

Developing Assets

Successful futures for our children are directly tied to their healthy development as human beings. One way to approach the big topic of positive youth development is through the framework of 40 Developmental Assets. The idea of assets was born out of research by the Search Institute, an independent nonprofit organization dedicated to providing leadership, knowledge, and resources to promote healthy children, youth, and communities. The asset framework is used by many programs in Oregon and "asset-building" is happening in many of our communities.

How can I use the 40 Developmental Assets with my child?

Search Institute studies of more than 2 million youth since 1989 reveal that when young people experience more of the assets, they are more positive and successful in their development. When there are fewer assets present, the possibility is greater that they will engage in risky and problem behaviors. As a parent, you can use the asset approach to find focus and encouragement in your daily involvement with your children.

Developmental Assets have been identified for early childhood (ages 3 through 5), middle childhood (ages 8 through 12), and youth (grades 6th through high school). Together, they create a set of developmental building blocks. Each list of assets includes external and internal assets. As you become familiar with the asset lists, you will recognize that they reinforce or replicate many of the suggestions that are incorporated into this Web site.

EXTERNAL ASSETS

The first 20 Developmental Assets in each list focus on positive experiences that young people receive from the people and institutions in their lives. Four categories of external assets are included in each set:

- **Support**
Young people need to experience support, care, and love from their families, neighbors, and many others. They need organizations and institutions that provide positive, supportive environments.
- **Empowerment**
Young people need to be valued by their community and have opportunities to contribute to others. For this to occur, they must be safe and feel secure.
- **Boundaries and expectations**
Young people need to know what is expected of them and whether activities and behaviors are "in bounds" and "out of bounds."

Worksheet, Cont.

- **Constructive use of time**

Young people need constructive, enriching opportunities for growth through creative activities, youth programs.

INTERNAL ASSETS

The second 20 Development Assets focus on internal qualities that guide positive choices and foster a sense of confidence, passion, and purpose. The framework includes four categories of internal assets:

- **Commitment to learning**

Young people need to develop a lifelong commitment to education and learning.

- **Positive values**

Young people need to develop strong values that guide their choices.

- **Social competencies**

Young people need skills and competencies that equip them to make positive choices, to build relationships, and to succeed in life.

- **Positive identity**

Young people need a strong sense of their own power, purpose, worth, and promise.

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The Search Institute provides many additional resources to support asset-building by parents. To find out more about their publications and tools, go to their Web site at <http://www.search-institute.org/families/>.

Middle and high school assets

The 40 developmental assets for youth are helpful with young people in grades 6 through 12. If you would like to print this list to share with your family or post in your house, go to <http://www.search-institute.org/assets/40AssetsList.pdf>. The list is also available in Spanish at <http://www.search-institute.org/assets/40AssetsSpanish.pdf>.

Asset Category		Asset Name	Asset Definition
EXTERNAL ASSETS			
Support	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 parent(s).
	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	7.	Community values children	Young person perceives that adults in the community value youth.
	8.	Children 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, at school, and in the neighborhood.
Boundaries and expectations	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.

Worksheet, Cont.

	16.	High expectations	Both parent(s) and teachers encourage the young person to do well.
Constructive use of time	17.	Creative activities	Young person spends three or more hours per week in lessons or practice in music, theater, or other arts.
	18.	Child programs	Young person spends three or more hours per week in sports, clubs, or organizations at school and/or in community organizations.
	19.	Religious community	Young person spends one hour or more 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	21.	Achievement motivation	Young person is motivated to do well in school.
	22.	Learning 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 adults at 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	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."

Worksheet, Cont.

	30. Responsibility	Young person accepts and takes personal responsibility.
	31. Healthy lifestyle	Young person believes it is important not to be sexually active or to use alcohol or other drugs.
Social competencies	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	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.

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