

40 Developmental Assets...Why They Matter

Developmental Assets: Preparing Youth for Success

The Search Institute has worked with schools, programs, families, and communities in using the Developmental Assets framework to measure and increase the external supports and internal strengths students need to grow and be successful in and outside of school. The framework of Developmental Assets combines a research-based approach to child/youth development with concrete and doable ways that communities can work together to help students succeed and flourish in and outside of school.

The Developmental Assets

The Developmental Assets are 40 research-based, positive experiences and qualities that influence a student's development, helping them become caring, responsible, and productive adults. Centered in youth development, resiliency, and prevention research, the Developmental Assets' framework has proven to be effective and has become the most widely used approach to positive youth development in the United States and in many other areas around the world. The framework has been adapted to be developmentally and age appropriate from early childhood through adolescence.

Who needs them? Why are They Important?

Studies of more than 5 million youth consistently show that the more assets that young people have, the less likely they are to engage in a wide range of high-risk behaviors and the more likely they are to succeed in and outside of school. Research shows that youth with a higher number of assets are less likely to engage in high-risk behaviors that include problem alcohol use, illicit drug use, violence, and sexual activity. And not only are they less likely to partake in risky behaviors, they are more likely to do well in school, be involved in improving and growing their communities, and tend to value diversity.

How Many Assets do Youth Need?

The positive impact of having these assets is shown across all cultural and socioeconomic groups of youth in the United States as well as other parts of the world. It also has proven to be a better indicator of high-risk behaviors than poverty, family structure, or other demographic measures. What we know is that youth with 31–40 assets tend to do much better in life socially, emotionally, and academically. However, we also know, the average youth has 20 or less of these 40 assets.

Here is a breakdown in percentage of where youth fall in relation to the number of assets they have.

20% of children have between 0 & 10 assets

42% of children have between 11 & 20 assets

30% of children have between 21 & 30 assets

8% of children have between 31 & 40 assets

The good news is parents, teachers, neighbors etc. have the ability to positively impact and add to a youth's asset number.

Below is a list of the 40 Developmental Assets. While the list provided is specifically for youth between the ages of 12-18, you can go to www.search-institute.org/content/40-developmental-assets-adolescents-ages-12-18 to find lists for **3-5**; **5-9**; **9-12** year old youths.

The Search Institutes 40 Developmental Assets for Adolescents (age 12-18)

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 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 the child succeed in school.

EMPOWERMENT

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 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.
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. **Youth 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. **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

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

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.

This list is an educational tool. It is not intended to be nor is it appropriate as a scientific measure of the developmental assets of individuals.

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www.partnersforhealthyyouth.com/40-assets

www.search-institute.org/what-we-study/developmental-assets

<https://www.glcyd.org/category/40-developmental-assets/>