

# *40 Developmental Assets™ for Elementary-Age Children*

## **External Assets**

Search Institute<sup>SM</sup> has identified the following building blocks of healthy development that help elementary-age children grow up healthy, caring, and responsible.

### **Category Asset Name and Definition**

#### **Support**

#### **Empowerment**

#### **Boundaries &**

#### **Expectations**

#### **Constructive**

#### **Use of Time**

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

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- 21. Achievement Expectation 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.
- 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 ageappropriate 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.
- 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.
- 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.

## **Internal Assets**

**Commitment to**

**Learning**

**Positive Values**

**Social**

**Competencies**

**Positive**

**Identity**

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## Asset-Building Tips: Supporting Parents as Asset Builders

The following list provides ways for your congregation to support and encourage parents, based on the findings from the *Building Strong Families* study:

- Talk with parents about how your congregation does—or doesn't—support and encourage them as parents. Examine whether your efforts to engage parents are designed primarily for parents to support your child and youth programs, or for the congregation to support and equip families.
- Form support groups made up of parents who have children around the same age.
- Be intentional in reaching out to and including families that may be struggling, including single-parent families and those facing economic stress. Be aware that, under stress, families are more likely to isolate themselves than to reach out for the support they need.
- Take advantage of the intergenerational nature of your congregation by forming intentional mentoring relationships between older and younger parents.
- Encourage congregation members to spend time with children outside their family. (Parents indicated that this kind of engagement by people they trust would really help them as parents.)
- Provide occasional religious education experiences for the entire family rather than dividing family members by age groups. Develop short, one-time volunteer activities for parents to do since they're busy. Consider creating family service projects that family members can do together.

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## The Resource Shelf: Parents and Families

[\*Parenting with a Purpose: A Positive Approach for Raising Confident, Caring Youth\*](#)

By Dean Feldmeyer and Eugene C. Roehlkepartain

This booklet discusses parenting through an asset-based lens. It is especially helpful for parents navigating their children's teenage years or for those who work with parents. It also suggests ways for parents to find support in their community. Published by Search Institute, 1998. 16 pages.

[\*Ideas for Parents: Newsletter Master Set\*](#)

This collection of 52 reproducible newsletters is designed to distribute to parents to encourage and educate them as asset builders. They contain current Search Institute data and up-to-date resources for parents. The content includes suggestions for how parents can talk with their kids and concrete ideas parents can use to build assets for and with their children. You can customize these templates to best serve the parents in your congregation.

[\*When Parents Ask For Help: Everyday Issues through an Asset-Building Lens\*](#)

By Renie Howard

Howard has written a wonderful resource for professional working with parents of adolescent children. Complete with handouts that cover issues like homework, body image, depression, and dating, the book helps parents build assets while resolving their teenagers' dilemmas. Published by Search Institute, 2003. 144 pages.

[\*Your Family: Using Simple Wisdom in Raising Your Children\*](#)

By Jennifer Griffin-Wiesner

A parent's guide for everyday asset building, this booklet offers summaries of the eight asset categories and helps parents unleash their potential for asset building. The booklet's easy-to-follow format makes it a great addition to any resource shelf. Published by Search Institute, 2003. 24 pages.

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## New Articles on Congregations and Families from Search Institute

Two recent journal articles from Search Institute explore how congregations support and engage parents. They are:

Roehlkepartain, E. C. (Fall 2003). Engaging families in service: Rationale and resources for congregations. *Family Ministry: Empowering Through Faith*.

Roehlkepartain, E. C. (Summer 2003). Supporting and encouraging parents: Challenges and opportunities for congregations. *Family Ministry: Empowering Through Faith*, 17 (2), 45-59.

## Developmental Assets Have a Powerful Influence on Student Achievement, New Research Finds

Students from many different backgrounds and cultures are more likely to do well in school and have a higher GPA if they have more “developmental assets,” according to new research from Search Institute.

Using data from several community-level studies, researchers found that middle and high school students who experienced more positive relationships, opportunities, and personal strengths—known as “developmental assets”—were more likely to have high GPAs, regardless of their family income level, family composition, or race-ethnicity. This relationship holds true in both cross-sectional and longitudinal studies.

“These new findings suggest that an emphasis on overall development may actually have as much or more positive impact on academic outcomes in the long run as more obvious and traditional strategies for boosting achievement,” write authors Peter C. Scales and Eugene C. Roehlkepartain.

*“Developmental assets may serve as a reminder that boosting student achievement is, yes, about achievement. But it is also about boosting students to be successful in their overall growth and development.”*

This research was released in the premiere issue of *Search Institute Insights & Evidence*, a free, Web-based periodical designed to address critical issues in promoting healthy children, youth, and communities. To download the summary or complete report (no charge) and to sign up for future issues of *Search Institute Insights and Evidence*, go to: <http://www.search-institute.org/research/Insights>

*Search Institute Insights and Evidence* will be published approximately six times per year by Search Institute, a Minneapolis-based nonprofit organization with a mission to provide leadership, knowledge, and resources to promote healthy children, youth, and communities.

# 40 Developmental Assets for Middle Childhood

## External Assets

### SUPPORT

- 1. Family support**—Family life provides high levels of love and support.
- 2. Positive family communication**—Parent(s) and child communicate positively. Child feels comfortable seeking advice and counsel from parent(s).
- 3. Other adult relationships**—Child receives support from adults other than her or his parent(s).
- 4. Caring neighborhood**—Child experiences caring neighbors.
- 5. Caring school climate**—Relationships with teachers and peers provide a caring, encouraging school environment.
- 6. Parent involvement in schooling**—Parent(s) are actively involved in helping the child succeed in school.

### EMPOWERMENT

- 7. Community values children**—Child feels valued and appreciated by adults in the community.
- 8. Children as resources**—Child is included in decisions at home and in the community.
- 9. Service to others**—Child has opportunities to help others in the community.
- 10. Safety**—Child feels safe at home, at school, and in her or his neighborhood.

### BOUNDARIES AND EXPECTATIONS

- 11. Family boundaries**—Family has clear and consistent rules and consequences and monitors the child's whereabouts.
- 12. School boundaries**—School provides clear rules and consequences.
- 13. Neighborhood boundaries**—Neighbors take responsibility for monitoring the child's behavior.
- 14. Adult role models**—Parent(s) and other adults in the child's family, as well as nonfamily adults, model positive, responsible behavior.
- 15. Positive peer influence**—Child's closest friends model positive, responsible behavior.
- 16. High expectations**—Parent(s) and teachers expect the child to do her or his best at school and in other activities.

### CONSTRUCTIVE USE OF TIME

- 17. Creative activities**—Child participates in music, art, drama, or creative writing two or more times per week.
- 18. Child programs**—Child participates two or more times per week in cocurricular school activities or structured community programs for children.
- 19. Religious community**—Child attends religious programs or services one or more times per week.
- 20. Time at home**—Child spends some time most days both in high-quality interaction with parents and doing things at home other than watching TV or playing video games.

# Internal Assets

## COMMITMENT TO LEARNING

- 21. Achievement motivation**—Child is motivated and strives to do well in school.
- 22. Learning engagement**—Child is responsive, attentive, and actively engaged in learning at school and enjoys participating in learning activities outside of school.
- 23. Homework**—Child usually hands in homework on time.
- 24. Bonding to adults at school**—Child cares about teachers and other adults at school.
- 25. Reading for pleasure**—Child enjoys and engages in reading for fun most days of the week.

## POSITIVE VALUES

- 26. Caring**—Parent(s) tell the child it is important to help other people.
- 27. Equality and social justice**—Parent(s) tell the child it is important to speak up for equal rights for all people.
- 28. Integrity**—Parent(s) tell the child it is important to stand up for one's beliefs.
- 29. Honesty**—Parent(s) tell the child it is important to tell the truth.
- 30. Responsibility**—Parent(s) tell the child it is important to accept personal responsibility for behavior.
- 31. Healthy lifestyle**—Parent(s) tell the child it is important to have good health habits and an understanding of healthy sexuality.

## SOCIAL COMPETENCIES

- 32. Planning and decision making**—Child thinks about decisions and is usually happy with results of her or his decisions.
- 33. Interpersonal competence**—Child cares about and is affected by other people's feelings, enjoys making friends, and, when frustrated or angry, tries to calm her- or himself.
- 34. Cultural competence**—Child knows and is comfortable with people of different racial, ethnic, and cultural backgrounds and with her or his own cultural identity.
- 35. Resistance skills**—Child can stay away from people who are likely to get her or him in trouble and is able to say no to doing wrong or dangerous things.
- 36. Peaceful conflict resolution**—Child attempts to resolve conflict nonviolently.

## POSITIVE IDENTITY

- 37. Personal power**—Child feels he or she has some influence over things that happen in her or his life.
- 38. Self-esteem**—Child likes and is proud to be the person he or she is.
- 39. Sense of purpose**—Child sometimes thinks about what life means and whether there is a purpose for her or his life.
- 40. Positive view of personal future**—Child is optimistic about her or his personal future.

**Search Institute has identified the following building blocks of healthy development that help children grow up healthy, caring, and responsible.**

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