



Benefits of the DRDP (2015)

The Desired Results System is an initiative of the California Department of Education (CDE) developed to inform decisions about the effectiveness of its child development, early intervention, and early childhood special education services and programs. One part of the system, the DRDP (2015) assessment, enables the CDE's Special Education Division to report on the progress of infants and toddlers with Individualized Family Service Plans (IFSPs) and preschool-age children with Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) to the U.S. Office of Special Education Programs. This reporting helps assure that California will continue to receive federal funding for special education programs. The system also provides the CDE with information to share "what's working" with programs across the state. Perhaps most importantly, the DRDP (2015) offers a number of potential benefits to teachers, service providers, administrators, and families.

Benefits to Teachers and Service Providers

When assessing children with the DRDP (2015), teachers and service providers use authentic assessment practices (observation of children over time, in their natural settings and activities) to inform the planning of a child's learning activities. Authentic assessment is considered a recommended practice for early childhood assessment (Division for Early Childhood 2005; National Association for the Education of Young Children, 2009).

The DRDP (2015) focuses on strengths rather than deficits, and encourages teachers and service providers to identify what a child can do and has achieved. Documenting even the small steps a child makes on the DRDP (2015) measures can provide timely and useful information for both service providers and families.

A set of adaptations for the DRDP (2015) enables teachers and service providers to measure a child's abilities rather than disabilities. Disabilities can make it difficult to recognize a child's knowledge and skills. Adaptations, when used with the assessment and throughout the child's day, enable a child to have more control in the environment and to demonstrate mastery of important skills.

An important feature of the DRDP (2015) is the online reports system. The reports present information about a child's progress and a unique view of developmental sequences in key areas. These reports help service providers and families better understand a child's development in relation to his or her own progress as well as progress in relation to a sample of other children the same age. All of the DRDP (2015) reports can help with planning instruction and interventions for both individual children and groups of children.

The DRDP (2015) is aligned to the California Early Learning Foundations and measures the progress that infants, toddlers, and preschoolers with disabilities make toward state standards. It also provides a measure of preschool-age children's progress in the general preschool curriculum. The areas measured include both developmental and pre-academic areas, and includes problem-solving and self-regulation, important school readiness skills.

Because the DRDP (2015) is the single DRDP instrument used across CDE's special education and early education programs, child development and special education service providers can work together to assess the progress of children with IFSPs and IEPs in inclusive settings, and use the results to jointly plan curriculum modifications and instructional strategies.

Benefits to Program Administrators

The DRDP (2015) assists administrators in planning and leading professional development activities with individual staff members or groups in areas such as child observation, access and participation in the general preschool curriculum, identifying and implementing adaptations, and designing individualized instruction. Administrators can use the steps in the assessment process to support reflective practice to help teachers and service providers better understand the developmental sequences of early childhood, conduct descriptive and objective observations of children, make evidence-based planning decisions, and guide the structuring of appropriate learning environments and opportunities as well as instruction.

The Desired Results Access Project offers a number of professional development resources including guidance materials, videos, online modules, and job aides that can help administrators provide training on a variety of practices related to authentic assessment. In addition, a set of self-assessment tools assists administrators assess the extent to which they, and their staff members, have mastered the skills and performances needed to implement the DRDP (2015).

Benefits to Families

When teachers and service providers use the DRDP (2015), families can be assured that special education programs are monitoring and supporting their children's growth and learning using a sound assessment tool. They can receive a consistent assessment record of their child's progress throughout their infant, toddler, and preschool years. The DRDP (2015) promotes opportunities for families to have meaningful conversations with their service providers about their children's learning and progress. The reports help families understand what "comes next" developmentally, and to better understand important developmental sequences. When families better understand their children's progress and areas of need as measured by the DRDP (2015), they can better support their children's development and use the information to help set priorities for the IFSP or IEP.

Summary

The DRDP (2015) assessment helps assure that California has a coordinated system in which ALL children's progress counts and all young children are working toward the same successful developmental outcomes and school readiness.