

ideas for parents

Easy Ways to Build Assets for and with Your Child

FAST FACTS

ASSETS: 40 Keys to Effective Parenting

Assets are 40 key building blocks of development that help youth grow up healthy. The more assets youth have, the more likely they are to succeed.

56%

of youth surveyed by Search Institute have just 20 or fewer of these assets in their lives.*

What Are Assets?

Assets are 40 values, experiences, and qualities that help kids succeed.

* Based on Search Institute surveys of 217,277 6th- to 12th-grade youth throughout the United States during the 1999-2000 school year.

Powerful Parenting: The Asset-Building Way

It's easy to get scared as a parent. Watching the news, we see crime, drinking and driving, teen pregnancy, gang warfare, suicide. We wonder what's going to happen to our children.

In our fear, we may end up scaring our kids so that they live in fear as well. Or, we may look the other way, thinking that these things would never affect our families.

Whatever the approach, most parents feel uncertain at times. We would like to know the secrets of healthy parenting in a world that often seems very unhealthy.

The idea of "developmental assets," introduced by Search Institute in Minneapolis, gives a new sense of hope and practical direction for parents. Researchers at Search

Institute have identified 40 assets that have a powerful, positive impact on young people. Children and teenagers who have a lot of assets get involved in very few risky behaviors—the kinds of problems we worry about. And when young people have a lot of assets, they are much more likely to do the positive things we value.

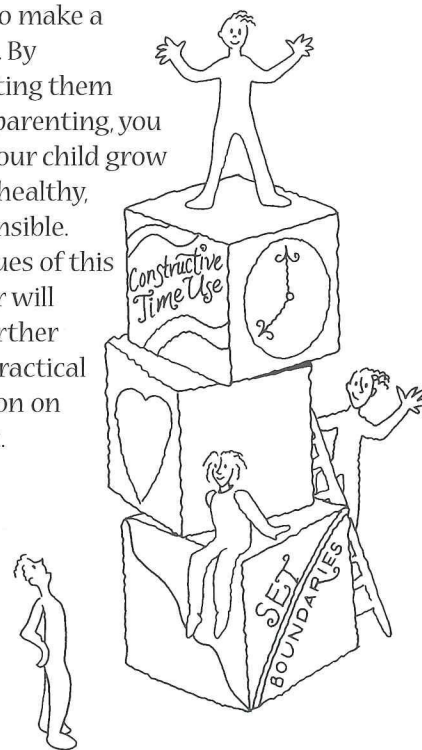
Assets do make a difference. By incorporating them into your parenting, you can help your child grow up happy, healthy, and responsible. Future issues of this newsletter will explain further and give practical information on each asset.

How to Start

Search Institute has identified eight types of assets that are crucial for helping young people grow up healthy:

- Supporting and loving your child.
- Empowering your child.
- Setting clear and realistic boundaries and expectations.
- Helping your child use her or his time in meaningful, constructive ways.
- Encouraging your child to develop a lifetime commitment to learning.
- Instilling in your child positive values.
- Developing social competencies in your child.
- Encouraging your child to form a positive identity.

Each area involves several specific assets. See the "asset quiz" for a list of all 40.



Quick Tip:
Focus on the positive and your children will, too.

Assets: How Does Your Child Rate?

Take this quiz to see how many assets you think your child has. Check each statement you feel is true.

1. My child receives a lot of love and support from family members.
2. My child and I communicate positively, and my child is willing to seek me out for advice and support.
3. My child receives support from three or more non-parent adults.
4. My child has neighbors that encourage and support her or him.
5. My child's school provides a caring, encouraging environment.
6. I am actively involved in helping my child succeed in school.
7. My child feels that adults in the community value youth and children.
8. My child is given useful roles in the community.
9. My child serves in the community one hour or more per week.
10. My child feels safe at home, at school, and in the neighborhood.
11. Our family has clear rules and consequences, and monitors our child's whereabouts.
12. My child's school provides clear rules and consequences.
13. Our neighbors take responsibility for monitoring my child's behavior.
14. I and other adults model positive, responsible behavior.
15. My child's best friends model responsible behavior.
16. I and my child's teachers encourage my child to do well.
17. My child spends three or more hours per week in lessons or practice in music, theater, or other arts.
18. My child spends three or more hours per week in sports, clubs, or organizations at school and/or in the community.
19. My child spends one or more hours per week in activities in a religious institution.
20. My child is out with friends "with nothing special to do" two or fewer nights per week.
21. My child wants to do well in school.
22. My child likes to learn new things.
23. My child does at least one hour of homework every school day.
24. My child cares about her or his school.
25. My child reads for pleasure three or more hours per week.
26. My child places high value on helping other people.
27. My child wants to promote equality and reduce hunger and poverty.
28. My child acts on convictions and stands up for her or his beliefs.
29. My child tells the truth even when it is not easy.
30. My child accepts and takes personal responsibility.
31. My child believes it is important not to be sexually active nor to use alcohol or other drugs.
32. My child knows how to plan ahead and make choices.
33. My child is good at making and keeping friends.
34. My child has knowledge of and comfort with people of different cultural, racial, and ethnic backgrounds.
35. My child can resist negative peer pressure and dangerous situations.
36. My child seeks to resolve conflict nonviolently.
37. My child feels he or she has control over things that happen to her or him.
38. My child feels good about her- or himself.
39. My child believes that her or his life has a purpose.
40. My child feels positive about her or his personal future.

Scoring: Give yourself one point for each "true." Total up the number of points. This is the number of assets you think your child has. Now ask your child how he or she would answer.

This checklist is an educational, awareness-raising tool. It is not intended nor appropriate as a scientific measurement of developmental assets of individuals.

Final Word

"Like a dream catcher, assets are the supporting threads in a young person's life that can keep away harm and invite goodness."—*Helping Kids Succeed—Alaskan Style*

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