Alignment of the California DRDP© Assessment Instruments to the California Learning and Development Foundations

What Are the California DRDP© Assessment Instruments and How Are They Related to the California Early Learning and Development System?

The Desired Results Developmental Profile© (DRDP©) assessment instruments were developed for teachers to observe, document, and reflect on young children's learning and developmental progress. They are part of the California Desired Results System, which also includes the Desired Results Parent Survey and the Environment Rating Scales.[1] As a group, these instruments and other documents comprise the assessment component of the more encompassing California Early Learning and Development System.

At the center of the early learning and development system are the *California Infant/Toddler Learning and Development Foundations* and the *California Preschool Learning Foundations, Volumes 1, 2 and 3*. The foundations describe knowledge and skills that young children typically develop when provided with developmentally, culturally, and linguistically appropriate learning experiences. While the foundations provide general research-based descriptions of early learning and development, the DRDP assessment instruments provide valid and reliable measurement of the learning and developmental progress of individual children. The resulting developmental profiles allow teachers to document individual children's learning and development over time and plan curriculum for individual children and small groups of children. In addition, the profiles of individual children can be aggregated to inform continuous program improvement in different developmental areas assessed by the DRDP assessment instruments such as self and social development, motor development, cognitive development, and language and literacy development.

Because the foundations identify the content of the CDE's early learning and development system, alignment to the foundations gives each component a common focus and makes the entire system coherent. In effect, the components of curriculum, program improvement, and professional development support what research indicates is critically important learning and development for young children. Likewise, aligned DRDP instruments make possible valid and reliable assessment of the progress of individual children that is consistent with the focus of intentional efforts to support learning and development.

[1] The Environment Rating Scales refer to the *Infant Toddler Environment Rating Scale – Revised* (ITERS -R), the *Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale – Revised* (ECERS -R), and the *Family Child Care Environment Rating Scale – Revised* (FCCERS-R).

Thus, a primary concern in the continuing development of the DRDP assessment instruments is that they are carefully aligned to the foundations. The CDE ensured that the foundations accurately reflect current research by engaging leading experts in each developmental area to conduct research reviews and write the foundations based on those reviews. Both the research reviews and the draft foundations underwent extensive review and refinement by consortia of research experts, stakeholders, and focus groups of early childhood educators. In order to align the content of the DRDP to the foundations, a parallel development process was followed. The experts who created the foundations reviewed and edited the DRDP measures in their areas of expertise. In addition, a consortia of research experts and focus groups gave feedback that guided the final development of each set of measures.

Currently, there are two DRDP assessment instruments for children from birth to kindergarten entry:

- DRDP-IT© (2010): Infant/Toddler (birth to 36 months), *and*
- DRDP-PS© (2010): Preschool (three years to kindergarten entry)

These two assessment instruments are aligned to the foundations in the manner described above and link to each other. Together they represent continuous measurement of learning and development from birth to kindergarten entry.

How Exactly Do the DRDP-IT© and DRDP-PS© Align to the Foundations?

Several criteria were used to align the DRDP-IT and the DRDP-PS to the foundations. First, as previously stated, the current research base underlying the foundations became the source material for the DRDP measures. Secondly, the research experts who developed the foundations also participated in the development of the DRDP measures. Thirdly, the DRDP measures were designed to sample core areas of development identified by the foundations. And finally, the DRDP measures were grouped into developmental domains that generally correspond to the domains addressed by the learning and development foundations.

While the foundations describe the learning and development typical of children at around a particular age, the DRDP measures assess progress of individual children across developmental levels, independent of age. As individual children develop at different rates in different domains, the DRDP's multiple levels allow for an accurate developmental profile of each child. The comparison of profiles gathered at different points in time shows individual children's developmental progress. Because the DRDP measures assess individual children's knowledge and skills along age-independent continua, they do not directly map to the age-related foundation descriptions. Thus, rather than alignment consisting of duplicating the wording of the foundations, the developmental levels of the DRDP measures present a range of behaviors that

encompass the foundations. The broad range of behaviors covered by the DRDP measures takes into account individual differences among children and provides a means to assess each child's progress across important developmental dimensions.

As stated above, the DRDP measures represent a sample of key knowledge and skills identified by the foundations for a particular domain. The following considerations guided the creation of aligned DRDP measures for each foundation domain:

- Breadth—as a group, the measures for any given domain should cover the full range of knowledge and skills addressed by that domain
- Most salient constructs—the measures should correspond to the most essential knowledge and skills within a domain
- Behaviors that are reliably observable in early care and education settings—each measure's developmental levels should describe behavior that teachers can readily observe and document

The above considerations led to alignment of the DRDP to the foundations in a general sense, rather than specific DRDP measures strictly corresponding to specific foundations. In other words, the DRDP's sampling of knowledge and skills provides a broad assessment of children's learning and development in a particular domain. The resulting profile across domains gives an indication or picture of individual children's overall development at a particular point in time.

Figure 1 shows the alignment of the DRDP measures to the infant/toddler foundation domains, and Figure 2 shows alignment to the preschool foundation domains. The five DRDP domains (Self and Social Development, Language and Literacy Development, Cognitive Development, Motor and Perceptual Development or Physical Development, and Health) that are similar across the infant/toddler and preschool instruments provide developmental continua of children's learning and development from birth to kindergarten entry.

Figure 1. Alignment of Infant/Toddler Domains

Infant/Toddler Learning & Development Foundations		DRDP-IT© (2010)
Social-Emotional Development	⟷	Self and Social Development
Language Development	⟷	Language and Literacy Development
Cognitive Development	⟷	Cognitive Development
Perceptual and Motor Development	⟷	Motor and Perceptual Development
		Health*

* The Health domain is included as part of the DRDP-IT© (2010) to align to the Preschool Learning Foundations in Health.

Figure 2: Alignment of Preschool Domains

	Preschool Learning Foundations		DRDP-PS© (2010)
Vol 1	Social-Emotional Development	⟷	Self and Social Development
	Language and Literacy	⟷	Language and Literacy Development
	English Language Development	⟷	English Language Development
	Mathematics	⟷	Mathematical Development
Vol 2	Visual and Performing Arts	⟷	[Visual and Performing Arts**]
	Physical Development	⟷	Physical Development
	Health	⟷	Health
Vol 3	History-Social Science	⟷	[History-Social Science**]
	Science	⟷	[Science**]

*Domains that will be included once measures are developed, field tested, and calibrated.

How Do Teachers Use the DRDP© and the Foundations?

The DRDP assessment process produces a developmental profile for each child that can inform curriculum planning to support the learning of individual children and small groups of children. Programs summarize data both at the classroom and contract levels

to determine trends that warrant attention. This information then feeds into a cycle of continuous improvement as programs develop an action plan to modify the curriculum and environment to address areas in which children need additional support. As programs complete an action plan, the learning and development foundations can serve as a guide to understand the overall goals and objectives for all children's learning in the program. In addition, teachers can draw upon other areas of the early learning and development system, such as the curriculum framework, for general planning to support learning and development. For further information about utilization of these different resources, visit the Desired Results Training and Technical Assistance Project at http://www.wested.org/desiredresults/training/index.htm.

What progress has been made in aligning the DRDP© to the Foundations?

The DRDP-IT© (2010) has been aligned to the *California Infant/Toddler Learning and Development Foundations*. Similarly, the *DRDP-PS© (2010)* has been aligned to the *California Preschool Learning Foundations, Volume 1* (Social-Emotional Development, Language and Literacy, English Language Development, and Mathematics). In addition, as of June 2010, DRDP-PS measures have been created or revised to align to the *California Preschool Learning Foundations, Volume 2* (Health, Physical Development, and Visual and Performing Arts). By June 2011, DRDP-PS measures were created or revised to align to the *California Preschool Learning Foundations, Volume 3* (History-Social Science, Science). A field-test and calibration study will be conducted with both new and revised measures resulting from the alignment before they are incorporated into the DRDP assessment instrument(s).

What Revisions to the DRDP-IT© (2010) and DRDP-PS© (2010) Resulted from Alignment?

The process of aligning the DRDP-IT and DRDP-PS to the learning and development foundations has produced instruments that differ from prior versions in several key ways. First, the measures and the resulting developmental profile reports are now organized by the foundation domains. Secondly, based on recommendations of the research experts who developed the foundations, two measures have been eliminated from the infant/toddler instrument (Awareness of Diversity and Time) and one from the preschool instrument (Time). In essence, the research literature was not robust enough to support valid definitions of those measures. Thirdly, the remaining measures were revised and reordered to better align to the foundations. Finally, some new measures were created that correspond to the foundations. Specifically, two new measures were created in the infant/toddler instrument (Social understanding and Imitation). For preschool, four measures were developed for the English Language Development domain, and a measure was added to the Language and Literacy Development domain (Comprehension of Age-Appropriate Text, Presented by Adults).