

40 Developmental Assets

Search Institute has identified the following building blocks of healthy development that help young people grow up healthy, caring, and responsible.



Category	Asset Name and Definition	
External Assets	Support <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Family Support-Family life provides high levels of love and support. 2. Positive Family Communication-Young person and her or his parent(s) communicate positively, and young person is willing to seek advice and counsel from parents. 3. Other Adult Relationships-Young person receives support from three or more nonparent adults. 4. Caring Neighborhood-Young person experiences caring neighbors. 5. Caring School Climate-School provides a caring, encouraging environment. 6. Parent Involvement in Schooling-Parent(s) are actively involved in helping young person succeed in school. 	
	Empowerment <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 7. Community Values Youth-Young person perceives that adults in the community value youth. 8. Youth as Resources-Young people are given useful roles in the community. 9. Service to Others-Young person serves in the community one hour or more per week. 10. Safety-Young person feels safe at home, school, and in the neighborhood. 	
	Boundaries & Expectations <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 11. Family Boundaries-Family has clear rules and consequences and monitors the young person's whereabouts. 12. School Boundaries-School provides clear rules and consequences. 13. Neighborhood Boundaries-Neighbors take responsibility for monitoring young people's behavior. 14. Adult Role Models-Parent(s) and other adults model positive, responsible behavior. 15. Positive Peer Influence-Young person's best friends model responsible behavior. 16. High Expectations-Both parent(s) and teachers encourage the young person to do well. 	
	Constructive Use of Time <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 17. Creative Activities-Young person spends three or more hours per week in lessons or practice in music, theater, or other arts. 18. Youth Programs-Young person spends three or more hours per week in sports, clubs, or organizations at school and/or in the community. 19. Religious Community-Young person spends one or more hours per week in activities in a religious institution. 20. Time at Home-Young person is out with friends "with nothing special to do" two or fewer nights per week. 	
	Internal Assets	Commitment to Learning <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 21. Achievement Motivation-Young person is motivated to do well in school. 22. School Engagement-Young person is actively engaged in learning. 23. Homework-Young person reports doing at least one hour of homework every school day. 24. Bonding to School-Young person cares about her or his school. 25. Reading for Pleasure-Young person reads for pleasure three or more hours per week.
		Positive Values <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 26. Caring-Young person places high value on helping other people. 27. Equality and Social Justice-Young person places high value on promoting equality and reducing hunger and poverty. 28. Integrity-Young person acts on convictions and stands up for her or his beliefs. 29. Honesty-Young person "tells the truth even when it is not easy." 30. Responsibility-Young person accepts and takes personal responsibility. 31. Restraint-Young person believes it is important not to be sexually active or to use alcohol or other drugs.
		Social Competencies <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 32. Planning and Decision Making-Young person knows how to plan ahead and make choices. 33. Interpersonal Competence-Young person has empathy, sensitivity, and friendship skills. 34. Cultural Competence-Young person has knowledge of and comfort with people of different cultural/racial/ethnic backgrounds. 35. Resistance Skills-Young person can resist negative peer pressure and dangerous situations. 36. Peaceful Conflict Resolution-Young person seeks to resolve conflict nonviolently.
		Positive Identity <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 37. Personal Power-Young person feels he or she has control over "things that happen to me." 38. Self-Esteem-Young person reports having a high self-esteem. 39. Sense of Purpose-Young person reports that "my life has a purpose." 40. Positive View of Personal Future-Young person is optimistic about her or his personal future

The Power of Developmental Assets

A study of the dynamics of positive change in individuals, organizations, and communities by Search Institute has measured developmental assets in more than 1 million 6th to 12th graders in communities across the United States, since 1989, using the survey *Search Institute Profiles of Student Life: Attitudes and Behaviors*.

- The assets represent everyday wisdom about positive experiences and characteristics
- The assets are powerful influences on adolescent behavior
- Assets protect young people from many different problem behaviors
- Assets promote positive attitudes and behaviors
- The power of assets is evident across all cultural and socioeconomic groups of youth
- Assets offer a set of benchmarks for positive child and adolescent development
- The assets clearly show important roles that families, schools, congregations, neighborhoods, and organizations play in shaping young people's lives.

While the assets are powerful shapers of young people's lives and choices, too few young people experience enough of these assets.

- The average young person surveyed experiences only 18 of the 40 assets
- Overall, 62 percent of young people surveyed experience fewer than 20 of the assets
- Most young people in the United States do not have many of the basic building blocks of healthy development in their lives

Protecting Youth from High-Risk Behaviors

Assets have tremendous power to protect youth from many different harmful or unhealthy choices. To illustrate this power, these charts show that youth with the most assets are least likely to engage in four different patterns of high-risk behavior.

# of Assets	0-10	11-20	21-30	31-40
Problem Alcohol Use	49%	27%	11%	3%
Violence	61%	38%	19%	7%
Illicit Drug Use	39%	18%	6%	1%
Sexual Activity	32%	21%	11%	3%

The same kind of impact is evident with many other problem behaviors, including tobacco use, depression and attempted suicide, antisocial behavior, school problems, driving and alcohol, and gambling.

Promoting Positive Attitudes and Behaviors

In addition to protecting youth from negative behaviors, having more assets increases the chances that young people will have positive attitudes and behaviors.

# of Assets	0-10	11-20	21-30	31-40
Exhibits Leadership	50%	65%	77%	85%
Maintains Good Health	26%	47%	69%	89%
Values Diversity	36%	57%	74%	88%
Succeeds in School	8%	17%	30%	47%

Source: Search Institute web site - www.search-institute.org