

40 Developmental Assets™ for Elementary-Age Children

Category *Asset Name and Definition*

External Assets

Support

1. **Family Support** – Family life provides high levels of love and support.
2. **Positive Family Communication** – Parents and children communicate positively. Children are willing to seek advice and counsel from their parents.
3. **Other Adult Relationships** – Children have support from at least one adult other than their parents. Their parents have support from people outside the home.
4. **Caring Neighborhood** – Children experience caring neighbors.
5. **Caring Out-Of-Home Climate** – School and other activities provide caring, encouraging environments for children.
6. **Parent Involvement in Out-of-Home Situations** – Parents are actively involved in helping children succeed in school and in other situations outside the home.

Empowerment

7. **Community Values Children** – Children feel that the family and Community value and appreciate children.
8. **Children are Given Useful Roles** – Children are included in age-appropriate family tasks and decision and are given useful roles at home and in the community.
9. **Service to Others** – Children serve others in the community with their family or in other settings.
10. **Safety** – Children are safe at home, at school, and in the neighborhood.

Boundaries & Expectations

11. **Family Boundaries** – The family has clear rules and consequences and monitors children’s activities and whereabouts.
12. **Out-of-Home Boundaries** – Schools and other out-of-home environments provide clear rules and consequences.
13. **Neighborhood Boundaries** – Neighbors take responsibility for monitoring children’s behavior.
14. **Adult Role Models** – Parents and other adults model positive, responsible behavior.
15. **Positive Peer Observation** – Children interact with other children who model responsible behavior and have opportunities to play and interact in safe, well-supervised settings.
16. **Appropriate Expectations for Growth** – Adults have realistic expectations for children’s development at this age. Parents, caregivers, and other adults encourage children to achieve and develop their unique talents.

Constructive Use of Time

17. **Creative Activities** – Children participate in music, art, drama, or other creative activities for at least three hours a week at home and elsewhere.

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18. Out-of-Home Activities – Children spend one hour or more each week in extracurricular school activities or structured community programs.

19. Religious Community – The family attends religious programs or services for at least one hour per week.

20. Positive, Supervised Time at Home – Children spend most evenings and weekends at home with their parents in predictable, enjoyable routines.

Internal Assets

Commitment to Learning **21. Achievement Expectations and Motivation** – Children are motivated to do well in school and other activities.

22. Children are Engaged in Learning – Children are responsive, attentive, and actively engaged in learning.

23. Stimulating Activity – Parents and teachers encourage children to explore and engage in stimulating activities. Children do homework when it's assigned.

24. Enjoyment of Learning and Bonding with School – Children enjoy learning and care about their school.

25. Reading for Pleasure – Children and an adult read together for at least 30 minutes a day. Children also enjoy reading or looking at books or magazines on their own.

Positive Values **26. Caring** – Children are encouraged to help other people.

27. Equality and Social Justice – Children begin to show interest in making the community a better place.

28. Integrity – Children begin to act on their convictions and stand up for their beliefs.

29. Honesty – Children begin to value honesty and act accordingly.

30. Responsibility – Children begin to accept and take personal responsibility for age-appropriate tasks.

31. Healthy Lifestyle and Sexual Attitudes – Children begin to value good health habits and learn healthy sexual attitudes and beliefs as well as respect for others.

Social Competencies **32. Planning and Decision Making Practice** – Children begin to learn how to plan ahead and make choices at appropriate developmental levels.

33. Interpersonal Skills – Children interact with adults and children and can make friends. Children express and articulate feelings in appropriate ways and empathize with others.

34. Cultural Competence – Children know about and are comfortable with people of different cultural, racial, and/or ethnic backgrounds.

35. Resistance Skills – Children start developing the ability to resist negative peer pressure and dangerous situations.

36. Peaceful Conflict Resolution – Children try to resolve conflicts nonviolently.

Positive Identity **37. Personal Power** – Children begin to feel they have control over things that happen to them. They begin to manage frustrations and challenges in ways that have positive results for themselves and others.

38. Self-Esteem – Children report having high self-esteem.

39. Sense of Purpose – Children report that their lives have purpose and actively engage their skills.

40. Positive View of Personal Future – Children are hopeful and positive about their personal future.

Search Institute ***Background and History of Search Institute's*** ***Research Efforts****

Researchers have learned a great deal in the past several decades about elements in human experience that have long-term, positive consequences for young people. Factors such as family dynamics, support from community adults, school effectiveness, peer influence, values development, and social skills have all been identified as contributing to healthy development. However, these different areas of study are typically disconnected from each other.

The framework of Developmental Assets steps back to look at the whole-to pull many pieces together into a comprehensive vision of what young people need to thrive. In addition to roots in the scientific research on adolescent development, the assets grow out of two types of applied research:

- ***Prevention***, which focuses on protective factors that inhibit high-risk behaviors such as substance abuse, violence, sexual intercourse, and dropping out of school.
- ***Resiliency***, which identifies factors that increase young people's ability to rebound in the face of adversity, from poverty to drug-abusing parents to dangerous neighborhoods.

*The Developmental Assets framework and terminology was first introduced in 1990 through a Search Institute report titled *The Troubled Journey: A Portrait of 6th-12th Grade Youth*, which was sponsored by Lutheran Brotherhood through its RespecTeen Program. At that time, the survey identified and measured 30 Developmental Assets.*

We continued to review the research, as well as conduct our own studies, cumulatively surveying more than 350,000 6th-12th graders in more than 600 communities between 1990 and 1995 to learn about the Developmental Assets they experienced, the risks they took, the deficits they had to overcome, and the ways they thrived.

We also conducted numerous informal discussions and focus groups, in particular to better understand the developmental realities of youth of color and youth in distressed communities. Those focus groups led us to elaborate more on safety and cultural competence as assets in adolescence. As a result of all those ongoing research activities, in 1996 we revised the Developmental Assets framework into its current form, a model of 40 Developmental Assets.

**Information in Appendix A has been obtained from the Search Institute – www.search-institute.org.*

DEVELOPMENTAL ASSETS

What Are Developmental Assets™

Search Institute's 40 Developmental Assets are concrete, common sense, positive experiences and qualities essential to raising successful young people. These assets have the power during critical adolescent years to influence choices young people make and help them become caring, responsible adults.

The Developmental Asset framework is categorized into two groups of 20 assets. External assets are the positive experiences young people receive from the world around them. These 20 assets are about supporting and empowering young people, about setting boundaries and expectations, and about positive and constructive use of young people's time. External assets identify important roles that families, schools, congregations, neighborhoods, and youth organizations can play in promoting healthy development.

The twenty internal assets identify those characteristics and behaviors that reflect positive internal growth and development of young people. These assets are about positive values and identities, social competencies, and commitment to learning. The internal Developmental Assets will help these young people make thoughtful and positive choices and, in turn, be better prepared for situations in life that challenge their inner strength and confidence.

We invite you to thoroughly explore Search Institute: read about each of the 40 Developmental Assets, learn more about the research behind the assets, and discover all the resources and support services Search Institute provides to assist those who are ready to begin improving the lives of young people and their communities.

Asset Categories

External Assets

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

- ***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."
- ***Constructive use of time***-Young people need constructive, enriching opportunities for growth through creative activities, youth programs

Internal Assets

A community's responsibility for its young people does not end with the provision of external assets. Caring adults must make a similar commitment to nurturing the internal qualities that guide positive choices and foster a sense of confidence, passion, and purpose. Young people need this wisdom to make responsible decisions about the present and future. 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.