

The Power of Assets

On one level, the 40 Developmental Assets represent everyday wisdom about positive experiences and characteristics for young people. In addition, Search Institute research has found that these assets are powerful influences on adolescent behavior—both protecting young people from many different problem behaviors and promoting positive attitudes and behaviors. This power is evident across all cultural and socioeconomic groups of youth. There is also evidence from other research that assets have the same kind of power for younger children.

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, based on surveys of almost 150,000 6th- to 12th-grade youth in 202 communities across the United States in calendar year 2003.

	0-10 Assets	11-20 Assets	21-30 Assets	31-40 Assets
Problem Alcohol Use	45%	26%	11%	3%
Violence	62%	38%	18%	6%
Illicit Drug Use	38%	18%	6%	1%
Sexual Activity	34%	23%	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, as these charts show.

	0-10 Assets	11-20 Assets	21-30 Assets	31-40 Assets
Exhibits Leadership	48%	66%	78%	87%
Maintains Good Health	27%	48%	69%	88%
Values Diversity	39%	60%	76%	89%
Succeeds in School	9%	19%	34%	54%

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