

40 Developmental Assets for Middle Childhood

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

External Assets

SUPPORT

- 1. Family support**—Family life provides high levels of love and support.
- 2. Positive family communication**—Parent(s) and child communicate positively. Child feels comfortable seeking advice and counsel from parent(s).
- 3. Other adult relationships**—Child receives support from adults other than her or his parent(s).
- 4. Caring neighborhood**—Child experiences caring neighbors.
- 5. Caring school climate**—Relationships with teachers and peers provide a caring, encouraging school environment.
- 6. Parent involvement in schooling**—Parent(s) are actively involved in helping the child succeed in school.

EMPOWERMENT

- 7. Community values children**—Child feels valued and appreciated by adults in the community.
- 8. Children as resources**—Child is included in decisions at home and in the community.
- 9. Service to others**—Child has opportunities to help others in the community.
- 10. Safety**—Child feels safe at home, at school, and in her or his neighborhood.

BOUNDARIES AND EXPECTATIONS

- 11. Family boundaries**—Family has clear and consistent rules and consequences and monitors the child's whereabouts.
- 12. School boundaries**—School provides clear rules and consequences.
- 13. Neighborhood boundaries**—Neighbors take responsibility for monitoring the child's behavior.
- 14. Adult role models**—Parent(s) and other adults in the child's family, as well as nonfamily adults, model positive, responsible behavior.
- 15. Positive peer influence**—Child's closest friends model positive, responsible behavior.
- 16. High expectations**—Parent(s) and teachers expect the child to do her or his best at school and in other activities.

CONSTRUCTIVE USE OF TIME

- 17. Creative activities**—Child participates in music, art, drama, or creative writing two or more times per week.
- 18. Child programs**—Child participates two or more times per week in cocurricular school activities or structured community programs for children.
- 19. Religious community**—Child attends religious programs or services one or more times per week.
- 20. Time at home**—Child spends some time most days both in high-quality interaction with parents and doing things at home other than watching TV or playing video games.

Internal Assets

COMMITMENT TO LEARNING

- 21. Achievement motivation**—Child is motivated and strives to do well in school.
- 22. Learning engagement**—Child is responsive, attentive, and actively engaged in learning at school and enjoys participating in learning activities outside of school.
- 23. Homework**—Child usually hands in homework on time.
- 24. Bonding to adults at school**—Child cares about teachers and other adults at school.
- 25. Reading for pleasure**—Child enjoys and engages in reading for fun most days of the week.

POSITIVE VALUES

- 26. Caring**—Parent(s) tell the child it is important to help other people.
- 27. Equality and social justice**—Parent(s) tell the child it is important to speak up for equal rights for all people.
- 28. Integrity**—Parent(s) tell the child it is important to stand up for one's beliefs.
- 29. Honesty**—Parent(s) tell the child it is important to tell the truth.
- 30. Responsibility**—Parent(s) tell the child it is important to accept personal responsibility for behavior.
- 31. Healthy lifestyle**—Parent(s) tell the child it is important to have good health habits and an understanding of healthy sexuality.

SOCIAL COMPETENCIES

- 32. Planning and decision making**—Child thinks about decisions and is usually happy with results of her or his decisions.
- 33. Interpersonal competence**—Child cares about and is affected by other people's feelings, enjoys making friends, and, when frustrated or angry, tries to calm her- or himself.
- 34. Cultural competence**—Child knows and is comfortable with people of different racial, ethnic, and cultural backgrounds and with her or his own cultural identity.
- 35. Resistance skills**—Child can stay away from people who are likely to get her or him in trouble and is able to say no to doing wrong or dangerous things.
- 36. Peaceful conflict resolution**—Child attempts to resolve conflict nonviolently.

POSITIVE IDENTITY

- 37. Personal power**—Child feels he or she has some influence over things that happen in her or his life.
- 38. Self-esteem**—Child likes and is proud to be the person he or she is.
- 39. Sense of purpose**—Child sometimes thinks about what life means and whether there is a purpose for her or his life.
- 40. Positive view of personal future**—Child is optimistic about her or his personal future.