



Talk early and often about alcohol, tobacco and other drugs. Even when it gets tough.

Empowering Parents To Raise Their Children To Be Substance-Free



Click here to print a PDF of this article so you can start a conversation with your child

Talking regularly with youth about the dangers of alcohol, tobacco and other drugs reduces their risk of using in the first place.

Know! encourages you to share this Parent Tip with friends and family.

Learn more at: DrugFreeActionAlliance.org

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Know! What Kids Need to Succeed

“But whoever drinks of the water that I will give him will never be thirsty again. The water that I will give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life.” John 4:14

Wouldn't it be nice if there was a checklist that we, as parenting adults, could use to determine and impact our child's likelihood for success in life? After surveying more than 4 million children from varying backgrounds and circumstances, researchers from the Search Institute have found that there is in fact a checklist of sorts, to predict success. It is called the 40 Developmental Assets™ and it has become the most widely used approach to positive youth development in the U.S.

The Developmental Assets are 40 positive qualities that influence adolescent development, guiding them toward becoming caring, responsible and productive adults. Regardless of socioeconomic status or cultural background, studies show that the more internal and external assets an individual possesses, the less likely he or she is to engage in four major patterns of high-risk behaviors: Problem Alcohol Use, Illicit Drug Use, Violence and Sexual Activity. The level of assets one has is said to be a better predictor of thriving vs. high-risk involvement than poverty, family structure or other demographic differences.

In order for a child to be considered “thriving,” he/she must experience at least 31 of the 40 possible assets. Yet only 11% of youth are found to be at this level. The average middle or high school youth tends to be at increased risk, experiencing less than half of the 40 Developmental Assets.

So what exactly are Developmental Assets and how can I help my child gain more of them?

Developmental Assets are supports, strengths and non-cognitive skills youth experience in themselves, their families, their schools and their communities.

Internal Assets include an individual's Commitment to Learning, Positive Values, Social Competencies and Positive Identity. An individual with a high level of internal assets possess such qualities as integrity, honesty, responsibility, he/she is likely to be caring and empathetic, seek peaceful conflict resolution, have knowledge and a comfort level with people of different cultural, racial and ethnic backgrounds and feel a sense of purpose. Internal Assets can be encouraged and supported in children by caring adults who role model positive behaviors.



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Parents and other caring adults also play a key role when it comes to a child's **External Assets**, which include Support, Empowerment, Boundaries & Expectations and Constructive Use of Time. An individual with a high level of External Assets is likely to experience strong family support, positive family communication, parental involvement in schooling, set and clearly known family boundaries, is involved in creative activities and youth programs, is a part of a religious community and feels optimistic about his/her future.

Adolescents are also more likely to thrive and succeed when they feel the adults in their school, neighborhood and greater community care about them and are looking out for them. Youth also benefit when they are given useful roles in their community and when they take the opportunity to serve others.

Children are more likely to succeed when the important adults in their lives encourage and support the 40 Developmental Assets. They are more likely to do well in school, to be civically engaged, to value diversity and to continue their path of success into adulthood.

For more on the Power of Assets, including the full list of 40 Developmental Assets, visit <http://www.search-institute.org>.

Sources: [Search Institute: 40 Developmental Assets](#).

Other Verses to consider:

Psalm 16:11
Matthew 6:33
Romans 15:13

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