

# Guidance for Using the DESSA System with Parents and Students

The objective of this document is to provide guidance to educators and out-of-school-time staff for using the DESSA System resources as opportunities to engage students and families during online/home learning.



## 7 ways to use the DESSA System to support students and families:

### 1 Spark strength-based conversations with parents.

View or print the DESSA or DESSA-mini (from the Support Portal). Use the questions or script from [Appendix A](#) while talking with a parent/guardian to engage in meaningful, strength-base conversations.

*Example: "How often has your child been taking an active role in learning?" or "Has your child been speaking of positive things?"*

### 2 Spark strength-based conversations with students.

View or print the DESSA or DESSA-mini (from the Support Portal). Use the questions or script from [Appendix B](#) while talking with a student to engage in meaningful, strength-base conversations.

*Example: "How well are you able to keep trying with you are unsuccessful with your schoolwork?" or "Are you able to do routine tasks or chores without being reminded?"*

### 3 Teach SEL Basics.

Select one of the eight DESSA competencies to work on with your families each week. Share the SEL Basics slide deck and work your way through definitions of each competency and what behaviors are associated with each. Check out [Appendix C](#).

*Example: Ask parents to discuss how the child shows Self-Awareness at home. What behaviors are they really good at and which ones may need some practice? Encourage parents to try out the "Home Strategy" listed in the SEL Basics slide deck.*

### 4 Create a Checklist and Make it Fun!

Choose [one of the eight DESSA competencies](#) to work on with your students each week. Send them a checklist (example in [Appendix D](#)) of the behaviors associated with that competency and ask them to share an example of how they're demonstrating each.

*Example: Consider asking students to record a video skit where they demonstrate a behavior associated with a competency of their choice.*

## 5 Share a Home Strategy.

Pick out and share a Home Strategy from the DESSA System, located on the “Strategies” tab. These can easily be emailed or printed to share with families and can also be used one-on-one or in small groups.

*Example: Choose one Home Strategy each week to share with your families and check in to see how they’re going.*

## 6 Check out “Even If...”

Check out one of our favorite Growth Strategies, called “Even If,” located in [Appendix E](#). Help students and families use the phrase ‘even if’ when they come up against a challenge or obstacle.

*Example: Share this strategy with your class and help families develop a habit of being resilient.*

## 7 Introduce the Parent Portal.

Share the Aperture Education Parent Portal with families and encourage them to review and discuss the resources. We are always adding to this page, so keep an eye out for more content and great tools to help strengthen the social-emotional skills of your students and families.

<https://apertureed.com/parent-portal>

Please note: We do not recommend DESSA assessments be completed by educators or out-of-school-time staff during this time of online learning. DESSA assessments were standardized and normed for a 4 week in-person observation period.

### **\*To access the SUPPORT PORTAL, follow these steps:**

1. Login to [the DESSA System](#)
2. Select the Support tab in the upper right-hand corner of your screen.
3. A new tab will open containing the Support Portal (please ensure your browser’s pop-up blocker is disabled).
4. Type the name of the resource you are looking for in the search bar.
5. To contact our Support Team with a question, select Submit A Support Request button in the top right-hand corner to submit a ticket.

### **\*To access the Appendices, visit our Parent Portal:**

<https://apertureed.com/parent-portal/>

