

DESSA 2 Single Competency Progress Monitoring Forms User Guide

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This guide explains how to administer, score, interpret, and use the DESSA 2 Single Competency Progress Monitoring Forms to monitor students' growth in specific social-emotional competencies over time and inform instructional decisions.

Progress monitoring is an essential component of a multi-tiered system of supports (MTSS) for social and emotional skill development. By comparing assessment scores over time, it helps determine whether instruction, interventions, or other supports are improving students' social and emotional competence. Rather than waiting until the end of the school year to evaluate outcomes, progress monitoring allows educators to measure growth throughout the year and adjust instruction as needed.

Three approaches to progress monitoring are available within the DESSA x Move This World system, depending on your goals (see Table 1). The **DESSA 2 mini** is designed to monitor overall social and emotional competence. The **DESSA 2 Single Competency Progress Monitoring Forms** are designed to monitor growth in one or more specific competency domains (e.g., Self-Management, Relationship Skills). The **full DESSA 2 assessment** can be used to monitor both overall social and emotional competence and individual competency domains. The [DESSA 2 Technical Manual](#) provides guidance on progress monitoring with the DESSA 2 mini and full DESSA 2 assessment. This guide focuses on the six Single Competency Progress Monitoring Forms.

Table 1. Choosing the Right DESSA Progress Monitoring Measure

If your goal is to...	Use...
Monitor overall social and emotional competence	DESSA 2 mini
Monitor one or more specific competencies	DESSA 2 Single Competency Progress Monitoring Forms
Monitor both overall competence and all six competencies	DESSA 2 assessment

Overview of the Forms

The DESSA 2 Single Competency Progress Monitoring Forms consist of six brief behavior rating scales, one for each social and emotional competency measured by the DESSA 2:

- Self-Awareness
- Self-Management
- Social Awareness
- Relationship Skills
- Responsible Decision Making
- Optimistic Thinking

Each form includes eight items that measure behaviors related to a single competency and is completed by educators for students in grades K–8. Most items were drawn directly from the DESSA 2 assessment and aligned to the corresponding competency. To ensure comprehensive coverage of each competency, one or two additional items per form were selected from the DESSA 2 standardization item pool based on both their psychometric performance and representation of the competency.

The forms are intended to monitor growth in one or more specific social and emotional competencies over time. They are most appropriate when educators want to evaluate the effectiveness of instruction, interventions, or supports targeting a particular competency, such as a Tier 2 small group intervention in Relationship Skills.

Administering and Using of the Forms

The DESSA 2 Single Competency Progress Monitoring Forms are standardized, norm-referenced behavior rating scales that are administered and completed in the same manner as the DESSA 2 measures (see Chapter 4 of the [DESSA 2 Technical Manual](#) for additional guidance). Forms may be administered individually or in combination, depending on the competencies being monitored.

The forms are intended for progress monitoring at the individual student, small group, or classroom level. To evaluate growth over time, administrations should be separated by at least four weeks so that each rating reflects a different sample of student behavior. To allow sufficient time for instruction, practice, and skill development, an interval of six to eight weeks between administrations is recommended. The same form can be administered repeatedly throughout the year.

In the DESSA x Move This World system, the forms can be completed by selecting the *Complete Progress Monitoring* button on the Ratings tab. Detailed guidance on how to complete and access these ratings can be found in this [Knowledge Base article](#).

Scoring and Interpreting the Forms

The DESSA x Move This World system automatically saves and scores the rating form upon submission. All eight items must be completed to submit and generate a score, which are computed in the following way.

Item responses are assigned values from Never = 0 to Almost Always = 4. Scores are summed to produce a raw score, which is then converted to a competency-specific *T*-score and percentile rank using the appropriate norms table based on the DESSA 2 normative sample. Separate norms tables are provided for each of the six forms.

Each form produces a single competency-specific score that reflects a student's social and emotional competence in that domain at the time of assessment. *T*-scores are interpreted using the following descriptive ranges:

- **Strength:** *T*-scores of 60 and above
- **Typical:** *T*-scores of 41–59
- **Need for Instruction:** *T*-scores of 40 and below

Progress is evaluated by comparing a student's competency *T*-score across administrations. Changes in *T*-scores indicate whether social and emotional competence is improving, remaining stable, or declining, and can help determine whether current instructional supports should be continued, modified, or intensified. Table 2 provides guidance for interpreting changes in *T*-scores and determining whether instructional adjustments may be warranted.

In addition to monitoring individual students, results can be aggregated at the group, classroom, grade, school, or district level to evaluate the effectiveness of instructional supports and inform planning.

When interpreting progress, allow sufficient time for instruction, practice, skill development, and opportunities to observe new behaviors before expecting meaningful changes in scores. Although the goal of instruction is to strengthen students' social and emotional competence, some students may demonstrate declines over time. For example, students who experience hardship or traumatic life events between assessments may show lower competence at follow-up. [Research](#) also suggests that social and emotional competence often declines during the middle school years. Progress monitoring data can help identify these patterns and determine when additional supports may be needed.

Table 2. Using Changes in *T*-scores to Inform Instruction

<i>T</i> -score Difference	Description of the Difference	Guidance
Less than 2	No change	Supports are ineffective. Review additional data (e.g., attendance, implementation fidelity, etc.) and address as needed, or try to new strategies. Consult with student assistance personnel
2–4	Small change	Supports are somewhat effective. Increase the frequency, duration, or intensity of supports, or try new strategies. If only group supports are being provided, consider more individualized supports.
5–7	Medium change	Supports are moderately effective. Continue the current plan and if resources permit, consider enhancing support.
8 or more	Large change	Supports are working well. Continue the current plan.

Note. The guidance in this table reflects negligible or positive change in *T*-scores. If negative trends are observed and the student falls in the Need range, review additional data (attendance, implementation fidelity, recent life events, etc.) and consider further assessment and consultation with student assistance personnel to determine whether a change in the strategies or supports being provided are needed. Also consider reducing the interval between successive administrations for more frequent progress monitoring.

Access Additional Support

For additional training and support resources, visit our [Training](#) page in the Educator Portal to access self-paced courses, on-demand videos, FAQs, and other helpful resources.

Our 24/7 [Support Portal](#) is located under the question mark icon in the upper righthand corner of your dashboard. Use it to access additional resources. Click the **Submit a request** button on the top right to contact our support team.