



40 Developmental Assets

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



Category	Asset Name and Definition
External Assets	Support <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 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 <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 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 & Expectations <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 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 <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 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 <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 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 <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 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 Competencies <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 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 <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 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

The Power of Developmental Assets

A study of the dynamics of positive change in individuals, organizations, and communities by Search Institute has measured developmental assets in more than 1 million 6th to 12th graders in communities across the United States, since 1989, using the survey *Search Institute Profiles of Student Life Attitudes and Behaviors*

- The assets represent everyday wisdom about positive experiences and characteristics
- The assets are powerful influences on adolescent behavior
- Assets protect young people from many different problem behaviors
- Assets promote positive attitudes and behaviors
- The power of assets is evident across all cultural and socioeconomic groups of youth
- Assets offer a set of benchmarks for positive child and adolescent development
- The assets clearly show important roles that families, schools, congregations, neighborhoods, and organizations play in shaping young people's lives

While the assets are powerful shapers of young people's lives and choices, too few young people experience enough of these assets.

- The average young person surveyed experiences only 18 of the 40 assets
- Overall, 62 percent of young people surveyed experience fewer than 20 of the assets
- Most young people in the United States do not have many of the basic building blocks of healthy development in their lives

Protecting Youth from High-Risk Behaviors

Assets have tremendous power to protect youth from many different harmful or unhealthy choices. To illustrate this power, these charts show that youth with the most assets are least likely to engage in four different patterns of high-risk behavior.

# of Assets	0-10	11-20	21-30	31-40
Problem Alcohol Use	49%	27%	11%	3%
Violence	61%	38%	19%	7%
Illicit Drug Use	39%	18%	6%	1%
Sexual Activity	32%	21%	11%	3%

The same kind of impact is evident with many other problem behaviors, including tobacco use, depression and attempted suicide, antisocial behavior, school problems, driving and alcohol, and gambling.

Promoting Positive Attitudes and Behaviors

In addition to protecting youth from negative behaviors, having more assets increases the chances that young people will have positive attitudes and behaviors.

# of Assets	0-10	11-20	21-30	31-40
Exhibits Leadership	50%	65%	77%	85%
Maintains Good Health	26%	47%	69%	89%
Values Diversity	36%	57%	74%	88%
Succeeds in School	8%	17%	30%	47%

Source: Search Institute web site - www.search-institute.org

OJJDP Model Programs Guide

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RISK FACTORS

Risk factors are personal characteristics or environmental conditions scientifically established to increase the likelihood of problem behavior. The risk and protective factor framework suggests that risk factors combine to contribute to and shape problem behavior over the course of adolescent development and, while no single risk factor is more potent than another, the more risk factors present in life, the greater the probability of problem behaviors (Bry, McKeon, and Pandina 1982, Newcomb, 1995).

Some risk factors are causally related to negative outcomes while others are simply correlated with negative outcomes. They can range from prenatal biological traits to broad environmental conditions that increase an individual's vulnerability to negative developmental outcomes (Small and Luster, 1994). Biological risk traits (e.g., genetic markers) refer to an individual predisposition toward developing a specific problem condition. For example, children born to parents with schizophrenia are more likely than other children to develop symptoms of schizophrenia (Rende and Plomin, 1993). These traits are important to consider because environmental factors can play a triggering role in determining outcomes for individuals at genetic risk. Environmental conditions can have both direct and indirect effects on overall risk. For example, poverty directly affects children by lowering the quality of their food and shelter. It puts parents under constant strain so that they find it difficult to respond consistently to a child's needs.

There is also a cumulative effect of these stressors such that a prolonged exposure to risk factors increases the likelihood of negative outcomes. For example, school failure in early grades may not be associated with antisocial behavior, but it may become related if failure is repeated over a period of time. Consequently, as the number of risk factors increases, the cumulation exerts an increasingly strong influence on children. According to Sterling and colleagues (1985), school adjustment problems associated with a stressful life event, such as moving or death of a parent, worsened when another stressful event or circumstance arose concurrently.

Risk factors (as well as protective factors) are organized typically into life domains or spheres of influence, which are loosely identified by relational proximity, starting with the individual and extending outward in concentric circles to the community.

Individual

The factors in this sphere are identified as those individual behaviors or characteristics that affect risk of, or resistance to, engaging in violent behavior. The risk factors and their indicators unique to the individual sphere are presented below.

	FACTOR	INDICATOR
Risk	Antisocial Behavior and Alienation	School disciplinary actions/referrals (school district records)
		Students served in programs classified as Behaviorally or Emotionally Handicapped (BEH) (school district reports)
		Social adjustment assessments of children referred to city/county social service agencies
		Juvenile arrests for vandalism
		Juvenile arrests for drug-related offenses
		Juvenile arrests for alcohol-related offenses
		Juvenile arrests for drug distribution-related offenses
		Juvenile/family court referral/adjudication rate
		Suicides
		Bullying
	Gun Possession/Illegal gun ownership/carrying	Juvenile weapons/gun violation arrests
		Juvenile gun confiscations at school
		Self-report of carrying gun
	Teen Parenthood	Births to mothers ages 13-19
		Adolescent pregnancies ages 0-14
		Adolescent pregnancies ages 15-19
		Sexual activity among high school students
	Favorable Attitudes Toward Drug Use/early onset of AOD	Juvenile arrests for alcohol/drug use (local police department)

use/alcohol/drug use	Juvenile arrests for driving under the influence (local police department) Juvenile arrests for liquor law violations (local police department) Juvenile arrests for drug abuse violations (local police department) Juvenile arrests for drunkenness (local police department) Positive attitudes toward alcohol or drug abuse (Monitoring the Future Study Volume 1) Early initial use of drugs (Monitoring the Future Study, Volume 1) Annual alcohol use by students (Monitoring the Future Study, Volume 1) Recent or current use of alcohol/drugs (Monitoring the Future Study, Volume 1)
Early Onset of aggression/Violence	School disciplinary actions/referrals and mental health referrals for aggression (school and mental health center records) Child (prior to age 13) court referrals for person offenses (local juvenile/family court records) School disciplinary actions/referrals (school district records) Students served in programs classified as Behaviorally or Emotionally Handicapped (BEH) Social adjustment assessments of children referred to city/county social service agencies (local agency data) Juvenile arrests for violent crime and serious violent crime
Cognitive and neurological deficits/ low intelligence quotient/hyperactive	Students served in programs classified as Behaviorally or Emotionally Handicapped (BEH) (school district reports) Standardized intelligence test scores (school district reports) Learning disabilities (Elementary and Secondary Students Programs for the Disabled) Traumatic brain injury (Elementary and Secondary Students Programs for the Disabled) Emotional Disturbance (Elementary and Secondary Students Programs for the Disabled) Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder
Victimization and exposure to violence	Child abuse and neglect rate (Child Protective Services) Domestic violence arrests and convictions (local police department & criminal court) Treatment needs assessments of adolescents referred to juvenile/family courts
Lack of guilt and empathy	Students served in programs classified as Behaviorally or Emotionally Handicapped (BEH) (school district reports) Treatment needs assessments of adolescents referred to juvenile/family courts Factor- Poor refusal skills (no indicators) Factor- Chronic medical/physical condition
Poor refusal skills	
Chronic medical/physical condition	Problems among children referred to city/county social service agencies
Life stressors	Failing a course at school (School records) Being suspended or expelled from school (School records) Breaking up with a boyfriend/girlfriend (Self-report) Having a big fight or problem with a friend (Self-report) Death of someone close
Early sexual involvement	Sexually Transmitted Disease (STD) reports (local health department) Adolescent/student surveys of sexual activity

Mental disorder/mental health problem/conduct disorder	Students served in programs classified as Behaviorally or Emotionally Handicapped (BEH) Treatment needs assessments of adolescents referred to juvenile/family courts Social adjustment assessments of children referred to city/county social service agencies Juvenile arrest rate for curfew, vandalism, & disorderly conduct Juvenile/family court referral/adjudication rate for curfew, vandalism, & disorderly conduct Juvenile detainees diagnosed with depression
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Family

The factors in the family sphere of influence typically are related to family structure, support, culture, and functioning and ultimately affect the behavior of the individual members. The risk factors and their indicators unique to the family sphere are presented below.

	FACTOR	INDICATOR
Risk	Family History of the Problem Behavior	Adult criminal arrest rate (local police/sheriff department) Adults in drug treatment programs (Medicaid claims for alcohol and substance use, state alcohol and other drug treatment agencies, local treatment programs, U S Bureau of the Census, Statistical Abstract of the US) Parental assessments of children referred to juvenile/family courts (local agency data and city/county social service agencies) Educational attainment (U S Bureau of the Census Statistical Abstract of the US) Low adult literacy (National Adult Literacy Survey) Pregnant mothers using alcohol (Pregnancy Risk Assessment Monitoring System, CDC) Babies born with fetal alcohol syndrome

Family Management Problems/poor parental supervision and/or monitoring	<p>Arrests for runaway by age 18 (local police department)</p> <p>Children living outside the family/Placements in foster care facilities (local department of social services, U.S. Bureau of the Census Statistical Abstract of the US)</p> <p>Number of latchkey children among referrals to child welfare agency (local department of social services)</p> <p>Child abuse and neglect rate (Child Protective Services, U.S. Bureau of the Census, Statistical Abstract of the US)</p> <p>Risk & treatment needs assessments of children referred to juvenile/family courts and city/county social service agencies (local agency data)</p> <p>Parental involvement in child's school</p>
Poor family attachment/bonding	<p>Risk & treatment needs assessments of children referred to juvenile/family courts</p> <p>Risk & treatment needs assessments of children referred to city/county social service agencies</p>
Child victimization and maltreatment	<p>Child abuse and neglect rate</p> <p>Treatment needs assessments of adolescents referred to juvenile/family courts</p> <p>Unpaid child support</p> <p>Requests for social service intervention city/county social service agencies</p>
Pattern of high family conflict	<p>911 calls for domestic violence (local police/sheriff department)</p> <p>Domestic violence arrests (Sourcebook of Criminal Justice Statistics)</p>
Family violence	<p>Murders of intimate others (local police/sheriff department)</p> <p>Child abuse rate (Child Protective Services)</p> <p>Protective Orders Written (Child Protective Services)</p>
Having a young mother	Births to mothers age 13 to 19 (state or local health departments)
Broken home	<p>Children in neighborhoods with a high rate of female-headed families</p> <p>Proportion of children in non-intact families referred to juvenile/family courts and city/county social service agencies</p> <p>Divorce rate for parents with children under age 18</p> <p>Children with one or more parents in jail/prison</p> <p>Placements in foster care facilities</p> <p>Number of latchkey children among referrals to child welfare agency</p>
Sibling antisocial behavior	Risk & treatment needs assessments of children referred to juvenile/family courts and city/county social service agencies
Family transitions	<p>Divorce rate (county clerk or recorder, U.S. Bureau of the Census Statistical Abstract of the US)</p> <p>Change of custody orders (local juvenile/family court local child welfare agency)</p>
Parental use of physical punishment/harsh and/or erratic discipline practices	Reports to CPS of harsh physical punishment (Child Protective Services)
Low parent education level/illiteracy	<p>Education level of parents (school district reports)</p> <p>Families eligible for Free and Reduced Lunch Program (State Welfare Agency)</p> <p>Families on Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (State Welfare Agency)</p> <p>Food Stamp Program Recipients</p>

Maternal depression	Risk & treatment needs assessments of parents of children referred to juvenile/family courts and city/county social service agencies (local agencies)
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School

The factors in the school sphere of influence typically are related to school attendance, performance and attachment. The risk factors and their indicators unique to the school sphere are presented below.

	FACTOR	INDICATOR
Risk	Low academic achievement	Performance composite of public schools (school district reports) End of year testing/competency exams by grade (school district reports) Reading proficiency by grade (school district reports, Digest of Education Statistics) Math proficiency by grade (school district reports, Digest of Education Statistics) Science proficiency by grade
	Negative attitude toward school/ Low bonding/ low school attachment /commitment to school	Number of GED diplomas Completion of four years of high school
	Tuancy/frequent absences	Tuancy rate Chronic Absenteeism
	Suspension	Suspension rate
	Dropping out of school	School dropout rate Event dropout rate (the proportion of all students enrolled in school at the beginning of a 12-month period who leave school by the end of that 12-month period without graduating) Status dropout rate (proportion of the population 16 to 24 years of age who are not enrolled in high school and have not graduated)
	Inadequate school climate/ poorly organized and functioning schools/negative labeling by teachers	Large classes Graduation rates High dropout rate Excessive zero tolerance punishments Excessive suspensions and expulsions Reports of corporal punishment in schools Disruptive/dangerous school environment (suspensions & expulsions for fighting) Teacher exposure to teacher abuse by students Violence/crime in schools Teacher attitudes/job satisfaction Physical decay of schools Under-funded schools
	Identified as learning disabled	Enrollments in Special Education/Exceptional student programs Low academic aspirations Low parent college expectations for child Frequent school transitions New students and transfers

Peer

The factors in the peer sphere of influence are related to peer norms, attachment, socialization, and interaction processes.
The risk factors and their indicators unique to the peer sphere are presented below

	FACTOR	INDICATOR
Risk	Gang Involvement/gang membership	Presence of documented gangs Documentation of gang membership or association Perceived peer gang involvement
	Peer ATOD use	Alcohol, tobacco, and other drug use rate (local studies & YRBS survey) Violent friends
	Association with delinquent/aggressive peers	Documentation of friends/associates
	Peer Rejection	Self-admission of peer rejection

Community

The factors in the community sphere of influence are generally related to the physical environment, available economic and recreational opportunities, existing social supports, and other issues that affect successful functioning. The risk factors and their indicators unique to the community sphere are presented below

	FACTOR	INDICATOR
Risk	Availability/use of alcohol, tobacco, and other drugs in neighborhood	Juvenile/adult arrests for drug abuse violations Adolescent/student surveys of drug use Total alcoholic beverage sales by location Trends in exposure to drug use Perceived availability of drugs
	Availability of firearms	Juvenile arrests for weapons law violations Adult arrests for weapons law violations Illegal gun confiscations Firearms in homes of adults Firearm sales Gun Licenses/Permits Issued
	High-crime neighborhood	Juvenile arrest/adjudication rate Adult arrest/conviction rate for weapons-related charges Adult arrest/conviction rate for violent crimes Adult arrest/conviction rate for DUI Adult arrest/conviction rate for drug-related charges Adult arrest/conviction rate for alcohol-related charges Adult arrest/conviction rate for property crimes Presence of documented gangs Alcohol-related traffic fatalities Use of weapons in murders Murder rate
	Community instability	Unemployment rate Net migration rate Rental residential properties as proportion of all housing Non-enforcement of building violations/condemned buildings

	<p>Frequent moves of families with children</p> <p>New home construction</p> <p>Home ownership rates</p> <p>Property vacancy</p>
Low community attachment	<p>Prevalence of homeless families/individuals</p> <p>Population voting in Congressional or Presidential elections</p>
Economic deprivation/poverty/ residence in a disadvantaged neighborhood	<p>Median family income</p> <p>Unemployment rate</p> <p>Families/persons/children living below poverty level (U S Bureau of the Census, Statistical Abstract of the U S)</p> <p>Families on Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (State Welfare Agency, U S Bureau of the Census, Statistical Abstract of the U S)</p> <p>Food Stamp Program Recipients (State Welfare Agency, U S Bureau of the Census, Statistical Abstract of the U S)</p> <p>Families eligible for Free and Reduced Lunch Program (State Welfare Agency, U S Bureau of the Census, Statistical Abstract of the U S)</p> <p>Female family householder with no spouse present (U S Bureau of the Census, Statistical Abstract of the U S)</p> <p>Children in working poor families (Kids Count Data Book)</p> <p>Individuals/children without health insurance (U S Bureau of the Census, Statistical Abstract of the U S)</p>
Neighborhood youth in trouble	<p>Juvenile overall arrest rate (local police department)</p> <p>Juvenile/family court referral/adjudication rate</p>
Feeling unsafe in the neighborhood	<p>Juvenile violent crime</p> <p>Juvenile/adult violent crime/ homicide arrests (local police/sheriff department)</p> <p>Presence of documented gangs</p>
Social and physical disorder/disorganized neighborhood	<p>Poor external housing conditions (local Housing and Urban Development office, U S Bureau of the Census, Statistical Abstract of the U S)</p> <p>Graffiti, vandalism, & littering (local police/sheriff department)</p> <p>Un-repaired homes (photographs)</p> <p>Hate crimes (local police/sheriff department)</p> <p>Broken light fixtures in public halls (U S Bureau of the Census Statistical Abstract of the U S)</p> <p>Absence of Neighborhood Watch organizations (local police/sheriff department)</p> <p>Non-enforcement of building code violations/condemned buildings (city/county government agency)</p> <p>Projection of homeless families (National Coalition for the Homeless)</p> <p>Public Drunkenness</p>

By integrating the risk and protective models, the new Title V delinquency prevention model can more adequately identify at-risk youths and then provide them with methods of healthy development to combat the likelihood of developing problem behaviors