



## Excerpts from Reviews of the Devereux Student Strengths Assessment (DESSA)

**Durlak, J. A., Domitrovich, C. E., Weissberg, R. P., Gullotta, T. P. (2015). *Handbook of Social and Emotional Learning Research and Practice*. New York: Guilford Press.**

The Handbook has been the go-to for comprehensive and conclusive research, policy and practice for Social and Emotional Learning. It explores scientific and conceptual foundations of SEL and its connection to academic achievement, mental health, and overall well-being.

*"Recent independent investigations indicate evidence of convergent and divergent validity for the main measure, as well as reliability, and predictive power for the DESSA-Mini."*

*"Given its level of comprehensiveness and focus on child strengths, and its fit with other criteria listed here, the DESSA provides useful information for intervention planning and can also be applied to create classroom profiles that can be used for subsequent prevention strategies."*

*"...this measure could conceivably be used for interim and formative functions, as well as summative functions, because of its standardization."*

**Denham, S. A., Ji, P. & Hamre, B. (2010). *Compendium of preschool through elementary social-emotional learning and associated assessment measures*. Chicago, IL: Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning.**

The Compendium provides reviews and descriptions of assessment tools used to measure social and emotional learning.

*"It utilizes only strength-based items whereas most rating scales have a larger focus on clinically oriented items."*

*"The DESSA also lends itself to be used with the general population in Tier 1 (i.e., universal screening) to promote the social-emotional well-being of all youth as well as for more targeted and intensive interventions."*

*"Another advantage the DESSA has over both the BASC-2 and the BERS-2 is that it is shorter and simpler because the same form can be used with both parents and teachers. This also enables parent and teacher ratings to be directly compared on the same set of behaviors."*

**Devereux Student Strengths Assessment. (2010). In R. A. Spies, J. F. Carlson, & K. F. Geisinger (Eds.), *The eighteenth mental measurements yearbook*. Lincoln, NE: Buros Institute of Mental Measurements.**

The Mental Measurements Yearbook provides relevant assessment reviews to encourage and promote informed test selection.

*"The DESSA is an elegant, comprehensive measure of young student social-emotional strengths."*

*"The questions are thought-provoking."*

*"These (internal consistency) estimates are impressive."*

*"The DESSA is a well-thought-out, appropriately developed test that holds great promise of value for those working with children who face adversity in their lives. The emphasis on identifying positive behaviors is a major attribute of the DESSA."*

*"The DESSA manual is well organized. The rating scale is easy to complete."*

*"The DESSA is a well-thought-out, norm-referenced, easily administered and interpreted behavior rating scale."*

*"Initial reliability and validity information...is very promising. The developmental processes of the DESSA meet or exceed the standards for test construction set forth by the American Psychological Association. The results of the DESSA would lend themselves well...to help children overcome adversities they have faced or will face in their lives."*

**Haggerty, K., Elgin, J., & Woolley, A. (2011). *Social-emotional learning and school climate assessment measures for middle school youth*. Retrieved from the Raikes Foundation**

This review identifies and validates assessments for the social and emotional well-being of children. It is intended to help schools recognize useful and successful tools and programs.

*"Strong psychometric properties. It has solid conceptualization and ease of administration."*

*"The profiles are easy to read and interpret. Information on the website is readily available and easy to access."*

**Merrell, K. W., & Gueldner, B. A. (2010). *Social and emotional learning in the classroom: Promoting mental health and academic success*. New York: Guilford Press.**

This book provides essential resources for implementing social and emotional learning in K-12 settings. Guidance is provided on choosing the right SEL program, how to teach SEL concepts, how to monitor outcomes and more.

*"The DESSA evidences careful development, with commendable attention to both theoretical issues and practical details of test construction. The nationwide norming sample is large and impressive, as are the psychometric properties and basic validity research."*

*"The DESSA appears to be advantageous for several reasons, including its specific focus on protective factors or resilience, its dual-rater (parent and teacher) target, its structural connection to the three-tiered prevention model that is increasingly popular in education, its strong technical properties, and the availability of the brief 1-minute checkup version of the scale."*

*"Overall, the DESSA appears to be a solid and welcome addition to the available assessments in this realm."*

Aperture Education, LLC is the exclusive publisher of the DESSA.

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