

The 40 Assets Approach:

Why do some kids grow up with ease, while others struggle? Why do some kids get involved in dangerous activities, while others spend their time contributing to society? Why do some youth "beat the odds" in difficult situations, while others get trapped?

Many factors influence why some young people have successes in life and why others have a harder time. Economic circumstances, genetics, trauma, and many other factors play a role. But, these factors - which seem difficult, if not impossible, to change - aren't all that matters. Research by Search Institute has identified 40 concrete, positive experiences and qualities - "developmental assets" - that have a tremendous influence on young people's lives. And they are things that people from all walks of life can help to nurture. Research shows that the 40 developmental assets help young people make wise decisions, choose positive paths, and grow up competent, caring, and responsible. The assets are grouped into eight categories:

****Support:** Young people need to experience support, care, and love from their families 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" or "out of bounds".

****Constructive use of time:** Young people need constructive, enriching opportunities for growth through creative activities, youth programs, congregational involvement, and quality time at home.

****Commitment to learning:** Young people need to develop a lifelong commitment to education and learning.

****Positive Values:** Youth 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.