vi) Supporting parents participation in any needed mental health interventions</p>	<p>Through a culturally competent approach, the Devereux model emphasizes to staff the importance of communicating with parents about mental health issues and providing parents with information about partnering with staff and other mental health resources to promote children's social and emotional development. Regularly scheduled family activities are strongly encouraged in the Devereux model.</p>
<p>1304.24 (a) (2) (2) Grantee and delegate agencies must secure the services of mental health professionals on a schedule of sufficient frequency to enable the timely and effective identification of and intervention in family and staff concerns about child's mental health</p>	<p>The DECA Preschool Program may be used as one source of information to recommend the referral of a child to a mental health specialist. The model also provides electronic access to an early childhood/mental health specialist. This access will provide support to the staff until an on-site mental health professional is available. In addition, the electronic technical assistance will guide staff and parents in their efforts to secure the assistance of a mental health professional in their community.</p>
<p>1304.24 (a) (3) (I) (3) Mental health program services must include a regular schedule of on-site mental health consultation involving the mental health professional, program staff, and parents on how to: (I) Design and implement program practices responsive to the identified behavioral and mental health concerns of an individual child or group of children</p>	<p>The Devereux model supports and enhances regularly scheduled on-site mental health consultation.</p> <p>The DECA-P2 produces two types of profiles, an individual profile and a classroom profile. Based on these profiles generated by the assessment, teachers implement strategies that are specifically geared to address the needs of the individual child as well as the entire class. Item-level analysis offers valuable insight that will help teachers and families determine the most</p>

		appropriate strengths and goals to include in a child's plan.
1304.24 (a) (3) (ii) (ii) Promote children's mental wellness by providing group and individual staff and parent education on mental health issues		The Devereux model provides staff and parent education on mental health through the Strategies and electronic technical assistance. While this does not take the place of an on-site mental health specialist, it provides feedback to staff and parents regarding their immediate concerns.
1304.24 (a) (3) (iii) (iii) Assist in providing special help for children with atypical behavior or development		<p>The DECA-P2 includes a Behavioral Concerns scale which can serve as information for teachers and parents about a child's atypical behavior. This scale alone should not be used to make a decision about a child's behavior, but should serve as a guide regarding the need for further assessment.</p> <p>Devereux also has a full assessment of behavioral concerns and protective factors, the DECA-Clinical or DECA-C. In addition, the DECA Preschool Program offers online downloadable planning forms, including several devoted to helping children change challenging behaviors.</p> <p>Finally, the <i>Facing the Challenge</i> DVD Series, <i>Classroom Moments</i> DVD, <i>FLIP IT</i> ®: <i>Transforming Challenging Behaviors</i>, and a variety of train-the-trainer and onsite professional development opportunities around challenging behaviors are offered.</p>
1304.40 (a) (4) & (5) (4) & (5) A variety of opportunities must be created by grantee and delegate agencies for interaction with parents throughout the year. Meetings and interactions with families must be respectful of each family's diversity and cultural and ethnic background.		The DECA Preschool Program encourages and supports family involvement throughout the program design. The DECA-P2 is also available in Spanish to help support even more families.
1304.40 (e) (1)		The DECA-P2 should be completed by both

<p>(e) (1) Grantee and delegate agencies must provide opportunities to include parents in the development of the programs curriculum and approach to child development and education.</p>	<p>the parent and the teacher. The results are then coupled with classroom observations and other pertinent family information to help plan for the children. The design of the Devereux model incorporates parents as key members of the planning team.</p>
<p>1304.40 (e) (3) Grantee and delegate agencies must provide opportunities for parents to enhance their parenting skills, knowledge, and understanding of the educational and developmental needs and activities of their children and to share concerns about their children with program staff.</p>	<p>The DECA Preschool Program encourages family involvement at many different levels. Parents and other key family members are important members of their child's planning team. Parental input is encouraged in the program design, including the environment, the activities and experiences, and the daily program.</p>
<p>1304.40 (f) (1) (f) (1) Grantee and delegate agencies must provide medical, dental, nutrition, and mental health education programs for program staff, parents, and families.</p>	<p>The DECA Preschool Program serves as a mental health education program complete with assessment, strategies and planning forms for children and classrooms.</p>
<p>1304.40 (f) (4) (I) (ii) & (iii) (4) (I) Grantee and delegate agencies must ensure that the mental health education program provides, at a minimum: (I) A variety of group opportunities for parents and program staff to identify and discuss issues related to mental health (ii) Individual opportunities for parents to discuss mental health issues related to their child and family with program staff; (iii) The active involvement of parents in planning and implementing any mental health interventions for their children.</p>	<p>The parent guide was designed to be incorporated into parent trainings and parent activities designed to promote the mental health of children and of parents. The DECA Preschool Program helps open the lines of communication between staff and parents regarding healthy social and emotional development and modeling. Parents and staff alike are also encouraged to reflect upon their own protective factors as a way to plan for their own positive mental health. <i>Building Your Bounce</i> and the <i>Devereux Adult Resilience Scale (DARS)</i> are two Devereux resources to help adults reflect upon and plan for their own healthy resilience.</p>
<p>1304.40 (h) (3) (ii) Assist parents to communicate with teachers and other school personnel so that parents can participate in decisions related to their children's education.</p>	<p>The parent guide helps give parents the terminology to use as well as ideas to explore in planning for their children. Because parents and teacher complete the same assessment, parental input is a key part of their child's programming.</p>

<p>1304.41 (a) (2) (ii) (vii) & (viii) Grantee and delegate agencies must take affirmative steps to establish ongoing collaborative relationships with community organizations to promote the access of children and families to community services that are responsive to their needs, and to ensure that Early Head Start and Head Start programs respond to community needs, including: (ii) Mental health providers. (vii) Local elementary schools and other educational and cultural institutions, such as libraries and museums, for both children and families; (viii) Providers of child care services</p>	<p>Communication will be facilitated by the results of this standardized, reliable, and valid, strength-based assessment. Results may be shared, as needed, and with parental permission, with other community agencies involved in planning and supporting the child and his or her family. Child care staff, elementary school personnel, and mental health providers may choose to use DECA-P2 results to support the growing strengths of the child. The opportunity for consistency across programs is increased.</p>
<p>1304.52 (I) Grantee and delegate agencies must, at a minimum, perform annual performance reviews of each Early Head Start and Head Start staff member and use the results of these reviews to identify staff training and professional needs, modify staff performance agreements, as necessary, and assist each staff member in improving his or her skills and professional competencies.</p>	<p>One of the essential sets of DECA Program forms, the Reflective Checklists, help administrative staff to assess the developmental appropriateness of classroom environments, daily programs, activities and experiences, caring connections, and partnerships with families. By administrators and teachers completing the Reflective Checklists for Teaching Practices together, communication and facilitation of professional growth are fostered.</p>
<p>1304.52 (j) (3) Grantee and delegate agencies must make mental health and wellness information available to staff with concerns that may affect their job performance.</p>	<p>Participation in the DECA Preschool Program provides the unique opportunity for staff to reflect on their own protective factors. Being aware of their own strengths and concerns can help staff become more mentally healthy and thus reflect a more positive and nurturing environment for children.</p>
<p>1304.53 (a) (1) & (3) (1) Grantee and delegate agencies must provide a physical environment and facilities conducive to learning and reflective of the different stages of development of each child. (3) The center space provided by grantee</p>	<p>An entire chapter devoted to environment will serve as a vital reference to classroom and administrative personnel. Through a developmentally appropriate environment, specific strategies are offered for encouraging Initiative, Self-Regulation, and Attachment/Relationships in individual</p>

<p>and delegate agencies must be organized into functional areas that can be recognized by the children and that allow for individual activities and social interactions.</p>	<p>children and groups of children.</p>
<p>1304.53 (b) (1) (I) (ii) (iii) (iv) (v) (vi) & (vii) (b) Grantee and delegate agencies must provide and arrange sufficient equipment, toys, materials, and furniture to meet the needs and facilitate the participation of children and adults. Equipment, toys, materials, and furniture owned or operated by the grantee or delegate agency must be: (I) Supportive of the specific educational objectives of the local program; (ii) Supportive of the local cultural and ethnic backgrounds of the children; (iii) Age-appropriate, safe, and supportive of the abilities and developmental level of each child served, with adaptations, if necessary, for children with disabilities; (iv) Accessible, attractive, and inviting to children; (v) Designed to provide a variety of learning experiences and to encourage each child to experiment and explore; (vi) Safe, durable, and kept in good condition; (vii) Stored in a safe and orderly fashion when not in use.</p>	<p>Several chapters in the classroom guide offer specific strategies that allow children to learn and develop through play and positive interactions with adults and other children. Guidelines for planning incorporate cultural and ethnic sensitivity and inclusion, materials and activities for children of varying developmental levels, and proper use, clean-up, and storage of equipment. Both new and seasoned teachers alike will benefit from the rich strategies designed to make the classroom developmentally appropriate, fun and supportive of social and emotional growth.</p>
<p>1308.6 (a) (1) & (2) The disabilities coordinator must be involved with other program staff throughout the full process of assessment of children, which has three steps: (1) All children enrolled in Head Start are screened as the first step in the assessment process; (2) Staff also carry out on-going developmental assessment for all enrolled children throughout the year to determine progress and plan program activities.</p>	<p>The DECA Preschool Program is to be completed by parents and teachers for ALL children in the classroom. Each child's individual strengths and needs in the areas of Initiative, Self-Regulation, and Attachment/Relationships, and Behavior Concerns will be discovered. Children with low protective factors who might have previously slipped though the cracks will be identified and incorporated in the planning process, even when they lack behavioral concerns. This aspect of the DECA-P2 makes the assessment unique in comparison</p>

		with other instruments that assess social and emotional health. It is a tool to help identify children early in order to prevent future social and emotional problems.
1308.6 (d) Developmental assessment, the second step, is the collecting of information on each child's functioning in these areas: gross and fine motor, perceptual discrimination, cognition, attention skills, self-help, social and receptive skills, and expressive language.		The area of social/emotional development is an area in which information must be collected throughout the program year. In addition to social and emotional health, a behavioral concerns screener will assist in the identification of children at-risk.
1308.8 (a) & (b) (a) An emotional/behavioral disorder is a condition in which a child's behavioral or emotional responses are so different from those of the generally accepted, age-appropriate norms of children with the same ethnic or cultural background as to result in significant impairment in social relationships, self-care, educational progress or classroom behavior. (b) The eligibility decision must be based on multiple sources of data, including assessment of the child's behavioral or emotional functioning in multiple settings.		Utilizing the DECA-P2 as one source of information, in addition to information gathered through quality observations and other sources, will contribute to the decision for referral for further evaluation. The DECA-Clinical version (or DECA-C) serves as a follow-up assessment for children scoring in the concern range on the DECA-P2 behavioral concerns screener.
1308.19(d) & (e) (d) If Head Start develops the IEP, the IEP must take into consideration the child's unique needs, strengths, developmental potential and the family strengths and circumstances as well as their child's disabilities. (e) The IEP must include: (1) A statement about the child's present level of functioning in the social-emotional, motor, communication, self-help, and cognitive areas of development, and the identification of needs in those areas requiring specific programming.		The strength-based assessment tool, the DECA-P2, will provide information regarding a child's strengths in the areas of Initiative, Self-Regulation, and Attachment/Relationships. This information will be key in planning for children who have been identified as children with special needs.
1308.19 (j) (2)		The DECA Preschool Program strongly

<p>Grantee and their delegates must make vigorous efforts to involve parents in the IEP process. The grantee must: (2) make every effort to assure that parents understand the purpose and proceedings and that they are encouraged to provide information about their child and their desires for the child's program;</p>	<p>encourages programs to include parents as a key part of the planning team for all children, including children for whom an IEP has been developed.</p>
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