

# 40 Developmental Assets™

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

## External Assets

### ♥ Support

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 parents.
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

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, school, and in the neighborhood.

### ☆ Boundaries and Expectations

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

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.
19. **Religious Community:** Young person spends one or more hours per week in activities in a religious institution.
20. **Time at Home:** Young person is out with friends "with nothing special to do" two or fewer nights per week.

## Internal Assets

### 💡 Commitment to Learning

21. **Achievement Motivation:** Young person is motivated to do well in school.
22. **School Engagement:** Young person is actively engaged in learning.
23. **Homework:** Young person reports doing at least one hour of homework every school day.
24. **Bonding to School:** Young person cares about her or his school.
25. **Reading for Pleasure:** Young person reads for pleasure three or more hours per week.

### ⊕ Positive Values

26. **Caring:** Young person places high value on helping other people.
27. **Equality and Social Justice:** Young person places high value on promoting equality and reducing hunger and poverty.
28. **Integrity:** Young person acts on convictions and stands up for her or his beliefs.
29. **Honesty:** Young person "tells the truth even when it is not easy."
30. **Responsibility:** Young person accepts and takes personal responsibility.
31. **Restraint:** Young person believes it is important not to be sexually active or to use alcohol or other drugs.

### 😊 Social Competence

32. **Planning and Decision Making:** Young person knows how to plan ahead and make choices.
33. **Interpersonal Competence:** Young person has empathy, sensitivity, and friendship skills.
34. **Cultural Competence:** Young person has knowledge of and comfort with people of different cultural/racial/ethnic backgrounds.
35. **Resistance Skills:** Young person can resist negative peer pressure and dangerous situations.
36. **Peaceful Conflict Resolution:** Young person seeks to resolve conflict nonviolently.

### 👍 Positive Identity

37. **Personal Power:** Young person feels he or she has control over "things that happen to me."
38. **Self-Esteem:** Young person reports having a high self-esteem.
39. **Sense of Purpose:** Young person reports that "my life has a purpose."
40. **Positive View of Personal Future:** Young person is optimistic about her or his personal future.





Search Institute® has identified the following building blocks of healthy development—known as **Developmental Assets®**—that help young children grow up healthy, caring, and responsible.

External Assets	Support	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>1. Family support</b>—Parent(s) and/or primary caregiver(s) provide the child with high levels of consistent and predictable love, physical care, and positive attention in ways that are responsive to the child's individuality.</li> <li><b>2. Positive family communication</b>—Parent(s) and/or primary caregiver(s) express themselves positively and respectfully, engaging young children in conversations that invite their input.</li> <li><b>3. Other adult relationships</b>—With the family's support, the child experiences consistent, caring relationships with adults outside the family.</li> <li><b>4. Caring neighbors</b>—The child's network of relationships includes neighbors who provide emotional support and a sense of belonging.</li> <li><b>5. Caring climate in child-care and educational settings</b>—Caregivers and teachers create environments that are nurturing, accepting, encouraging, and secure.</li> <li><b>6. Parent involvement in child care and education</b>—Parent(s), caregivers, and teachers together create a consistent and supportive approach to fostering the child's successful growth.</li> </ol>
	Empowerment	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>7. Community cherishes and values young children</b>—Children are welcomed and included throughout community life.</li> <li><b>8. Children seen as resources</b>—The community demonstrates that children are valuable resources by investing in a child-rearing system of family support and high-quality activities and resources to meet children's physical, social, and emotional needs.</li> <li><b>9. Service to others</b>—The child has opportunities to perform simple but meaningful and caring actions for others.</li> <li><b>10. Safety</b>—Parent(s), caregivers, teachers, neighbors, and the community take action to ensure children's health and safety.</li> </ol>
	Boundaries & Expectations	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>11. Family boundaries</b>—The family provides consistent supervision for the child and maintains reasonable guidelines for behavior that the child can understand and achieve.</li> <li><b>12. Boundaries in child-care and educational settings</b>—Caregivers and educators use positive approaches to discipline and natural consequences to encourage self-regulation and acceptable behaviors.</li> <li><b>13. Neighborhood boundaries</b>—Neighbors encourage the child in positive, acceptable behavior, as well as intervene in negative behavior, in a supportive, nonthreatening way.</li> <li><b>14. Adult role models</b>—Parent(s), caregivers, and other adults model self-control, social skills, engagement in learning, and healthy lifestyles.</li> <li><b>15. Positive peer relationships</b>—Parent(s) and caregivers seek to provide opportunities for the child to interact positively with other children.</li> <li><b>16. Positive expectations</b>—Parent(s), caregivers, and teachers encourage and support the child in behaving appropriately, undertaking challenging tasks, and performing activities to the best of her or his abilities.</li> </ol>
	Constructive Use of Time	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>17. Play and creative activities</b>—The child has daily opportunities to play in ways that allow self-expression, physical activity, and interaction with others.</li> <li><b>18. Out-of-home and community programs</b>—The child experiences well-designed programs led by competent, caring adults in well-maintained settings.</li> <li><b>19. Religious community</b>—The child participates in age-appropriate religious activities and caring relationships that nurture her or his spiritual development.</li> <li><b>20. Time at home</b>—The child spends most of her or his time at home participating in family activities and playing constructively, with parent(s) guiding TV and electronic game use.</li> </ol>

Internal Assets	Commitment to Learning	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>21. Motivation to mastery</b>—The child responds to new experiences with curiosity and energy, resulting in the pleasure of mastering new learning and skills.</li> <li><b>22. Engagement in learning experiences</b>—The child fully participates in a variety of activities that offer opportunities for learning.</li> <li><b>23. Home-program connection</b>—The child experiences security, consistency, and connections between home and out-of-home care programs and learning activities.</li> <li><b>24. Bonding to programs</b>—The child forms meaningful connections with out-of-home care and educational programs.</li> <li><b>25. Early literacy</b>—The child enjoys a variety of pre-reading activities, including adults reading to her or him daily, looking at and handling books, playing with a variety of media, and showing interest in pictures, letters, and numbers.</li> </ol>
	Positive Values	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>26. Caring</b>—The child begins to show empathy, understanding, and awareness of others' feelings.</li> <li><b>27. Equality and social justice</b>—The child begins to show concern for people who are excluded from play and other activities or not treated fairly because they are different.</li> <li><b>28. Integrity</b>—The child begins to express her or his views appropriately and to stand up for a growing sense of what is fair and right.</li> <li><b>29. Honesty</b>—The child begins to understand the difference between truth and lies, and is truthful to the extent of her or his understanding.</li> <li><b>30. Responsibility</b>—The child begins to follow through on simple tasks to take care of her- or himself and to help others.</li> <li><b>31. Self-regulation</b>—The child increasingly can identify, regulate, and control her or his behaviors in healthy ways, using adult support constructively in particularly stressful situations.</li> </ol>
	Social Competencies	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>32. Planning and decision making</b>—The child begins to plan for the immediate future, choosing from among several options and trying to solve problems.</li> <li><b>33. Interpersonal skills</b>—The child cooperates, shares, plays harmoniously, and comforts others in distress.</li> <li><b>34. Cultural awareness and sensitivity</b>—The child begins to learn about her or his own cultural identity and to show acceptance of people who are racially, physically, culturally, or ethnically different from her or him.</li> <li><b>35. Resistance skills</b>—The child begins to sense danger accurately, to seek help from trusted adults, and to resist pressure from peers to participate in unacceptable or risky behavior.</li> <li><b>36. Peaceful conflict resolution</b>—The child begins to compromise and resolve conflicts without using physical aggression or hurtful language.</li> </ol>
	Positive Identity	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>37. Personal power</b>—The child can make choices that give a sense of having some influence over things that happen in her or his life.</li> <li><b>38. Self-esteem</b>—The child likes her- or himself and has a growing sense of being valued by others.</li> <li><b>39. Sense of purpose</b>—The child anticipates new opportunities, experiences, and milestones in growing up.</li> <li><b>40. Positive view of personal future</b>—The child finds the world interesting and enjoyable, and feels that he or she has a positive place in it.</li> </ol>

# 40 Developmental Assets® for Children Grades K–3 (ages 5-9)

Search Institute® has identified the following building blocks of healthy development—known as **Developmental Assets**®—that help young people grow up healthy, caring, and responsible.

External Assets	Support	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Family Support</b>—Family continues to be a consistent provider of love and support for the child’s unique physical and emotional needs.</li> <li><b>Positive Family Communication</b>—Parent(s) and child communicate openly, respectfully, and frequently, with child receiving praise for her or his efforts and accomplishments.</li> <li><b>Other Adult Relationships</b>—Child receives support from adults other than her or his parent(s), with the child sometimes experiencing relationships with a nonparent adult.</li> <li><b>Caring Neighborhood</b>—Parent(s) and child experience friendly neighbors who affirm and support the child’s growth and sense of belonging.</li> <li><b>Caring School Climate</b>—Child experiences warm, welcoming relationships with teachers, caregivers, and peers at school.</li> <li><b>Parent Involvement in Schooling</b>—Parent(s) talk about the importance of education and are actively involved in the child’s school success.</li> </ol>
	Empowerment	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Community Values Children</b>—Children are welcomed and included throughout community life.</li> <li><b>Children as Resources</b>—Child contributes to family decisions and has opportunities to participate in positive community events.</li> <li><b>Service to Others</b>—Child has opportunities to serve in the community with adult support and approval.</li> <li><b>Safety</b>—Parents and community adults ensure the child’s safety while keeping in mind her or his increasing independence.</li> </ol>
	Boundaries & Expectations	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Family Boundaries</b>—The family maintains supervision of the child, has reasonable guidelines for behavior, and always knows where the child is.</li> <li><b>School Boundaries</b>—Schools have clear, consistent rules and consequences and use a positive approach to discipline.</li> <li><b>Neighborhood Boundaries</b>—Neighbors and friends’ parents help monitor the child’s behavior and provide feedback to the parent(s).</li> <li><b>Adult Role Models</b>—Parent(s) and other adults model positive, responsible behavior and encourage the child to follow these examples.</li> <li><b>Positive Peer Influence</b>—Parent(s) monitor the child’s friends and encourage spending time with those who set good examples.</li> <li><b>High Expectations</b>—Parent(s), teachers, and other influential adults encourage the child to do her or his best in all tasks and celebrate their successes.</li> </ol>
	Constructive Use of Time	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Creative Activities</b>—Child participates weekly in music, dance, or other form of artistic expression outside of school.</li> <li><b>Child Programs</b>—Child participates weekly in at least one sport, club, or organization within the school or community.</li> <li><b>Religious Community</b>—Child participates in age-appropriate religious activities and caring relationships that nurture her or his spiritual development.</li> <li><b>Time at Home</b>—Child spends time at home playing and doing positive activities with the family.</li> </ol>
Internal Assets	Commitment to Learning	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Achievement Motivation</b>—Child is encouraged to remain curious and demonstrates an interest in doing well at school.</li> <li><b>Learning Engagement</b>—Child is enthused about learning and enjoys going to school.</li> <li><b>Homework</b>—With appropriate parental support, child completes assigned homework.</li> <li><b>Bonding to School</b>—Child is encouraged to have and feels a sense of belonging at school.</li> <li><b>Reading for Pleasure</b>—Child listens to and/or reads books outside of school daily.</li> </ol>
	Positive Values	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Caring</b>—Parent(s) help child grow in empathy, understanding, and helping others.</li> <li><b>Equality and Social Justice</b>—Parent(s) encourage child to be concerned about rules and being fair to everyone.</li> <li><b>Integrity</b>—Parent(s) help child develop her or his own sense of right and wrong behavior.</li> <li><b>Honesty</b>—Parent(s) encourage child’s development in recognizing and telling the truth.</li> <li><b>Responsibility</b>—Parent(s) encourage child to accept and take responsibility for her or his actions at school and at home.</li> <li><b>Self-Regulation</b>—Parents encourage child’s growth in regulating her or his own emotions and behaviors and in understanding the importance of healthy habits and choices.</li> </ol>
	Social Competencies	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Planning and Decision Making</b>—Parent(s) help child think through and plan school and play activities.</li> <li><b>Interpersonal Competence</b>—Child seeks to build friendships and is learning about self-control.</li> <li><b>Cultural Competence</b>—Child continues to learn about her or his own cultural identity and is encouraged to interact positively with children of different racial, ethnic, and cultural backgrounds.</li> <li><b>Resistance Skills</b>—Child is learning to recognize risky or dangerous situations and is able to seek help from trusted adults.</li> <li><b>Peaceful Conflict Resolution</b>—Child continues learning to resolve conflicts without hitting, throwing a tantrum, or using hurtful language.</li> </ol>
	Positive Identity	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Personal Power</b>—Child has a growing sense of having influence over some of the things that happen in her or his life.</li> <li><b>Self-Esteem</b>—Child likes herself or himself and feels valued by others.</li> <li><b>Sense of Purpose</b>—Child welcomes new experiences and imagines what he or she might do or be in the future.</li> <li><b>Positive View of Personal Future</b>—Child has a growing curiosity about the world and finding her or his place in it.</li> </ol>

## External Assets

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| <b>Support</b>                       | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <b>Family support</b>—Family life provides high levels of love and support.</li> <li>2. <b>Positive family communication</b>—Parent(s) and child communicate positively. Child feels comfortable seeking advice and counsel from parent(s).</li> <li>3. <b>Other adult relationships</b>—Child receives support from adults other than her or his parent(s).</li> <li>4. <b>Caring neighborhood</b>—Child experiences caring neighbors.</li> <li>5. <b>Caring school climate</b>—Relationships with teachers and peers provide a caring, encouraging environment.</li> <li>6. <b>Parent involvement in schooling</b>—Parent(s) are actively involved in helping the child succeed in school.</li> </ol>  |
| <b>Empowerment</b>                   | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>7. <b>Community values youth</b>—Child feels valued and appreciated by adults in the community.</li> <li>8. <b>Children as resources</b>—Child is included in decisions at home and in the community.</li> <li>9. <b>Service to others</b>—Child has opportunities to help others in the community.</li> <li>10. <b>Safety</b>—Child feels safe at home, at school, and in his or her neighborhood.</li> </ol>  |
| <b>Boundaries &amp; Expectations</b> | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>11. <b>Family boundaries</b>—Family has clear and consistent rules and consequences and monitors the child's whereabouts.</li> <li>12. <b>School boundaries</b>—School provides clear rules and consequences.</li> <li>13. <b>Neighborhood boundaries</b>—Neighbors take responsibility for monitoring the child's behavior.</li> <li>14. <b>Adult role models</b>—Parent(s) and other adults in the child's family, as well as nonfamily adults, model positive, responsible behavior.</li> <li>15. <b>Positive peer influence</b>—Child's closest friends model positive, responsible behavior.</li> <li>16. <b>High expectations</b>—Parent(s) and teachers expect the child to do her or his best at school and in other activities.</li> </ol> |
| <b>Constructive Use of Time</b>      | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>17. <b>Creative activities</b>—Child participates in music, art, drama, or creative writing two or more times per week.</li> <li>18. <b>Child programs</b>—Child participates two or more times per week in cocurricular school activities or structured community programs for children..</li> <li>19. <b>Religious community</b>—Child attends religious programs or services one or more times per week.</li> <li>20. <b>Time at home</b>—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.</li> </ol>  |

## Internal Assets

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| <b>Commitment to Learning</b> | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>21. <b>Achievement Motivation</b>—Child is motivated and strives to do well in school.</li> <li>22. <b>Learning Engagement</b>—Child is responsive, attentive, and actively engaged in learning at school and enjoys participating in learning activities outside of school.</li> <li>23. <b>Homework</b>—Child usually hands in homework on time.</li> <li>24. <b>Bonding to school</b>—Child cares about teachers and other adults at school.</li> <li>25. <b>Reading for Pleasure</b>—Child enjoys and engages in reading for fun most days of the week.</li> </ol>  |
| <b>Positive Values</b>        | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>26. <b>Caring</b>—Parent(s) tell the child it is important to help other people.</li> <li>27. <b>Equality and social justice</b>—Parent(s) tell the child it is important to speak up for equal rights for all people.</li> <li>28. <b>Integrity</b>—Parent(s) tell the child it is important to stand up for one's beliefs.</li> <li>29. <b>Honesty</b>—Parent(s) tell the child it is important to tell the truth.</li> <li>30. <b>Responsibility</b>—Parent(s) tell the child it is important to accept personal responsibility for behavior.</li> <li>31. <b>Healthy Lifestyle</b>—Parent(s) tell the child it is important to have good health habits and an understanding of healthy sexuality.</li> </ol>  |
| <b>Social Competencies</b>    | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>32. <b>Planning and decision making</b>—Child thinks about decisions and is usually happy with results of her or his decisions.</li> <li>33. <b>Interpersonal Competence</b>—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.</li> <li>34. <b>Cultural Competence</b>—Child knows and is comfortable with people of different racial, ethnic, and cultural backgrounds and with her or his own cultural identity.</li> <li>35. <b>Resistance skills</b>—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.</li> <li>36. <b>Peaceful conflict resolution</b>—Child seeks to resolve conflict nonviolently.</li> </ol> |
| <b>Positive Identity</b>      | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>37. <b>Personal power</b>—Child feels he or she has some influence over things that happen in her or his life.</li> <li>38. <b>Self-esteem</b>—Child likes and is proud to be the person that he or she is.</li> <li>39. <b>Sense of purpose</b>—Child sometimes thinks about what life means and whether there is a purpose for her or his life.</li> <li>40. <b>Positive view of personal future</b>—Child is optimistic about her or his personal future.</li> </ol>   |

## External Assets

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|--------------------------------------|--|
| <b>Support</b>                       | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <b>Family support</b>—Family life provides high levels of love and support.</li> <li>2. <b>Positive family communication</b>—Young person and her or his parent(s) communicate positively, and young person is willing to seek advice and counsel from parents.</li> <li>3. <b>Other adult relationships</b>—Young person receives support from three or more nonparent adults.</li> <li>4. <b>Caring neighborhood</b>—Young person experiences caring neighbors.</li> <li>5. <b>Caring school climate</b>—School provides a caring, encouraging environment.</li> <li>6. <b>Parent involvement in schooling</b>—Parent(s) are actively involved in helping young person succeed in school.</li> </ol> |
| <b>Empowerment</b>                   | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>7. <b>Community values youth</b>—Young person perceives that adults in the community value youth.</li> <li>8. <b>Youth as resources</b>—Young people are given useful roles in the community.</li> <li>9. <b>Service to others</b>—Young person serves in the community one hour or more per week.</li> <li>10. <b>Safety</b>—Young person feels safe at home, school, and in the neighborhood.</li> </ol>  |
| <b>Boundaries &amp; Expectations</b> | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>11. <b>Family boundaries</b>—Family has clear rules and consequences and monitors the young person's whereabouts.</li> <li>12. <b>School Boundaries</b>—School provides clear rules and consequences.</li> <li>13. <b>Neighborhood boundaries</b>—Neighbors take responsibility for monitoring young people's behavior.</li> <li>14. <b>Adult role models</b>—Parent(s) and other adults model positive, responsible behavior.</li> <li>15. <b>Positive peer influence</b>—Young person's best friends model responsible behavior.</li> <li>16. <b>High expectations</b>—Both parent(s) and teachers encourage the young person to do well.</li> </ol>  |
| <b>Constructive Use of Time</b>      | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>17. <b>Creative activities</b>—Young person spends three or more hours per week in lessons or practice in music, theater, or other arts.</li> <li>18. <b>Youth programs</b>—Young person spends three or more hours per week in sports, clubs, or organizations at school and/or in the community.</li> <li>19. <b>Religious community</b>—Young person spends one or more hours per week in activities in a religious institution.</li> <li>20. <b>Time at home</b>—Young person is out with friends “with nothing special to do” two or fewer nights per week.</li> </ol>   |

## Internal Assets

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|-------------------------------|--|
| <b>Commitment to Learning</b> | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>21. <b>Achievement Motivation</b>—Young person is motivated to do well in school.</li> <li>22. <b>School Engagement</b>—Young person is actively engaged in learning.</li> <li>23. <b>Homework</b>—Young person reports doing at least one hour of homework every school day.</li> <li>24. <b>Bonding to school</b>—Young person cares about her or his school.</li> <li>25. <b>Reading for Pleasure</b>—Young person reads for pleasure three or more hours per week.</li> </ol>   |
| <b>Positive Values</b>        | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>26. <b>Caring</b>—Young person places high value on helping other people.</li> <li>27. <b>Equality and social justice</b>—Young person places high value on promoting equality and reducing hunger and poverty.</li> <li>28. <b>Integrity</b>—Young person acts on convictions and stands up for her or his beliefs.</li> <li>29. <b>Honesty</b>—Young person “tells the truth even when it is not easy.”</li> <li>30. <b>Responsibility</b>—Young person accepts and takes personal responsibility.</li> <li>31. <b>Restraint</b>—Young person believes it is important not to be sexually active or to use alcohol or other drugs.</li> </ol> |
| <b>Social Competencies</b>    | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>32. <b>Planning and decision making</b>—Young person knows how to plan ahead and make choices.</li> <li>33. <b>Interpersonal Competence</b>—Young person has empathy, sensitivity, and friendship skills.</li> <li>34. <b>Cultural Competence</b>—Young person has knowledge of and comfort with people of different cultural/racial/ethnic backgrounds.</li> <li>35. <b>Resistance skills</b>—Young person can resist negative peer pressure and dangerous situations.</li> <li>36. <b>Peaceful conflict resolution</b>—Young person seeks to resolve conflict nonviolently.</li> </ol>  |
| <b>Positive Identity</b>      | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>37. <b>Personal power</b>—Young person feels he or she has control over “things that happen to me.”</li> <li>38. <b>Self-esteem</b>—Young person reports having a high self-esteem.</li> <li>39. <b>Sense of purpose</b>—Young person reports that “my life has a purpose.”</li> <li>40. <b>Positive view of personal future</b>—Young person is optimistic about her or his personal future.</li> </ol>  |





## THE SCIENCE OF NATURAL HIGHS

# NATURAL HIGH CHART

NATURAL HIGH (NH)	HOW TO ACHIEVE THE NH	FEELINGS ASSOCIATED WITH THE NH	NEUROCHEMICAL(S) ASSOCIATED WITH THE NH
Laughing	Hanging out with friends; Watching funny movies and/or stand-up comedy	Euphoria; Happiness; Sense of well-being	Dopamine; Norepinephrine; Serotonin
Running	Distance running; Surfing; Biking; Skiing; any activity that significantly elevates heart rate	Euphoria; Calm; Focused; Reduced pain sensation; Sense of power	Opiates; Endorphins; Acetylcholine
Eating	Cooking 'slow food' at home or eating at a well-known restaurant – preferably with loved ones	Calm; Happiness; Reduced hunger pains	Dopamine; Serotonin
Helping	Volunteering your time to those in need; Donating money to good causes	Happiness; Sense of connection to others	Oxytocin; Dopamine
Loving	Spending time with family, friends or romantic partners; Becoming immersed in an activity you're passionate about	Euphoria; Warm feelings; Happiness; Sense of connection to others; Sense of well-being	Oxytocin; Dopamine; Norepinephrine; Serotonin
Creating Your Own	Varies (e.g., Meditating, Creating art; Outdoor activities)	Varies (e.g., Meditating produces a sense of calm / sense of being at peace with the world)	Varies (e.g., Meditating increases serotonin levels)

*Table created by Matt Bellace, Ph.D., author of A Better High*

# Alcohol and Your Brain

## • What to Know •

**Drinking alcohol affects the way your brain works**—changing everything from the way you act to your ability to walk. Some effects can be long-lasting. Learn about how alcohol affects different parts of the brain.<sup>1</sup>

**Hippocampus:** Your memory is controlled by the hippocampus. Drinking a lot of alcohol at one time can cause you to blackout, or forget a period of time. Long-term alcohol abuse can permanently damage the hippocampus, making it difficult for a person to learn.

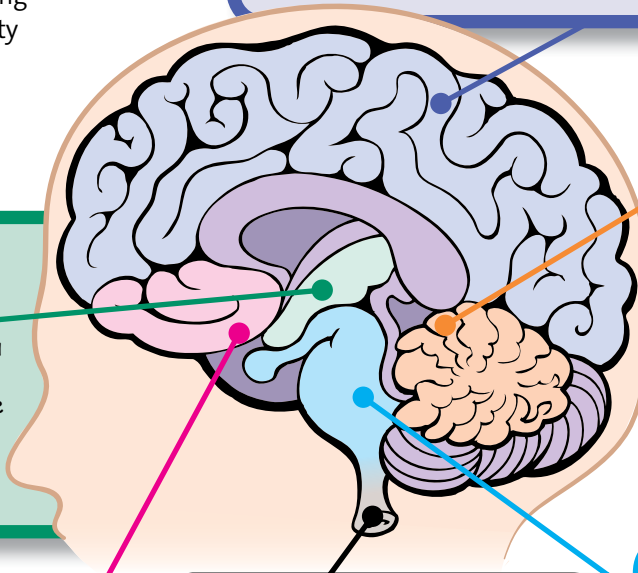
**Hypothalamus:** Many body processes, such as heart rate and the feeling of hunger or thirst, are controlled in this small area. Alcohol can slow your heart rate and may make you hungrier and thirstier.

**Central Nervous System:** Alcohol slows down this system, which is made up of the brain, spinal cord, and nerves. That affects how signals flow through your body, making you think, speak, and move more slowly.

**Medulla:** Involuntary processes, such as breathing and maintaining body temperature, are controlled here. Drinking a lot of alcohol at one time can shut down the medulla, leading to a coma.

**Cerebral Cortex:** This is the main area involved in thinking, decision-making, emotions, and the five senses. Alcohol's effects on this area can impair your ability to think clearly and lower your inhibitions. It may make you act without thinking or make you angry for no reason. Alcohol may affect your senses, such as blurring your vision. Long-term alcohol abuse can permanently damage this region.

**Cerebellum:** This part of the brain is important for coordinating many of your daily movements, such as walking and grabbing objects. Alcohol can slow your reflexes. It may cause you to lose your balance or make your hands shake.



**Use the information above to answer the following questions.**

1. Which part of the brain is responsible for the five senses? \_\_\_\_\_
2. Which part of the brain is affected when a person experiences a “blackout” in which they can’t remember entire events? \_\_\_\_\_
3. How can alcohol lead to a coma? \_\_\_\_\_

<sup>1</sup> Basic information on this page taken from: “Too Smart to Start.” <http://toosmarttostart.samhsa.gov/tweens/games/InteractiveBody/index.aspx>. “Alcohol’s Damaging Effects on the Brain,” *Alcohol Alert*, no. 63, October 2004. <http://pubs.niaaa.nih.gov/publications/AA63/AA63.htm>. “Underage Drinking,” *Alcohol Alert*, no. 67, January 2006. <http://pubs.niaaa.nih.gov/publications/AA67/AA67.htm>.

## Fast Fact

Research suggests that a young person’s brain is more sensitive to some of alcohol’s harmful effects because it is still developing.