

**Devereux Student Strengths Assessment (DESSA):**  
Scales and Associated Items

**Self-Awareness:** A child's realistic understanding of her/his strengths and limitations and consistent desire for self-improvement.

- 41. make accurate statements about events in her/his life?
- 49. teach another person to do something?
- 57. ask questions to clarify what he/she did not understand?
- 58. show an awareness of her/his personal strengths?
- 59. ask somebody for feedback?
- 62. describe how he/she was feeling?
- 63. give an opinion when asked?

**Social-Awareness:** A child's capacity to interact with others in a way that shows respect for their ideas and behaviors, recognizes her/his impact on them, and uses cooperation and tolerance in social situations.

- 8. cope well with insults and mean comments?
- 11. get along with different types of people?
- 17. act respectfully in a game or competition?
- 19. respect another person's opinion?
- 22. contribute to group efforts?
- 25. resolve a disagreement
- 27. share with others?
- 31. cooperate with peers or siblings?
- 34. forgive somebody who hurt or upset her/him?

**Self-Management:** A child's success in controlling his or her emotions and behaviors, to complete a task or succeed in a new or challenging situation.

- 43. pay attention?
- 44. wait for her/his turn?

- 46. focus on a task despite a problem or distraction?
- 48. act comfortable in a new situation?
- 51. perform the steps of a task in order?
- 53. think before he/she acted?
- 54. pass up something he/she wanted, or do something he/she did not like, to get something better in the future?
- 56. accept another choice when his/her first choice was unavailable?
- 60. stay calm when faced with a challenge?
- 67. adjust well to changes in plans?
- 72. adjust well when going from one setting to another?

**Goal-Directed Behavior:** A child's initiation of, and persistence in completing, tasks of varying difficulty.

- 3. keep trying when unsuccessful?
- 9. take steps to achieve goals?
- 12. try to do her/his best?
- 13. seek out additional knowledge or information?
- 14. take an active role in learning?
- 15. do things independently?
- 18. ask to take on additional work or responsibilities?
- 26. show creativity in completing a task?
- 29. seek out challenging tasks?
- 33. work hard on projects?

**Relationship Skills:** A child's consistent performance of socially acceptable actions that promote and maintain positive connections with others.

- 38. compliment or congratulate somebody?
- 40. do something nice for somebody?
- 45. show appreciation of others?
- 47. greet a person in a polite way?
- 50. attract positive attention from peers?
- 55. express concern for another person?
- 61. attract positive attention from adults?
- 64. make a suggestion or request in a polite way?
- 70. offer to help somebody?
- 71. respond to another person's feelings?

**Personal Responsibility:** A child's tendency to be careful and reliable in her/his actions and in contributing to group efforts.

1. remember important information?
4. handle his/her belongings with care?
6. serve an important role at home or school?
20. encourage positive behavior in others?
21. prepare for school, activities, or upcoming events?
23. do routine tasks or chores without being reminded?
24. act as a leader in a peer group?
28. get things done in a timely fashion?
32. show care when doing a project or school work?
35. follow rules?

**Decision Making:** A child's approach to problem solving that involves learning from others and from her/his own previous experiences, using her/his values to guide her/his action, and accepting responsibility for her/his decisions.

37. follow the example of a positive role model?
39. accept responsibility for what she/he did?
42. show good judgment?
52. seek advice?
65. learn from experience?
66. follow the advice of a trusted adult?
68. show the ability to decide between right and wrong?
69. use available resources (people or objects) to solve a problem?

**Optimistic Thinking:** A child's attitude of confidence, hopefulness, and positive thinking regarding herself/himself and her/his life situations in the past, present, and future.

2. carry herself/himself with confidence?
5. say good things about herself/himself?
7. speak about positive things?
10. look forward to classes or activities at school?
16. say good things about his/her classmates?
30. say good things about the future?
36. express high expectations for himself/herself?

