

PREVENT THIS!

...a monthly alcohol, tobacco, and other drug newsletter to keep you informed.

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40 Developmental Assets

The 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.

These assets were developed by the Search Institute. The Institute is an independent nonprofit organization whose mission is to provide leadership, knowledge, and resources to promote healthy children, youth, and communities.

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. The twenty Internal Assets identify those characteristics and behaviors that reflect positive internal growth and development of young people.

Research indicates that these assets powerfully influence adolescent behavior – both by protecting young people from risky, problem behaviors and by promoting positive attitudes and choices. This power reaches across all cultural and socioeconomic groups of youth, and additional research suggests that assets have similar implications for younger children.

Studies reveal strong and consistent relationships between the number of assets present in young people's lives and the degree to which they develop in positive and healthful ways. The Search Institute has surveyed over 2 million youth across the United States and Canada since 1989. The results of their study show that the greater the numbers of Developmental Assets are experienced by young people, the more positive and successful their development. The fewer the number of assets present, the greater the possibility youth will engage in risky behaviors such as drug use, unsafe sex and violence.

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EXTERNAL ASSETS -

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.

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, and youth programs.

The average young person in the US experiences only 19 of the 40 assets.

Overall, 59% of young people surveyed have 20 or fewer of the 40 assets.

INTERNAL ASSETS -

These 20 assets are about positive internal values and identities, social competencies, and commitment to learning. The Internal assets will help young people make thoughtful and positive choices and, in turn, be better prepared for situations in life that challenge their inner strength and confidence.

Four categories of internal assets are included in the framework:

- **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.

The **Good News** is that **EVERYONE** can build assets. It's not just the responsibility of families, schools, social service agencies, or other institutions – though they all have important roles. Whether you are a grandparent, a neighbor, or a bus driver, you can start building assets today with the young people who live in your community.

STAY TUNED
More on the 40
Developmental Assets
in the coming months.