









Developmental Assets and Library Connections

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The mission of Search Institute® is to provide leadership, knowledge, and resources to promote healthy children, youth, and communities. Grounded in extensive research in youth development, resiliency, and prevention, the 40 Developmental Assets® represent the relationships, opportunities, and personal qualities that young people need to avoid risks and to thrive. Because of its basis in research and its proven effectiveness, the assets framework has become the single most widely used approach to positive youth development in the United States. Public and school libraries are in the unique position to provide the majority of the 40 Developmental Assets. The chart below describes specific ways that libraries can meet these assets and illustrates that librarians are doing some of the most important work in positive youth development today.



Assets Type	Asset Name	Asset Definition	Library Connection
EXTERNAL ASSETS			
Support 	Family Support	Family life provides high levels of love and support.	Intergenerational programming supports this asset, such as mother/daughter book discussion groups.
	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.	Libraries support this asset through workshop for parents or teenagers and by promoting books on parenting teens in the collections.
	Other adult relationships	Young person receives support from three or more nonparent adults.	Library staff can develop strong bonding relationship with teens, either through organized groups or through daily interaction.
	Caring neighborhood	Young person experiences caring neighbors.	Outreach work by library in the community spreads the assets message and helps create a caring neighborhood.
	Caring school climate	School provides a caring, encouraging environment.	Programming at the school media center teaches information literacy skills and demonstrates a caring school climate.
	Parent involvement in schooling	Parent(s) are actively involved in helping young person succeed in school.	Parent technology nights at school or public library provide skills parents need to help their teens succeed in school.
Empowerment 	Community values youth	Young person perceives that adults in the community value youth.	Teens are actively involved in library decisions and are asked for their opinions either formally or informally.
	Youth as resources	Young people are given useful roles in the community.	Teens are used as volunteers, workers, and mentors supporting the library's mission.
	Service to others	Young person serves in the community one hour or more per week.	Yearlong volunteer programs provide an opportunity for service, from helping the children's librarian with story times to helping the library build its physical and virtual collections.
	Safety	Young person feels safe at home, school, and in the neighborhood.	Library often acts as the safe haven for teens and provides them with a place to be alone.
Boundaries and Expectations 	Family Boundaries	Family has clear rules and consequences and monitors the young person's whereabouts.	Libraries support this asset through workshops for parents of teenagers and by promoting books on parents of teens in the collection.
	School boundaries	School provides clear rules and consequences.	Positive discipline practiced in the library media center supports this asset.
	Neighborhood boundaries	Neighbors take responsibility for monitoring young people's behavior.	Libraries are neighborhood institutions. Through positive discipline and redirecting inappropriate behaviors, librarians can play a role in setting boundaries.
	Adult role models	Parent(s) and other adults model positive, responsible behavior.	Librarians can serve as role models for youth if they allow teens "in."
	Positive peer influence	Young person's best friends model responsible behavior.	Peer programming such as book discussion groups support this asset.
	High expectations	Both parent(s) and teachers encourage the young person to do well.	The school librarian takes an active role in encouraging students achievement and supports it through a proactive plan or service.
Constructive Use of Time 	Creative activities	Young person spends three or more hours per week in lessons or practice in music, theater, or other arts.	Programs that promote creativity such as creative writing programs, talent shows, literacy magazines, book reviews, newsletters, poetry slams, and other library-sponsored creative expressions activities.
	Youth programs	Young person spends three or more hours per week in sports, clubs, or organizations at school and/or in the community.	After school homework help program at school and the public library functions as a "club" as would a youth participation group.
	Religious community	Young person spends one or more hours per week in activities in a religious institution.	NA
	Time at home	Young person is out with friends "with nothing special to do" two or fewer nights per week.	Wide range of after school evening and weekend program established as well as collections that engage youth.

Assets Type	Asset Name	Asset Definition	Library Connection
INTERNAL ASSETS			
Commitment to Learning 	Achievement motivation	Young person is motivated to do well in school.	Homework assistance program involving tutors at the school or public library motivate students to achieve.
	School engagement	Young person is actively engaged in learning.	School media specialist involved in designing assignments that provide students with active learning in regard to information literacy.
	Homework	Young person reports doing at least one hour of homework every school day	Initiate homework assistance programs as well as collections to support homework: reference services in person, over the phone, via chat and e-mail, and assist teens in completing homework.
	Bonding to school	Young person cares about her or his school.	By involving youth in the school media center, as workers or volunteers, this bonding is encouraged.
	Reading for pleasure	Young person reads for pleasure three or more hours per week.	Everything we do: our collections, our programs, our displays, and our readers' advisory work.
Positive Values 	Caring	Young person places high value on helping other people.	Youth advisory groups/volunteer programs can involve teens in projects, such as reading to seniors or working with preschoolers, which gives them the opportunity to help others.
	Equality and social justice	Young person places high value on promoting equality and reducing hunger and poverty.	Collections and programming illustrate this asset.
	Integrity	Young person acts on convictions and stands up for her or his beliefs.	Youth participation groups encourage the development of this asset.
	Honesty	Young person "tells the truth even when it is not easy."	This value is learned while serving as a teen volunteer or worker.
	Responsibility	Yon person accepts and takes personal responsibility.	Participation in after-school programs and daily behavior, libraries help young people learn about responsibility.
	Restraint	Young person believes it is important not to be sexually active or to use alcohol/drugs.	Collections and programs can speak to this asset.
Social Competencies 	Planning and decision making	Young person knows how to plan ahead and make choices.	Youth advisory groups can involve youth in planning programs and services.
	Interpersonal competence	Young person has empathy, sensitivity, and friendship skills.	Youth advisory group, book discussion group, or other such groups support this asset.
	Cultural competence	Young person has knowledge of and comfort with people of different cultural/racial/ethnic backgrounds.	Both groups as well as our collections support this asset. Multicultural programming plays a role here as well.
	Resistance skills	Young person can resist negative peer pressure and dangerous situations.	Collections and programs illustrate this asset.
	Peaceful conflict resolution	Young person seeks to resolve conflict nonviolently.	Collections and programs can speak to this asset.
Positive Identity 	Personal power	Young person feels he or she has control over "things that happen to me."	Collections and programs illustrate this asset.
	Self-esteem	Young person reports having a high self-esteem	Collections and programs illustrate this asset.
	Sense of purpose	Young person reports that "my life has a purpose."	Collections and programs illustrate this asset, while youth participation provides teens with something of value in their life.
	Positive view of personal future	Young person is optimistic about her or his personal future.	Collections and program illustrate this asset.

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