



# 41 DEVELOPMENTAL ASSETS® FOR EARLY CHILDHOOD (AGES 3 TO 5)

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

- 1. Family support:** 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.
- 2. Positive family communication:** Parent(s) and/or primary caregiver(s) express themselves positively and respectfully, engaging young children in conversations that invite their input.
- 3. Other adult relationships:** With the family's support, the child experiences consistent, caring relationships with adults outside the family.
- 4. Caring neighbors:** The child's network of relationships includes neighbors who provide emotional support and a sense of belonging.
- 5. Caring climate in child-care and educational settings:** Caregivers and teachers create environments that are nurturing, accepting, encouraging, and secure.
- 6. Parent involvement in child-care and education:** Parent(s), caregivers, and teachers together create a consistent and supportive approach to fostering the child's successful growth.

### EMPOWERMENT

- 7. Community cherishes and values young children:** Children are welcomed and included throughout community life.
- 8. Children seen as resources:** 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.
- 9. Service to others:** The child has opportunities to perform simple but meaningful and caring actions for others.
- 10. Safety:** Parent(s), caregivers, teachers, neighbors, and the community take action to ensure children's health and safety.

### BOUNDARIES & EXPECTATIONS

- 11. Family boundaries:** The family provides consistent supervision for the child and maintains reasonable guidelines for behavior that the child can understand and achieve.
- 12. Boundaries in child-care and educational settings:** Caregivers and educators use positive approaches to discipline and natural consequences to encourage self-regulation and acceptable behaviors.
- 13. Neighborhood boundaries:** Neighbors encourage the child in positive, acceptable behavior, as well as intervene in negative behavior, in a supportive, nonthreatening way.
- 14. Adult role models:** Parent(s), caregivers, and other adults model self-control, social skills, engagement in learning, and healthy lifestyles.
- 15. Positive peer relationships:** Parent(s) and caregivers seek to provide opportunities for the child to interact positively with other children.
- 16. Positive expectations:** 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.

### CONSTRUCTIVE USE OF TIME

- 17. Play and creative activities:** The child has daily opportunities to play in ways that allow self-expression, physical activity, and interaction with others.
- 18. Out-of-home and community programs:** The child experiences well-designed programs led by competent, caring adults in well-maintained settings.
- 19. Religious community:** The child participates in age-appropriate religious activities and caring relationships that nurture his or her spiritual development.
- 20. Time at home:** 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.

## INTERNAL ASSETS

### COMMITMENT TO LEARNING

- 21. Motivation to mastery:** The child responds to new experiences with curiosity and energy, resulting in the pleasure of mastering new learning and skills.
- 22. Engagement in learning experiences:** The child fully participates in a variety of activities that offer opportunities for learning.
- 23. Home-program connection:** The child experiences security, consistency, and connections between home and out-of-home care programs and learning activities.
- 24. Bonding to programs:** The child forms meaningful connections with out-of-home care and educational programs.
- 25. Early literacy:** The child enjoys a variety of pre-reading activities, including adults reading to him or her daily, looking at and handling books, playing with a variety of media, and showing interest in pictures, letters, and numbers.

### POSITIVE VALUES

- 26. Caring:** The child begins to show empathy, understanding, and awareness of others' feelings.
- 27. Equality and social justice:** The child begins to show concern for people who are excluded from play and other activities or not treated fairly because they are different.
- 28. Integrity:** The child begins to express her or his views appropriately and to stand up for a growing sense of what is fair and right.
- 29. Honesty:** The child begins to understand the difference between truth and lies, and is truthful to the extent of his or her understanding.
- 30. Responsibility:** The child begins to follow through on simple tasks to take care of her- or himself and to help others.
- 31. Self-regulation:** The child increasingly can identify, regulate, and control his or her behaviors in healthy ways, using adult support constructively in particularly stressful situations.

### SOCIAL COMPETENCIES

- 32. Planning and decision making:** The child begins to plan for the immediate future, choosing from among several options and trying to solve problems.
- 33. Interpersonal skills:** The child cooperates, shares, plays harmoniously, and comforts others in distress.
- 34. Cultural awareness and sensitivity:** 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.
- 35. Resistance skills:** 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.
- 36. Peaceful conflict resolution:** The child begins to compromise and resolve conflicts without using physical aggression or hurtful language.

### POSITIVE IDENTITY

- 37. Personal power:** The child can make choices that give a sense of having some influence over things that happen in his or her life.
- 38. Self-esteem:** The child likes her- or himself and has a growing sense of being valued by others.
- 39. Sense of purpose:** The child anticipates new opportunities, experiences, and milestones in growing up.
- 40. Positive view of personal future:** The child finds the world interesting and enjoyable, and feels that he or she has a positive place in it.
- 41. Positive cultural identity\*:** Adults model for the child pride in his or her identity including but not limited to disabilities, ethnicity, faith/religion, family status, gender, and language.

\*Project Cornerstone established this asset through local community input.