

# **Tri-County Community Council, Inc.**

## **Head Start/Early Head Start**

**Part: 1302 Program Operations**

**Subpart: D- Health Program Services**

**Section: 1302.45 Child Mental Health and Social & Emotional Well Being**

**Subject: Administration of Devereux Early Childhood Assessment (DECA)**

---

### **Policy**

The DECA is a tool developed by the Center for Resilient Children to collect information on a child's strengths and areas of need. This will be administered, and the results used to support the development of a formal action plan to address a child's behavioral needs through a strengths-based approach.

### **Procedure**

1. The DECA form may be distributed to parents and teachers after the behavior observation/referral process has been completed or if a child's behavior is dangerous to the child or other children.
2. The DECA is completed by staff and families, ensuring that a team approach is taken to building the child's social and emotional skills.
3. The DECA will be scored and charted in a timely manner to ensure it is available for the multi-disciplinary staff members and family to review.
4. Parents should be assured that the DECA is an assessment with a margin of error that will help implement strategies based on the child's needs.
5. The DECA scores are not used to rate the child differences but to examine what strategies should be implemented to strengthen the child's skills.
6. The DECA will not be used as a tool to address the child's behavior with the parents, but rather a tool to open communication between staff and family about social-emotional development in children.
7. The DECA will help parents and staff to recognize and understand that behavior is often a child's response to stressful situations.
8. The DECA should never be explained using words such as: Normal, Abnormal, Below Average, Poor, or Bad.

**Tri-County Community Council, Inc.**  
**Head Start/Early Head Start**

9. The scored DECA and information will go into the education file under the assessments section.
10. The mental health coordinator will follow up with teaching staff and the child's family to determine if the child is responding to the strategies developed in their action plan.
11. If the child is meeting goals, staff will continue to set higher goals for the child.
12. If the child has not progressed or met the goals in their action plan, their plan will be adjusted as needed.