



Developmental
40
Assets

Competence
Resistance Skills
Peaceful Conflict Resolution
positive values
Caring
Equality and Social Justice
Integrity
Honesty
Responsibility
Restraint
commitment
achievement
School Engagement
Home
Reading
pleasure
Time
Religious Community
Youth Programs
Creative Activities
constructive
use of time
High Expectations
Positive Peer Influ
Adult Role
Neigh
Caring
Parent

Developmental Assets: A Profile of Your Youth

Executive Summary

Results from the Search Institute Survey *Profiles of Student Life: Attitudes and Behaviors*

Haddam-Killingworth Middle and High Schools
Killingworth and Higganum, CT
August 2010

Developmental Assets: A Profile of Your Youth

Executive Summary

Haddam-Killingworth Middle and High Schools
Killingworth and Higganum, CT

August 2010

Results from the Search Institute Survey
Profiles of Student Life: Attitudes and Behaviors



Developmental Assets: A Profile of Your Youth for Haddam-Killingworth Middle and High Schools. Copyright © 2009 by Search Institute. All rights reserved. Search Institute® and Developmental Assets® are registered trademarks of Search Institute. No part of this publication may be reproduced in any manner whatsoever, mechanical, digital, or electronic, without prior permission from the publisher, except in brief quotations or summaries in articles or reviews, or as follows:

- Youth and Family Services of Haddam-Killingworth, Inc. or its designee may photocopy and distribute this report in its entirety for informational and educational purposes only.
- Youth and Family Services of Haddam-Killingworth, Inc. or its designee may reproduce or adapt Figures 1 through 16 and Tables 1 through 26 to other formats (including, but not limited to, brochures, Web sites, and slide presentations), provided Search Institute is acknowledged as the source of the information and as the developer of the framework of Developmental Assets.
- The text and appendices contained in this report may not be reproduced as part of any adaptations—mechanical, digital, or electronic.

Search Institute will treat this report as **Confidential**. Because the data upon which this report is based can be used to advance the understanding of adolescent development, Search Institute reserves the right to add the data to its larger Developmental Assets database. This report is based on data from the survey **Search Institute Profiles of Student Life: Attitudes and Behaviors**, copyright © 2009 by Search Institute. For additional information, contact Search Institute's Survey Services Department at 1-800-888-7828 or www.search-institute.org.

Developmental Assets: A Profile of Your Youth

Haddam-Killingworth Middle and High Schools

Over the past 20 years, Search Institute has surveyed nearly three million youth about how they experience the 40 Developmental Assets—a research-based framework that identifies basic building blocks of human development. We've found clear relationships between youth outcomes and asset levels in both cross-sectional and longitudinal studies.

The results are compelling: The more assets kids have, the better. Youth with high asset levels are less likely to engage in high-risk behaviors (such as violence, sexual activity, drug use, and suicide), and more likely to engage in thriving behaviors (such as helping others, doing well in school, and taking on leadership roles).

Assets are crucial for the healthy development of all youth, regardless of their community size, geographic region, gender, economic status, race, or ethnicity. This report summarizes the extent to which *your* youth experience the Developmental Assets and how the assets relate to their behavior and overall health.

The Developmental Assets were assessed in your school community in May 2010, using the Search Institute survey *Profiles of Student Life: Attitudes and Behaviors*. Below you'll find a brief summary of demographic data that describes the young people who participated in your study.

Table 1. Youth Who Were Surveyed			
		Number of Youth	Percent of Total
Total Sample¹		913	100
Gender²	Male	443	49
	Female	453	51
Grade²	6	0	0
	7	173	19
	8	185	20
	9	131	14
	10	170	19
	11	139	15
	12	114	13
Race/Ethnicity²	American Indian	7	1
	Asian	17	2
	Black or African American	12	1
	Hispanic or Latino/Latina	13	1
	Pacific Islander	8	1
	White	802	88
	Other	15	2
	More than one of the above	35	4

¹ Four criteria were used to determine whether individual responses were valid. Survey forms that did not meet one or more of the criteria were discarded. Reasons for survey disqualification include inconsistent responses, missing data on 40 or more items, reports of unrealistically high levels of alcohol or other drug use, and surveys from students in grades other than those intended. See full report for more information.

² Numbers may not add up to the "Total Sample" figure due to missing information on individual surveys.

The Developmental Assets in Your Community

The Developmental Asset framework covers extensive territory, including the experiences of young people and their commitments, values, skills, and identity. Your youth were asked questions about their experience of each of the 40 assets. Their answers form the basis for this report. To grasp the range and depth of concepts measured by the asset framework, we can divide assets into two key areas: external assets and internal assets.

External assets are the positive developmental experiences that families, schools, neighborhoods, community groups, and other youth and family-serving organizations provide young people. These positive experiences are reinforced and supported by the broader efforts of society through government policy, health care providers, law enforcement agencies, civic foundations, and other community institutions.

Table 2. Percent of Your Youth Reporting External Assets			
Category	Asset Name	Definition	Percent
Support	1. Family support	Family life provides high levels of love and support.	72
	2. Positive family communication	Young person and his or her parent(s) communicate positively, and young person is willing to seek parent(s) advice and counsel.	32
	3. Other adult relationships	Young person receives support from three or more nonparent adults.	57
	4. Caring neighborhood	Young person experiences caring neighbors.	46
	5. Caring school climate	School provides a caring, encouraging environment.	33
	6. Parent involvement in schooling	Parent(s) are actively involved in helping young person succeed in school.	30
Empowerment	7. Community values youth	Young person perceives that adults in the community value youth.	26
	8. Youth as resources	Young people are given useful roles in the community.	29
	9. Service to others	Young person serves in the community one hour or more per week.	55
	10. Safety	Young person feels safe at home, school, and in the neighborhood.	62
Boundaries and Expectations	11. Family boundaries	Family has clear rules and consequences, and monitors the young person's whereabouts.	49
	12. School boundaries	School provides clear rules and consequences.	52
	13. Neighborhood boundaries	Neighbors take responsibility for monitoring young people's behavior.	46
	14. Adult role models	Parent(s) and other adults model positive, responsible behavior.	31
	15. Positive peer influence	Young person's best friends model responsible behavior.	65
	16. High expectations	Both parent(s) and teachers encourage the young person to do well.	48
Constructive Use of Time	17. Creative activities	Young person spends three or more hours per week in lessons or practice in music, theater, or other arts.	22
	18. Youth programs	Young person spends three or more hours per week in sports, clubs, or organizations at school and/or in community organizations.	73
	19. Religious community	Young person spends one or more hours per week in activities in a religious institution.	40
	20. Time at home	Young person is out with friends "with nothing special to do" two or fewer nights per week.	73

Internal assets are the positive commitments, skills, and values that form a young person's inner guidance system. Youth make personal choices and actions based upon the degree to which their internal assets are developed.

Table 3. Percent of Your Youth Reporting Internal Assets			
Category	Asset Name	Definition	Percent
Commitment to Learning	21. Achievement motivation	Young person is motivated to do well in school.	67
	22. School engagement	Young person is actively engaged in learning.	57
	23. Homework	Young person reports doing at least one hour of homework every school day.	58
	24. Bonding to school	Young person cares about his or her school.	50
	25. Reading for pleasure	Young person reads for pleasure three or more hours per week.	27
Positive Values	26. Caring	Young person places high value on helping other people.	53
	27. Equality and social justice	Young person places high value on promoting equality and reducing hunger and poverty.	52
	28. Integrity	Young person acts on convictions and stands up for his or her beliefs.	73
	29. Honesty	Young person tells the truth even when it is not easy.	65
	30. Responsibility	Young person accepts and takes personal responsibility.	62
	31. Restraint	Young person believes it is important not to be sexually active or to use alcohol or other drugs.	43
Social Competencies	32. Planning and decision-making	Young person knows how to plan ahead and make choices.	34
	33. Interpersonal competence	Young person has empathy, sensitivity, and friendship skills.	52
	34. Cultural competence	Young person has knowledge of and comfort with people of different cultural/racial/ethnic backgrounds.	36
	35. Resistance skills	Young person can resist negative peer pressure and dangerous situations.	45
	36. Peaceful conflict resolution	Young person seeks to resolve conflict nonviolently.	43
Positive Identity	37. Personal power	Young person feels he or she has control over "things that happen to me."	50
	38. Self-esteem	Young person reports having a high self-esteem.	54
	39. Sense of purpose	Young person reports that "my life has a purpose."	67
	40. Positive view of personal future	Young person is optimistic about his or her personal future.	76

The External Developmental Assets (Assets 1–20)

Think of *external assets* as positive developmental experiences provided for youth by networks of supportive people and social systems in the community. They offer youth a consistent source of love and respect, opportunities for empowerment, leadership, service, and creativity, safe interpersonal and physical boundaries, and high expectations for personal achievement.

The table below summarizes the extent to which young people in your community experience each of the 20 external Developmental Assets.

Table 4. Percent of Youth Reporting External Assets by Gender and Grade									
External Asset	Total Sample	Gender		Grade					
		M	F	6	7	8	9	10	11
Support									
1. Family support	72	72	73	80	79	69	64	65	73
2. Positive family communication	32	32	32	41	37	34	28	27	18
3. Other adult relationships	57	54	60	61	63	57	51	50	61
4. Caring neighborhood	46	43	50	62	49	47	42	33	40
5. Caring school climate	33	32	34	48	51	29	21	26	17
6. Parent involvement in schooling	30	26	35	44	36	34	25	20	18
Empowerment									
7. Community values youth	26	23	28	40	38	25	16	14	12
8. Youth as resources	29	27	30	42	37	31	25	17	11
9. Service to others	55	51	60	59	52	66	60	42	50
10. Safety	62	71	52	54	58	55	63	71	72
Boundaries and Expectations									
11. Family boundaries	49	46	53	53	51	42	45	53	50
12. School boundaries	52	48	55	74	66	39	43	42	35
13. Neighborhood boundaries	46	44	48	53	50	46	47	35	37
14. Adult role models	31	26	35	38	40	21	31	21	27
15. Positive peer influence	65	58	72	89	83	66	51	45	39
16. High expectations	48	48	49	66	61	45	36	42	30
Constructive Use of Time									
17. Creative activities	22	18	26	22	27	25	20	13	23
18. Youth programs	73	72	75	77	78	75	70	70	67
19. Religious community	40	37	43	52	42	46	38	29	27
20. Time at home	73	70	76	79	76	66	80	70	60

The Internal Developmental Assets (Assets 21–40)

The *internal assets* can be thought of as inner characteristics: a young person's motivation and commitment to academic achievement and lifelong learning; his or her positive personal values; social competencies (including relationship and communication skills); and characteristics of personal identity, including an optimistic future outlook and sense of purpose.

The table below summarizes the extent to which young people in your community experience each of the 20 internal Developmental Assets.

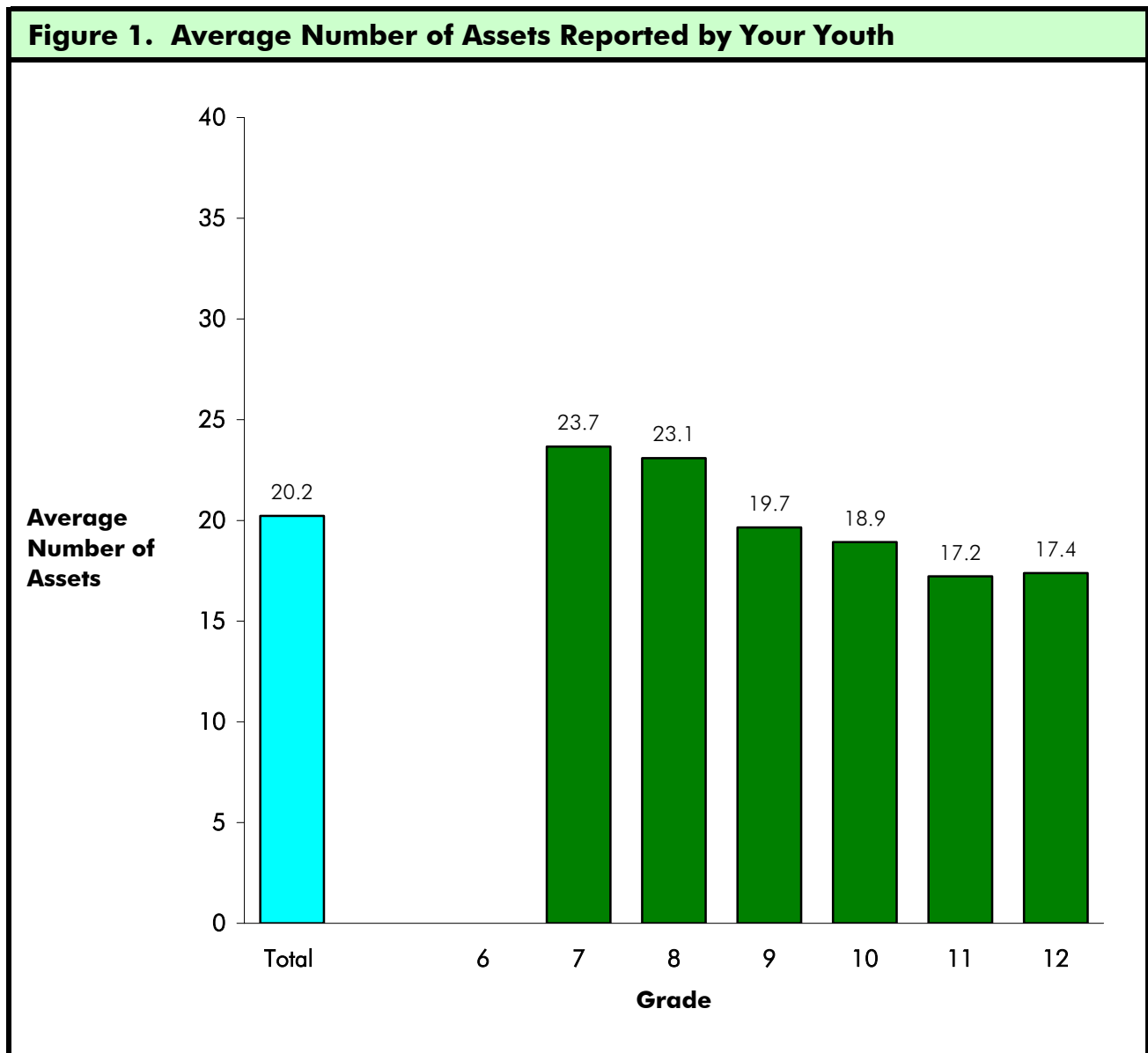
Table 5. Percent of Youth Reporting Internal Assets by Gender and Grade									
Internal Asset	Total Sample	Gender		Grade					
		M	F	6	7	8	9	10	11
Commitment to Learning									
21. Achievement motivation	67	58	76	77	71	65	69	57	57
22. School engagement	57	49	66	68	62	53	57	49	51
23. Homework	58	46	69	46	59	71	66	58	46
24. Bonding to school	50	45	55	68	71	44	42	32	29
25. Reading for pleasure	27	22	33	33	29	35	25	17	23
Positive Values									
26. Caring	53	40	64	55	54	51	58	45	49
27. Equality and social justice	52	41	63	62	57	56	53	39	39
28. Integrity	73	65	81	66	72	69	82	73	80
29. Honesty	65	58	72	65	66	67	67	63	61
30. Responsibility	62	56	67	59	62	60	62	61	67
31. Restraint	43	36	50	73	62	41	27	24	14
Social Competencies									
32. Planning and decision-making	34	30	38	35	39	25	34	31	40
33. Interpersonal competence	52	35	69	60	56	55	48	41	50
34. Cultural competence	36	31	41	44	51	31	34	25	24
35. Resistance skills	45	40	50	60	54	40	41	31	33
36. Peaceful conflict resolution	43	30	57	58	45	45	38	29	41
Positive Identity									
37. Personal power	50	49	50	49	52	46	46	45	61
38. Self-esteem	54	61	48	60	56	40	55	51	63
39. Sense of purpose	67	69	65	71	69	57	67	64	74
40. Positive view of personal future	76	73	79	79	81	70	73	70	80

Average Number of Developmental Assets in Your Youth

Search Institute's research on adolescents consistently shows a small but meaningful difference in assets between older youth (grades nine through 12) and younger youth (grades six through eight), with younger youth reporting more assets than older youth. This result has been found in both "snapshot" and longitudinal studies. Regardless of age, gender, economic status, or geographic region, most young people in the United States experience far too few of the 40 Developmental Assets.

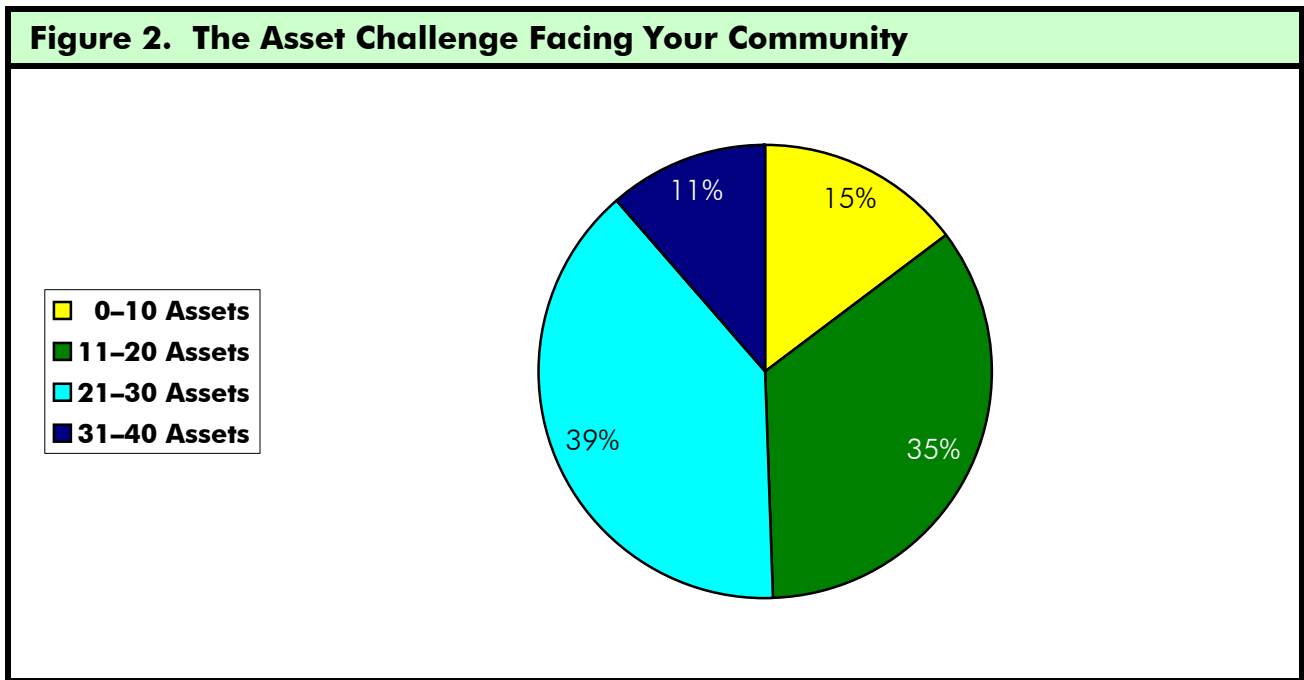
If one or more grade levels in your survey sample report particularly low average numbers of assets compared to other grades in your study, you may need to closely examine community conditions that affect asset development at those particular grade levels.

The following figure reflects the average number of Developmental Assets reported at each grade level by youth in your community.



Your Community's Challenge

For optimal youth outcomes, the more assets youth have, the better. Having 31–40 assets is better than 21–30, which is better than having 11–20, and so on. In an ideal world, communities would strive to ensure that all youth eventually experience between 31 and 40 of the Developmental Assets. In your community, 11 percent of surveyed students report 31 or more of the 40 assets. Below in Figure 2 you'll find the percent of your young people who currently experience Developmental Assets (in asset groups of 10).



The Asset Challenge for All Communities

The state of Developmental Assets in your community is likely to be similar to the challenging asset pattern found throughout the country. The particular strengths and weaknesses highlighted in this report are a unique reflection of your community, but general patterns (of average numbers of assets, general decreases in asset levels, and relationships between assets and risk behaviors and between assets and thriving behaviors) are typical of other communities that have administered this survey to youth. Search Institute studies have found regardless of town size or geography that youth typically lack support. Communities can draw upon the inherent strengths of youth and adults to increase assets in young people and do the following:

- Give adequate adult support through long-term, positive intergenerational relationships;
- Provide meaningful leadership and community involvement opportunities;
- Engage young people in youth-serving programs;
- Provide consistent and well-defined behavioral boundaries;
- Help youth connect to their community; and
- Create critical opportunities to develop social competencies and form positive values.

Young people may face complex social forces, including:

- High levels of parental absence;
- Adult silence on positive values and healthy boundaries;
- Fragmented family and community social systems;
- Neighbors who are isolated from one another and separated by age barriers;
- Adult fear of becoming involved and the sense that young people are someone else's responsibility;
- Public disengagement from the important work of building meaningful connections with youth;
- Youth overexposure to media saturated with violence and sexual situations;
- Poverty and lack of access to supportive programs and services;
- Inadequate education and poor economic opportunities that cause families to be unable to provide for their children's needs;
- Schools, religious institutions, and other youth-serving organizations that are not adequately equipped to be supportive, caring, and challenging in a positive way.

By working to eliminate these barriers and conditions, communities can fortify young people against the allure of risk-taking behaviors, negative pressures, and undesirable sources of belonging in order to prepare them to become the next generation of parents, workers, leaders, and citizens. While this combination of social factors suggests that we have much work to do, a concerted effort by all members of the community to build assets in youth can strengthen our capacity to be caring, connected and committed to the common good.

The Power of Developmental Assets to Promote Thriving in Youth

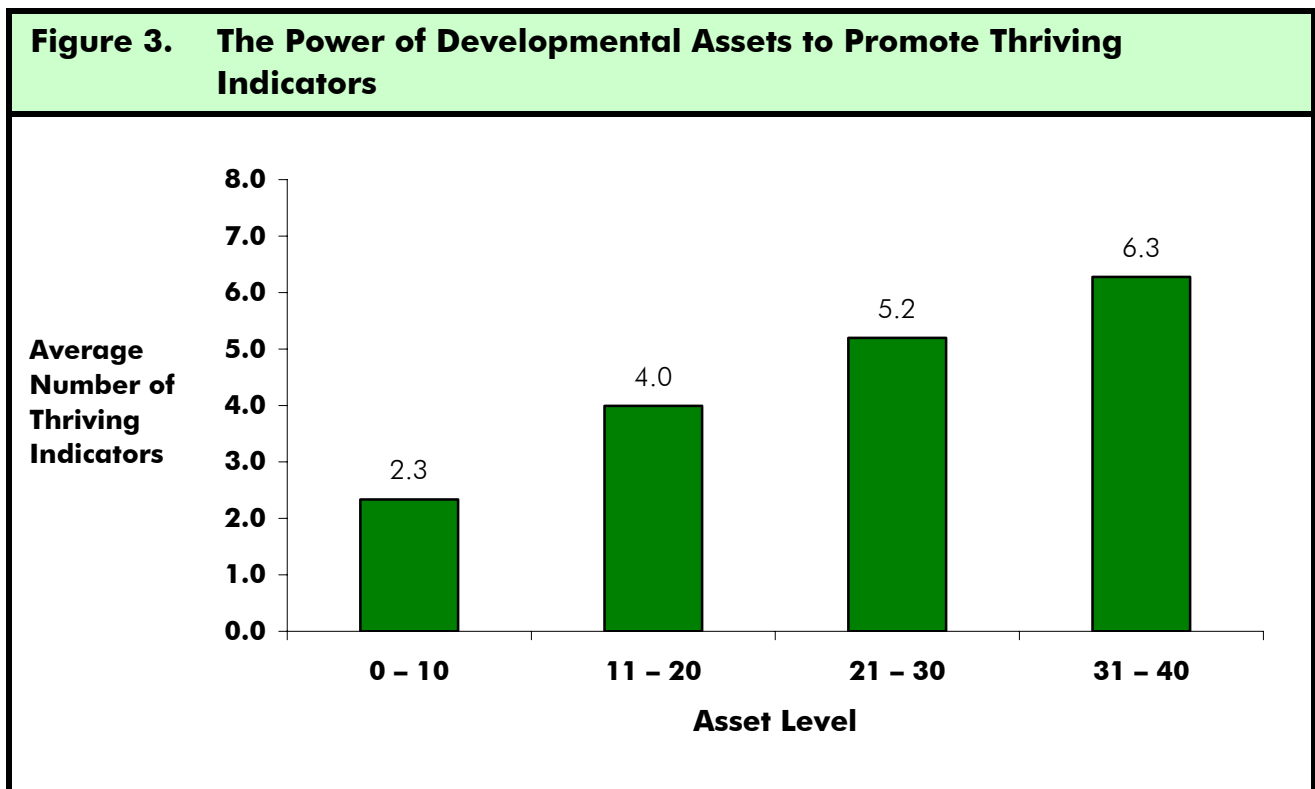
Youth who report higher levels of assets are not only less likely to engage in risk-taking behaviors, but they are also more likely to consistently report higher numbers of eight thriving indicators, according to Search Institute's research. These indicators offer a brief look at thriving, which is a much more comprehensive concept.³ Figure 3 reflects the power of assets to promote the eight specific thriving indicators among young people.

Eight Indicators of Thriving Youth

Youth:

- Experience school success
- Help others informally
- Value diversity
- Maintain good personal health
- Exhibit leadership
- Resist danger
- Control impulsive behavior
- Overcome adversity

In the figure below, each bar represents a relationship between the average number of thriving indicators reported by your youth and the total number of assets (in asset groups of 10) reported by the same youth.



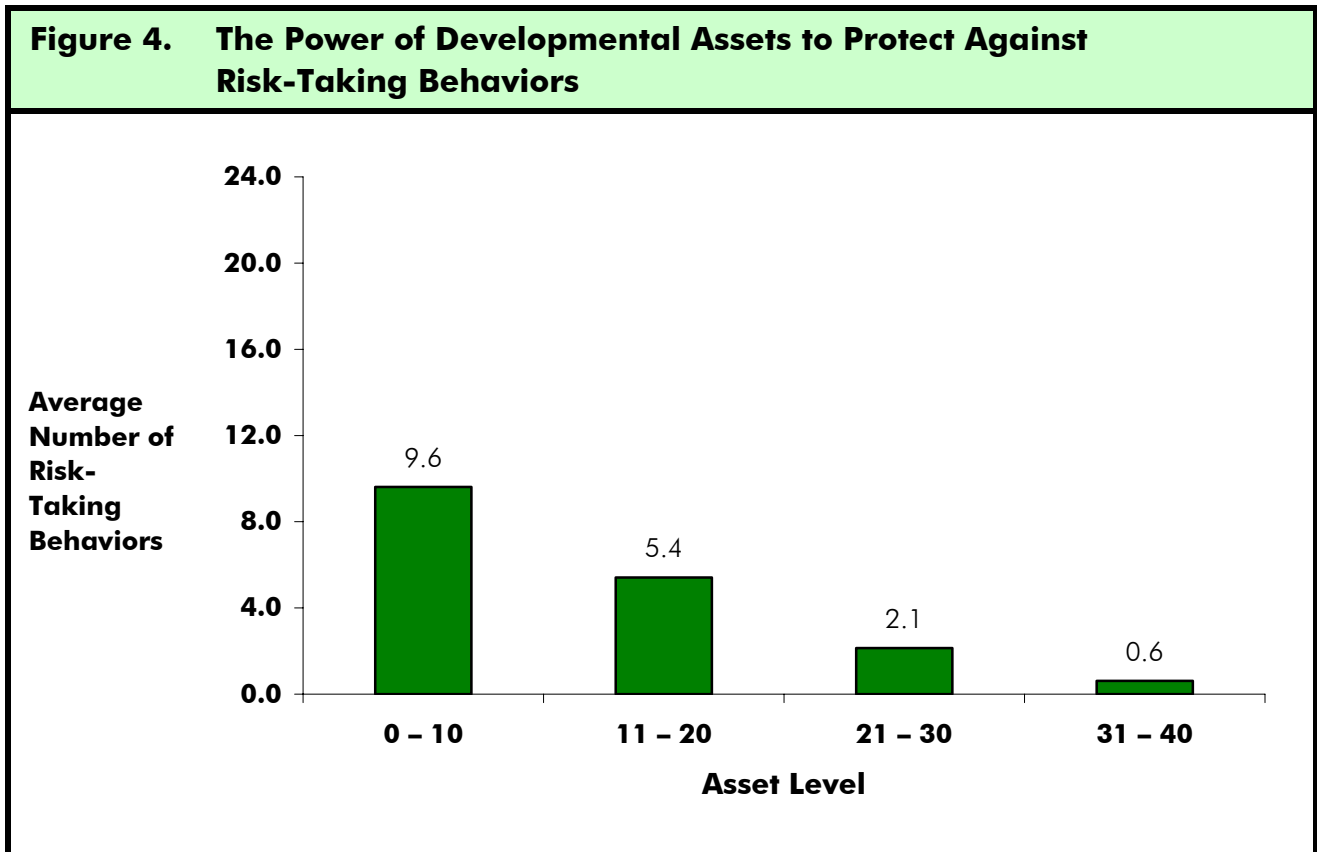
³ For more details regarding the definition and measurement of thriving, see *Sparks: How Parents Can Ignite the Hidden Strengths of Teenagers* by Peter L. Benson, Ph.D. (Jossey-Bass, 2008). See also Benson, P. L., & Scales, P. C. (2009). The definition and preliminary measurement of thriving in adolescence. *Journal of Positive Psychology* 4(1), 85-104.

The Protective Power of Developmental Assets

Search Institute's research consistently shows that youth with higher levels of Developmental Assets are involved in fewer risk-taking behaviors and experience higher levels of thriving indicators. Developmental Assets have the power to protect youth from engaging in the following 24 risk-taking behaviors:

- Risk-Taking Behaviors**
- Alcohol use
 - Binge drinking
 - Marijuana use
 - Smokeless tobacco use
 - Illegal drug use
 - Driving while drinking
 - Early sexual intercourse
 - Vandalism
 - Inhalant use
 - Smoking
 - Shoplifting
 - Using a weapon
 - Eating disorders
 - Skipping school
 - Gambling
 - Depression
 - Getting into trouble with police
 - Hitting another person
 - Hurting another person
 - Fighting in groups
 - Carrying a weapon for protection
 - Threatening to cause physical harm
 - Attempting suicide
 - Riding with an impaired driver

Each vertical bar in Figure 4 represents the average number of risk-taking behaviors reported by your youth at particular asset levels (in asset groups of 10). *Note the average number of risk-taking behaviors reported by students who experience assets at both the highest and lowest levels.*



Take Action!

This report provides educators and administrators, parents, neighbors, community members, and leaders with insight into the behaviors, opportunities, and challenges facing young people in your community. Use this information as a powerful basis for ongoing, community-wide discussions about how best to improve the well-being of your youth.

Set a Community-Wide Asset Goal

It is important for each community to establish and work toward the goal of a higher average total number of assets that each of its young people experience. This goal-setting process can provide a critical opportunity for community members to create a shared vision for healthy youth. As you begin your goal-setting process, keep in mind the barriers and challenges noted above, as well as the protective power of Developmental Assets and their power to help youth thrive.

The good news is that everyone—parents, grandparents, educators, neighbors, children, teenagers, youth workers, employers, health care providers, business people, religious leaders, coaches, mentors, and many others—can build Developmental Assets in youth. Ideally, an entire community will become involved in ensuring that its young people receive the solid developmental foundation they need to become tomorrow's competent, caring adults.

Begin With First Steps

As a Neighbor or Caring Adult, You Can . . .

- Invite a young person you know to join you in an activity: play a game, visit a park, or go for a walk together.
- Greet the children and adolescents you see every day.
- Send birthday cards, letters, "I'm thinking of you" notes, or e-messages to a child or adolescent with whom you have a connection.

As a Young Person, You Can . . .

- Challenge yourself to develop a new interest on your own, or try a new activity through school, local youth programming, cocurricular activities, or faith community youth program.
- Strike up a conversation with an adult you admire, and get to know that person better. See adults as potential friends and informal mentors.
- Look for opportunities to build relationships with younger children through service projects, tutoring, or baby-sitting.

As a Parent or Family Member, You Can . . .

- Consistently model—and talk about—your family's values and priorities.
- Regularly include all children in your family in projects around the house, recreational activities of all kinds, and community service projects that benefit people with needs greater than your own.
- Post a list of the Developmental Assets and talk to children about them. Ask teens for suggestions of ways to strengthen their assets as well as yours.

As an Organization Member and/or Businessperson, You Can . . .

- Highlight, develop, expand, and support programs designed to build assets, such as one-on-one mentoring, peer helping, service learning, and parent education.
- Provide meaningful opportunities for young people to contribute to the lives of others, in and through your organization.
- Develop employee policies that encourage asset building in youth, including flexible work schedules for parents and other employees that allow them to volunteer in youth development programs.

For detailed information about building Developmental Assets or starting an asset-building initiative in your community, visit Search Institute at www.search-institute.org or call (800) 888-7828.

