



What Are Developmental Assets?

Do you ever wonder why some kids seem to grow up with ease while others struggle? Are you surprised that some kids thrive in spite of difficult circumstances?

Search Institute is a nonprofit research organization in Minneapolis, Minnesota, that has been asking these same questions since 1958. Through studies involving hundreds of thousands of young people across the country, Search Institute has found 40 factors that are essential to young people's success. They call these 40 factors Developmental Assets. These assets aren't financial. Instead, they are opportunities, skills, relationships, values, and self-perceptions that all young people need in their lives.

The assets are both external (things that other people provide for youth) and internal (things that young people develop within themselves). There are four categories of external assets and four categories of internal assets.

EXTERNAL ASSETS

Support

Young people need to be supported, cared for, and loved by their families and many others. They also need organizations and institutions, such as schools and faith-based organizations, that provide positive, supportive environments. There are six Support assets:

- Asset 1—** Family Support
- Asset 2—** Positive Family Communication
- Asset 3—** Other Adult Relationships
- Asset 4—** Caring Neighborhood
- Asset 5—** Caring School Climate
- Asset 6—** Parent Involvement in Schooling

Empowerment

Young people need to feel that their community values them and that they have important ways to contribute. They must also feel safe. There are four Empowerment assets:

- Asset 7—** Community Values Youth
- Asset 8—** Youth as Resources
- Asset 9—** Service to Others
- Asset 10—** Safety

Boundaries and Expectations

Young people need to know what is expected of them and whether activities and behaviors are acceptable or not acceptable. There are six Boundaries-and-Expectations assets:

- Asset 11—** Family Boundaries
- Asset 12—** School Boundaries
- Asset 13—** Neighborhood Boundaries
- Asset 14—** Adult Role Models
- Asset 15—** Positive Peer Influence
- Asset 16—** High Expectations



Constructive Use of Time

Young people need to spend their time in positive, healthy ways. This includes doing activities in youth programs, in faith-based institutions, and at home. There are four Constructive-Use-of-Time assets:

- Asset 17—** Creative Activities
- Asset 18—** Youth Programs
- Asset 19—** Religious Community
- Asset 20—** Time at Home

INTERNAL ASSETS

Commitment to Learning

Young people do best when they develop a strong interest in and commitment to education and learning. There are five Commitment-to-Learning assets:

- Asset 21—** Achievement Motivation
- Asset 22—** School Engagement
- Asset 23—** Homework
- Asset 24—** Bonding to School
- Asset 25—** Reading for Pleasure

Positive Values

Young people thrive when they develop strong values that guide their choices. There are six Positive-Values assets:

- Asset 26—** Caring
- Asset 27—** Equality and Social Justice
- Asset 28—** Integrity
- Asset 29—** Honesty
- Asset 30—** Responsibility
- Asset 31—** Restraint

Social Competencies

Young people benefit from having skills and competencies that equip them to make positive choices, to build relationships, and to deal with difficult situations. Five assets make up the category of Social Competencies:

- Asset 32—** Planning and Decision Making
- Asset 33—** Interpersonal Competence
- Asset 34—** Cultural Competence
- Asset 35—** Resistance Skills
- Asset 36—** Peaceful Conflict Resolution

Positive Identity

Young people need to develop a strong sense of their own power, purpose, worth, and promise. There are four Positive-Identity assets:

- Asset 37—** Personal Power
- Asset 38—** Self-Esteem
- Asset 39—** Sense of Purpose
- Asset 40—** Positive View of Personal Future