



Frequently Asked Questions

This document was updated 05/15/08. Please note that this document will be revised periodically. Check for the most up-to-date version of this and other documents at www.draccess.org.

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Why Special Education is Required to Use the DRDP

Why do preschool children with IEPs need to participate in the Desired Results Assessment System?

- Implementing the Desired Results Assessment System ensures that the California Department of Education/Special Education Division, Special Education Local Plan Areas (SELPA) comply with requirements of PL 108-446, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 2004 (IDEA 2004) and the U.S. Department of Education's Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP).
- *Participation in statewide assessments:* In the fall of 2006, the Child Development Division (CDD) of the California Department of Education (CDE) began implementing statewide assessment of children in state-funded preschool programs using the Desired Results Assessment System. PL 108-446, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 2004 (IDEA 2004), requires the inclusion of children with disabilities in any state or district-wide assessments for accountability purposes (IDEA 2004: Sec 612(a) (16)(A)). Therefore, preschool-age children with disabilities need to be included in the Desired Results assessments.
- *Report progress in achieving child outcomes:* In accordance with IDEA 2004, 20 U.S.C. 1416(b)(1), not later than one year after the date of enactment of this law, each State must have in place a six year performance plan that evaluates the State's efforts to implement the requirements and purposes of Part B of IDEA and describe how the State will improve such implementation. This plan is called the Part B State Performance Plan (Part B – SPP). In accordance with IDEA 2004, 20 U.S.C. 1416(b)(2)(C)(ii) the State shall report annually to the public on the performance of each local educational agency located in the State on the targets in the State's performance plan. In California, CDE will report on this performance by SELPA. The State also shall report annually to the U.S. Secretary of Education on the performance of the State under the State's Performance Plan. This report is called the Part B Annual Performance Report, or Part B – APR (OSEP memorandum 05 – 12 to Chief State School Officers, State Directors of Special Education, and State Data Managers from the Office of Special Education Programs, U.S. Department of Education). In the Part B-APR, one of the required Indicators for each state to report is Indicator #7: the percent of preschool children with IEPs who demonstrate improved: positive social-emotional skills

(including social relationships); acquisition and use of knowledge and skills (including early language/ communication and early literacy); and use of appropriate behaviors to meet their needs.

- *The DRDP is being used as the instrument to meet this requirement:* CDE decided to use the Desired Results assessments to implement this requirement because it is already required under the IDEA statewide assessment requirements. Implementing the Desired Results Assessment System also enables California to report progress toward these three child outcomes for preschool-age children with disabilities. CDE has broad authority under IDEA and California Education Code to collect the information that is needed to evaluate pupil and program performance results. (20 USC 1412(a) (15); 1412(a)(16); 1413(a)(7); 30 EC 56600.6 and 30 EC 56601(a)).
- *Other benefits:* Participation in the Desired Results Assessment System will accomplish more than enabling California to comply with federal law. CDE has consulted extensively over a period of years with program administrators, staff, and parents in the development of the PS DRDP-R and the DRDP *access*. These are a few of the benefits of participation in the Desired Results Assessment System:
 - It will assist educators and programs to better monitor and understand children’s progress and tailor interventions to the individual needs of each child.
 - Teachers will be better able to inform families about their children’s progress.
 - The data collected will contribute to program evaluation and continual quality improvement efforts, assisting in decision-making at the child, program, and policy levels.
 - By participating in the Desired Results Assessment System, California’s preschool special educators will be better able to document the positive results of their programs and services.

Eligible Children

Which children need to be assessed?

All preschool-age children with IEPs (3, 4, 5 year olds) need to be assessed on the PS DRDP-R (with instructions for use with Children with IEPs) or the DRDP *access* regardless of type or level of service, and regardless of educational setting.

Are five-year old children with disabilities included in the Desired Results Assessment System?

Yes, if they have an IEP and have not yet entered kindergarten.

Do preschool-age children who are not attending preschool, but who receive a related service need to be assessed?

Yes, all preschool-age children with IEPs are assessed regardless of type or level of service and regardless of educational setting.

Do children who receive only one service, such as speech therapy, need to be assessed using the PS DRDP-R (with instructions for use with children with IEPs) or the DRDP *access*?

Yes. Children who have speech as their only service for special education are under the same IDEA rules and regulations as all children who have IEPs. These issues also apply to other related service providers. A work group has been created to address these concerns and generate strategies in response to these issues. Please refer to the document “Strategies to Support Speech and Language Pathologists in Implementing the DRDP Assessment System” in the “For Assessors” – “Specialized Guidance” section at www.draccess.org and check back periodically for further information.

On what dates do children need to enter preschool special education services to be included in the Desired Results assessments?

Children must enter special education with a signed IEP before November 1 to be included in the fall assessment and before April 1 to be included in the spring assessment.

Why does the IEP team need to specify on the IEP which Desired Results assessment instrument will be used to assess the child?

The DRDP is a statewide assessment and IDEA requires that the IEP reflect how a student participates in statewide assessments. Each child's participation must be documented by listing which Desired Results assessment instrument and which adaptations will be used.

Do preschoolers with a 504 plan need to be assessed with the DRDP instruments?

No. Children with 504 plans are not assessed by special education. Only preschool-age children (3, 4, and 5 year olds not enrolled in kindergarten) with IEPs are assessed.

Do children in Early Start/Part C participate in the DRDP assessment system?

At this time, the DRDP is not being used to assess the progress of children in Early Start (Part C) to meet IDEA requirements. Part C Programs should contact the Department of Developmental Services for the most up to date information regarding Part C. Visit their web site at: www.dds.ca.gov/EarlyStart/ESHome.cfm.

SELPA Responsibilities

What are SELPA's responsibilities for the Desired Results Assessment System?

SELPA's responsibilities include, but are not limited to:

- Assuring that staff are trained to administer the PS DRDP-R (with instructions for use with children with IEPs) and the DRDP *access*
- Sponsoring training events and related activities
- Providing adequate organizational support
- Selecting a data reporting method
- Collecting and reporting data
- Monitoring that all districts and/or programs report data

Training Opportunities

What training is available for assessors on using the DRDP instruments?

- More than 85 full-day training sessions were held across the state between January and April 2007. More than 7000 assessors attended these training events. Training materials from these sessions, including the PowerPoint slides and the handouts, can be found at www.draccess.org.
- If you missed the opportunity to attend one of the full-day sessions, a useful document, "If You Missed the Training Session" can be found in the "Training and TA Resources" – "Rollout Training" section at www.draccess.org.
- Check www.draccess.org periodically for upcoming training opportunities.
- The Desired Results *access* Project will be training local SELPA training teams beginning in February of 2008. Contact your local administrators for details and locally sponsored training activities.

What training materials are available?

Numerous documents to support the implementation of the Desired Results Assessment System for special education are available at www.draccess.org. Please check the web site periodically for new and updated information. Resources that are currently posted include assessor's guides, administrator's guides, training activities, guidance for assessing children who are English learners, guidance for IEP teams, and materials to support family involvement.

DRDP Assessment Instruments

How is the DRDP *access* different from the Preschool DRDP-R (with instructions for use with Children with IEPs)?

The DRDP *access* uses the same Desired Results and the same Indicators as the Preschool DRDP-R (with instructions for use with Children with IEPs). A primary difference is that the DRDP *access* extends the age range of the measures from birth to kindergarten for preschool-age children (3, 4, and 5 years old who are not enrolled in kindergarten) who need a broader developmental range. Information on the instruments is available at www.draccess.org. In particular, please refer to the "Similarities and Differences between the instruments" section on page 10 of the Rollout Training Handout, found in the "Training and TA Resources" – "Rollout Training" section.

Where can we get copies of the PS DRDP-R and the DRDP *access*?

The DRDP *access* and the PS DRDP-R (with instructions for use with Children with IEPs) are available for download in the "For Assessors" – "DRDP Instruments" section at www.draccess.org. You will also find the Rating Record and Information Page and other useful materials.

Do the DRDP instruments have any validity or reliability research?

Yes. The validity and reliability of the current version of the DRDP *access* was investigated using data collected between 2005 and 2006. The internal consistency reliability estimates (coefficient alpha) were all above .95, indicating excellent reliability. Regarding validity, scores on the DRDP *access* showed a high correlation with scores from another instrument designed to measure similar constructs (the ABILITIES index). The items function in a similar way across a group of typically developing children and a group of children with disabilities. A document titled "Understanding the DRDP Measurement Model" is available for download in the "For Assessors" – "Guidance for Using the DRDP" section at www.draccess.org.

Data Collection and Reporting

How is the child data being collected?

- The primary service provider for the IEP is responsible for ensuring that every three, four, and five year old child with an IEP (not enrolled in kindergarten) on his or her caseload is assessed reliably and accurately using either the PS DRDP-R (with instructions for use with Children with IEPs) or the DRDP *access*, regardless of instructional setting or services received.
- Assessors should observe children and document their progress on an ongoing basis. The assessor should collaborate with family members, other caregivers, and providers; and review curriculum-based measures and portfolios. Based on all of the available information, the assessor will rate and report the child's progress on the PS DRDP-R (with instructions for use with Children with IEPs) or the DRDP *access* two times a year, once in the fall and once in the spring. For more detailed information visit the "For Assessors" section at www.draccess.org.

How do we report DRDP ratings?

The Special Education Desired Results System (SEDRS), a web-based data system, has been designed for the collection and reporting of DRDP ratings. For each child, DRDP data will be entered into SEDRS from the Rating Record two times a year. SELPAs will certify that all districts and/or programs have fully reported. Alternatively, SELPAs may elect to submit DRDP data through their local Management Information Systems (MIS). Check with your SELPA office to find out how your SELPA submits DRDP data. For more information, visit the "Reporting Data" section at www.draccess.org.

Where is the Rating Record stored?

The Rating Record completed for each child will be entered into the SEDRS System or the local SELPA's MIS. Each SELPA will determine whether assessors or data entry clerks will enter the DRDP results from the Rating Records. A print copy of the completed Rating Record for each child should be stored in the teacher's

confidential file in case the copy that is submitted is lost, for reference at the next assessment, or to send to the receiving program if the child moves.

Is a Speech/Language Pathologist Assistant (SLPA) license sufficient to constitute an assessor?

The primary IEP service provider is responsible for making sure that the assessment is completed. The SLPA may help with the gathering of information to inform the ratings on the instrument, but the primary IEP service provider, e.g., the Speech/Language Pathologist is responsible for completing the DRDP instrument and reporting the data.

How valid will parents' observations be in completing the DRDP instruments?

Research findings suggest that parents' observations are reliable and valid and should be considered an essential component of a comprehensive assessment process. Inviting parents to share their observations of their children's development and behavior is considered recommended practice for the Desired Results Assessment System. Parents' observations provide useful data for informing both assessment and intervention decisions. When combined with practitioners' observations, the perspectives of parents help assessors converge on a more complete picture of children across settings. A review of research on the reliability and validity of information collected from parents is provided in the document "The Role of Family Observations in the DRDP Assessment System" at www.draccess.org.

What if a child hasn't mastered the lowest level on a Measure that does not have a "Not Yet" option?

If a child has not yet mastered the earliest level on a Measure that does not have a "Not Yet" option, the assessor should check the box, "Unable to Rate" and circle "Other" on the Rating Record. The assessor should document the child's emerging skills to assist in curriculum planning and conversations with families.

Do I enter a numerical value for "Unable to Rate" on the Rating Record?

No. Leave the rating box blank and check the UR box. Circle either "absence" or "other" as the reason.

How much data needs to be reported for each child?

Assessors need to complete the entire Rating Record for every child, including a rating for every Measure.

What student identifier number do we report?

The student identification number issued by Districts to report California Special Education Management Information System (CASEMIS) data is required for all preschool children. The California Student Information System (CSIS) ID should also be entered for all preschoolers who have had this number assigned.

How will the DRDP information follow a child who moves?

- If the child moves to a new program within the same district and a new teacher or data entry clerk enters data for the child during the current assessment period, the data will follow on the SEDRS District Spreadsheet that is accessible to district administrators.
- If a child moves to a new district within the same SELPA, the data will follow on the SEDRS SELPA Spreadsheet that is accessible to SELPA administrators.
- If the child moves to a new SELPA, the data will follow in the data viewable by CDE.

What if a child moves to another SELPA where a different data reporting system is in place?

The composite ID, created by SEDRS, will match children between the two data reporting systems. This matching occurs when all data has been collected for the current assessment period. Previous DRDP assessment data entered by a different SELPA will not be viewable to the current SELPA.

Can we view ratings from previous assessments?

- Teachers and data entry clerks will be able to view ratings that they entered from the previous assessment when they enter the data for the current assessment.
- Districts will be able to view data from previous assessments if the child was reported as having that

district as the district of residence or district of service for the current and previous assessments.

- SELPAs will be able to view data from previous assessments if the child was reported by that SELPA for the previous assessment.

Collaboration with Other Systems

What do we do when children attend a program funded by the Child Development Division (CDD) and have an IEP?

- When children attend a CDD-funded program and have an IEP, both providers should collaboratively complete either the PS DRDP-R (with instructions for use with Children with IEPs) or the DRDP *access*. The child's IEP team, which includes the general education preschool teacher, will determine which instrument will best measure the child's progress. When children are enrolled in preschool programs and receive special education services, DRDP results will be reported to both CDD and SED, according to the requirements of each Division.
- For children with IEPs in Head Start programs, the providers should also work collaboratively to complete the appropriate instrument. Each assessor will report results according to the requirements of their respective program, i.e. special education or Head Start.

It is difficult and time-consuming to collaborate across systems. What can be done to address this?

Communication and collaboration among all of the providers in the child and family's lives take time and are essential processes to providing effective services and accurate assessments. Effective service delivery draws on the expertise and knowledge of all providers who work with a child. The child's general education preschool teacher is required to attend IEP meetings; this provides an opportunity for planning and communication. In addition, ongoing communication between IEP meetings can address questions as they arise. Refer to the "Guide to Using the DRDP Instruments for Preschool Special Education" that can found in the "For Assessors" – "Guidance for Using the DRDP" section at www.draccess.org.

What are the responsibilities of related services staff in the Desired Results system?

The primary service provider for the IEP is responsible for ensuring that every three, four, and five year old child (not enrolled in kindergarten) who has an IEP is assessed reliably and accurately. If a related services provider working with the child is not the primary service provider he or she is encouraged to collaborate and assist the primary service provider with the assessment.

Parents/Families

How is the Desired Results system of benefit to families?

As children are assessed on the Preschool DRDP-R (with instructions for use with Children with IEPs) or DRDP *access*, families will have the opportunity to talk with their service providers about their children's development. Through these conversations, families will learn more about their children's individual strengths and needs in developmental and pre-academic areas, the progress their children are making, what to observe in their children to learn more about their developmental skills, and areas in which their children's program is targeting improvements.

I only see a child one hour per week. What do I do when it is difficult to meet or communicate with parents to complete the DRDP?

- You are encouraged to contact families by phone or email.
- For non-English speaking families you may need to obtain the services of an interpreter. Check with your SELPA for resources.

What information is available to help families understand the Desired Results Assessment System?

Refer to the "For Families" section at www.draccess.org for the documents:

- "An Introduction to the Desired Results for Families of Preschoolers with IEPs" and

- “Resources for Families: Learning about the DRDP Assessment System for Preschool-Age Children with IEPs”

Is there a parent report form?

SELPAs who elect to use the SEDRS data reporting system will receive a Developmental Status Report for each child for whom data is submitted. Teachers may use this report to inform their conversations with families. An accompanying Narrative Summary Form will soon be available. This form will explain the DRDP results in a manner that is meaningful and understandable to families.

Can parents refuse to have their children participate in the Desired Results Assessment System?

- Unlike STAR tests for school-age children, there is no parent exemption for the DRDP. The parent exemption is part of state assessment regulations and covers statewide assessments from grade 2 through 11. Federal guidance indicates that a parent exemption applies to students with disabilities if there is an exemption for typically developing students. CDD does not provide for a parent exemption for typically developing students.
- According to the federal Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP), “States are encouraged to provide information to families about the purposes of OSEP’s child outcomes data collection as well as opportunities to discuss and provide input to their State plan. Since these data are needed for federal accountability for the Part C and Part B/619 programs, families cannot refuse to have their child’s assessment data included in the aggregate. Source: Frequently Asked Questions regarding the SPP/APR: Early Childhood Outcomes (Part C Indicator #3 and Part B Indicator #7) (Published by the Office of Special Education programs, U.S. Department of Education, Updated October, 2007).

Must a parent provide prior written parental consent for DRDP information to be collected?

While consent is not required for assessments administered to all children (34 CFR 300.300 (d) (ii)) unless they are part of an initial assessment or reevaluation, it is very important that families be informed and involved in how the student will be assessed and how the assessment will help the programs to implement more appropriate programs for the children they serve.

Use of Data

How will the results of the DRDP instruments be useful to teachers?

The results of the DRDP instruments will be useful to teachers in several ways. The DRDP instruments provide:

- a useful framework for the sequence of typical development,
- a reference for teachers to track child progress within the general preschool curriculum,
- a common language for special educators and general education preschool teachers for assessing the progress of children,
- a way to share information with parents about their children’s progress,
- a profile of the child’s development across a broad range of skills and abilities. This may be especially informative to service providers who have limited contact with the child. A more thorough knowledge of the child may assist supporting his or her development in the area of the provider’s focus.

Can the results from the DRDP instruments contribute to the Present Levels of Functioning on the IEP?

Yes, when used in conjunction with other sources of information. The information can also be used in conjunction with other sources to help guide IEP goals and curricular decisions.

How will the data be used for accountability?

The California Department of Education, Special Education Division, will develop statewide targets and benchmarks as required by federal law and will use the data to assist in the development of training, technical assistance, and improvement activities.