

Prevention Research

- **Asset Development**
www.search-institute.org
- **Protective/Risk Factors**
- **Resiliency**
www.wested.org
- **Social Development Model**
<http://staff.washington.edu/sdrg>
- **Brain Development**
www.brainconnection.com
- **Positive Youth Development**
<http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu>

Prevention programming and academic success means creating attachments to healthy environments through:

- **Opportunities/Skills/Recognition (students, staff, parents)**
- **Care and Support**
- **Relationships**
- **Student Involvement**
- **High Expectations**



The Developmental Assets Approach

Since 1989, Search Institute has been conducting research—grounded in the vast literature on resilience, prevention and adolescent development—that has illuminated the positive relationships, opportunities, competencies, values and self-perceptions that youth need to succeed. The institute's framework of “developmental assets” grows out of that research, which has involved more than 1,000,000 6th- to 12th-grade youth in communities across the country. Developmental assets are the building blocks that all youth need to be healthy, caring, principled and productive (Scales & Leffert, 1999).

The Developmental Assets approach—or framework, since it merely *suggests* approaches—leads the way for a variety of strategies to build assets for young people. Some of these strategies call for establishing caring relationships between adults and young people. Other strategies call for providing an environment—in schools, in homes, in communities—conducive to building assets. And still other strategies call for programs and practices, formal structures that help build assets for young people. All the strategies rely on an awareness of the framework, on an assessment of the assets for each person, on an inventory of which resources are available to build the assets and finally, on an implementation and continuance of the strategies.

Following is a list of the 40 developmental assets. They are divided into “external” assets and “internal” assets. External assets are the relationships and opportunities that are provided to young people. Internal assets are the values and skills that young people develop to guide themselves. Each of these categories is in turn divided into types of assets: Support, Empowerment, Boundaries and Expectations and Constructive Use of Time comprise the external assets; and Commitment to Learning, Positive Values, Social Competencies and Positive Identity comprise the internal assets (Leffert, et al., 1997).

Note:

At this time, Developmental Assets is viewed only as a “promising” approach, not a “best” approach because although data indicate an association between the presence of assets and the absence of substance abuse, research has not yet conclusively shown that increasing assets reduces or delays substance abuse.



INFO SHEET

40 Developmental Assets

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 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	<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, at school and in the neighborhood.
Boundaries and 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.



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40 Developmental Assets – *continued*

CATEGORY	ASSET NAME AND DEFINITION
EXTERNAL ASSETS	
Constructive Use of Time – <i>continued</i>	<p>19. Religious community—Young person spends one or more hours per week in activities in a religious institution.</p> <p>20. Time at home—Young person is out with friends “with nothing special to do” two or fewer nights per week.</p>
INTERNAL ASSETS	
Commitment to Learning	<p>21. Achievement motivation—Young person is motivated to do well in school.</p> <p>22. School engagement—Young person is actively engaged in learning.</p> <p>23. Homework—Young person reports doing at least one hour of homework every school day.</p> <p>24. Bonding to school—Young person cares about her or his school.</p> <p>25. Reading for pleasure—Young person reads for pleasure three or more hours per week.</p>
Positive Values	<p>26. Caring—Young person places high value on helping other people.</p> <p>27. Equality and social justice—Young person places high value on promoting equality and reducing hunger and poverty.</p> <p>28. Integrity—Young person acts on convictions and stands up for her or his beliefs.</p> <p>29. Honesty—Young person “tells the truth even when it is not easy.”</p> <p>30. Responsibility—Young person accepts and takes personal responsibility.</p> <p>31. Restraint—Young person believes it is important not to be sexually active or to use alcohol or other drugs.</p>
Social Competencies	<p>32. Planning and decision making—Young person knows how to plan ahead and make choices.</p> <p>33. Interpersonal competence—Young person has empathy, sensitivity and friendship skills.</p> <p>34. Cultural competence—Young person has knowledge of and comfort with people of different cultural/racial/ethnic backgrounds.</p> <p>35. Resistance skills—Young person can resist negative peer pressure and dangerous situations.</p> <p>36. Peaceful conflict resolution—Young person seeks to resolve conflict nonviolently.</p>



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40 Developmental Assets – *continued*

CATEGORY	ASSET NAME AND DEFINITION
INTERNAL ASSETS	
Positive Identity	<p>37. Personal power—Young person feels he or she has control over “things that happen to me.”</p> <p>38. Self-esteem—Young person reports having a high self-esteem.</p> <p>39. Sense of purpose—Young person reports that “my life has a purpose.”</p> <p>40. Positive view of personal future—Young person is optimistic about her or his personal future.</p>

The Developmental Assets framework emphasizes strengths in people, not lacks. Schools and communities that have adopted the framework consider young people resources, not problems. This approach is preventive at its core: By building on strengths, by increasing the assets that have been found to be associated with healthy, caring, responsible people, practitioners of the framework hope to forestall any need for young people to use drugs. The framework is considered a “promising” approach because, although data indicate an association between the presence of assets and the absence of substance abuse, research has not yet conclusively shown that increasing assets reduces or delays substance abuse.

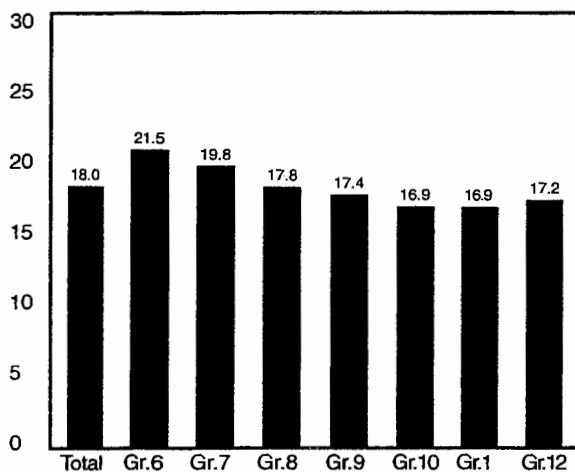
The Power of Developmental Assets: Grades 6-12

Thriving Indicators

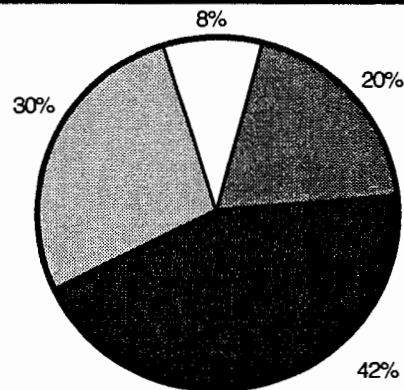
Category		Percent with Thriving Indicators*			
		if 0-10 Assets	if 11-20 Assets	if 21-30 Assets	if 31-40 Assets
Succeeds in School	Gets mostly A's on report card	7	19	35	53
Helps Others	Helps friends or neighbors one or more hours per week	69	83	91	96
Values Diversity	Places high importance on getting to know people of other racial/ethnic groups	34	53	69	87
Maintains Good Health	Pays attention to healthy nutrition and exercise	25	46	69	88
Exhibits Leadership	Has been the leader of a group or organization in the past 12 months	48	67	78	87
Resists Danger	Avoids doing things that are dangerous	6	15	29	43
Delays Gratification	Saves money for something special rather than spending it all right away	27	42	56	72
Overcomes Adversity	Does not give up when things get difficult	57	69	79	86

* Based on studies of 6th-12th grade public school students during the 1996-97 school year. Sample includes 99,462 students in 213 cities.

Average Number of 40 Developmental Assets



The Challenge Facing Your Community



0-10 Assets
 11-20 Assets
 21-30 Assets
 31-40 Assets

Ideally, of course all youth would experience 31-40 of these assets. Each community needs to establish a goal for what percentage of youth it seeks to be at this level. This process can provide an important opportunity for creating a community vision for your youth. The figure above shows the percentage of your youth who experience each of four levels of assets: 0-10, 11-20, 21-30, and 31-40.

Sample of 100,000 public school students

The data in this document is based on a sample of almost 100,000 6th to 12th grade public school students in 213 towns and cities across the United States who were surveyed during the 1996-97 school year.

Asset Building Ideas for Organizations

Here are ideas for how organizations in your community can build assets for children and adolescents

Ideas for Schools

1. Make it a priority to provide caring environments for all students and encourage their commitment to learning.
2. Train support staff, teachers, paraprofessionals, administrators, and other school staff in their role in asset building.
3. Involve youth in leadership roles and meaningful governance activities.
4. Expand, diversify, and strengthen co-curricular activities and service opportunities for all youth.
5. Provide opportunities for staff to share "best practices" for providing support, establishing boundaries, nurturing values, and teaching social skills.

Ideas for Youth Organizations

1. Involve youth in leadership and program planning.
2. Provide a range of structured activities for youth with diverse interests and needs.
3. Provide opportunities where young people feel supported and safe.
4. Coordinate activities and priorities with other youth-serving organizations.
5. Focus on asset building in programming, including building social competencies, engaging youth in service, and strengthening personal identity.

Ideas for Congregations

1. Intentionally foster inter-generational relationships by providing activities for all ages within the congregation.
2. Listen to what youth say they want.
3. Regularly offer parent education as part of the congregation's educational programs.
4. Make community service a central component of youth programming.
5. Network with other congregations and institutions in the area for mutual learning, support, and coordination.

Ideas for Neighborhood Groups

1. Make asset building a criteria for setting priorities for action in the neighborhood.
2. Sponsor creative activities and events that help people get to know their neighbors.
3. Coordinate residents to provide safe places where young people can go after school if they would be home alone or if they feel unsafe.
4. Organize informal activities (such as an ice cream social or pick-up basketball) for young people in the neighborhood.
5. Work with children and teenagers to create a neighborhood garden, a neighborhood playground, or a park.

Ideas for Businesses

1. Develop family-friendly policies that allow parents to be active in their children's lives.
2. Provide opportunities for employees to build relationships with youth through mentoring and other volunteer programs, flexible scheduling, and internships for youth.
3. Be intentional about nurturing the 40 developmental assets in the lives of teenagers employed by the company.
4. Become partners in and advocates for initiatives designed to create healthy communities for children and youth.
5. Provide resources (donations, in-kind contributions, and so on) to youth development programs and to community wide efforts on behalf of youth.

Ideas for Government

1. Become a champion for asset building throughout the city. Convene public and private stakeholders to begin efforts to coordinate a neighborhood or citywide vision for asset building.
2. Through policy training, and resource allocation, make asset development a top priority in the city.
3. Support and expand neighborhood-building initiatives.
4. Build the capacity of community-based organizations to serve children and families.
5. Initiate community-wide efforts to name shared values and boundaries.



Risk Factors and Protective Factors

RISK FACTORS

Family

- Family history of alcoholism
- Family management problems, e.g., unclear expectations of behavior, lack of monitoring, inconsistent or harsh discipline, lack of caring, marital conflict
- Parents who use or favor the use of tobacco, alcohol, or other drugs
- Low expectations of children's success

Peers

- Alienation, rebelliousness, and other anti-social behavior
- Friends who use or favor the use of tobacco, alcohol, or other drugs
- Favorable attitudes toward the use of tobacco, alcohol, or other drugs
- Early first use
- Greater influence by and reliance on friends than parents

Schools

- Lack of clear school policy on the use of tobacco, alcohol, and other drugs
- Availability of drugs
- Labeling and identifying students negatively
- Moving between schools
- Academic failure
- Lack of student involvement in school activities
- Truancy and suspension

Community

- Economic deprivation
- Lack of involvement in pro-social community activities
- Easy availability of tobacco, alcohol, or other drugs
- Community norms and laws which favor the use of tobacco, alcohol, or other drugs

PROTECTIVE FACTORS

Family

- Prenatal care
- Valuing and encouragement of education
- Ability to manage stress
- Positive time with children
- Avoidance of excessively authoritarian or permissive behavior
- Clear expectations of behavior
- Encouragement of supportive relationships with caring adults beyond the immediate family
- Shared family responsibilities

Peers

- Establishment of healthy friendships with peers who don't use tobacco, alcohol, or other drugs
- Sense of competence and personal power
- Orientation toward goals
- Involvement in activities free of tobacco, alcohol, and other drugs
- Involvement in positive groups

Schools

- Reasonable expectations of students
- Encouragement of students' setting and achieving goals
- Opportunities for leadership and decision-making
- Encouragement of active involvement of students
- Involvement of parents
- Opportunities for activities free of tobacco, alcohol, and other drugs

Community

- Community norms and laws which favor the abstinence from tobacco, alcohol, and other drugs
- Access to resources, e.g., housing, health care, childcare, job training, employment, and recreation
- Involvement of youth in pro-social activities
- Respect of authority

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The Resiliency Approach

The Resiliency Approach stems from research into young people from troubled backgrounds who have learned to bounce back when the odds are stacked against them. Emmy Werner is one such researcher; from studying children born on Kauai, Hawaii, in 1955, Werner (1986) identified several environmental factors that foster resilience in kids, including the following:

- ★ the age of the parent of the opposite sex (*younger mothers for resilient boys, older fathers for resilient girls*)
- ★ the number of children in the family (*four or fewer*)
- ★ spacing between children (*two years or more was best*)
- ★ the number and type of people available to help the mother rear the children (*such as grandparents, aunts, or uncles*)
- ★ steady employment for the mother, especially if she was a single mother
- ★ the availability of a sibling as a caretaker in childhood
- ★ the presence of a multigenerational network of friends, teachers, and relatives during adolescence
- ★ church attendance

Other researchers have come to different conclusions and most agree that much more needs to be studied, especially across cultures.

Werner and others have also concluded that kids who overcome adversity better than others tend not to seek out formal professional or institutional help. Instead, they turn to people they've grown to trust because they see them regularly, such as teachers, school counselors, ministers, grandparents and friends.

Steven and Sybil Wolin, directors of Project Resilience, a Washington-based training and consulting project, see the following characteristics of resilient children:

- They conclude that their parents' problems have nothing to do with them. They see through lies and mistreatment and they develop a cherished belief in truth and honesty.
- They spend extra time at school, in libraries, or in neighbors' homes, developing more meaningful relationships than they'll ever develop with their parents or guardians.

Werner has several suggestions for schools to foster resilient children:

- Establish better relations with local companies and community groups to encourage college students and grown-ups to work as mentors.
- Avoid cutting art, music or athletic programs.
- Establish school schedules that allow students to have the same teachers for at least two years.
- Decrease class sizes.

Note: The Resiliency Approach is considered a "promising" approach only because research has not yet conclusively shown that increasing resiliency through prevention or other strategies leads to a reduction in the prevention of substance abuse.

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Social Development Strategy

