

# External Assets for Teens

**Each New Year presents us with a clean slate on which to design a new diet, a new exercise routine and, for parents, a new plan to help our children succeed.**

**The Search Institute has identified 40 building blocks – known as Developmental Assets – that help young people grow up healthy, caring, and responsible.**

**Twenty Developmental Assets are external; twenty are internal.**

**The External Assets are listed here. The Internal Assets will follow, separately.**

## SUPPORT

- **Family Support** – Family life provides high levels of love and support.
- **Positive Communication** – Young person and parent/s communicate positively, and young person is willing to seek advice from parents.
- **Other Adult Relationships** – Young person receives support from three or more non-parent adults.
- **Caring Neighborhood** – Young person experiences caring neighbors.
- **Caring School Climate** – School provides a caring, encouraging environment.

## EMPOWERMENT

- **Community Values Youth** – Young person perceives that adults in the community value youth.
- **Youth as Resources** – Young people are given useful roles in the community.
- **Service to Others** – Young person serves in the community one+ hour per week.
- **Safety** – Young person feels safe at home, school, and in the neighborhood.

## BOUNDARIES & EXPECTATIONS

- **Family Boundaries** – Family has clear rules and consequences and monitors the young person's whereabouts.
- **School Boundaries** – School provides clear rules and consequences.

- **Neighborhood Boundaries** – Neighbors take responsibility for monitoring young people's behavior.
- **Adult Role Models** – Parent/s and other adults model positive, responsible behavior.
- **Positive Peer Influence** – Young person's best friends model responsible behavior.
- **High Expectations** – Parent/s and teachers encourage the young person to do well.

## CONSTRUCTIVE USE OF TIME

- **Creative Activities** – Young person spends three+ hours per week in lessons in music, theater, or other arts.
- **Youth Programs** – Spends three+ hours per week in sports, clubs, or organizations at school and/or in community organizations.
- **Religious Community** – Spends one+ hour per week in activities in a religious institution.
- **Time at Home** – Is out with friends "with nothing special to do" two or fewer nights per week.

Prepared by Shana N. Marshall,  
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Source: Search Institute  
[www.search-institute.org](http://www.search-institute.org)

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## COMMITMENT TO LEARNING

- **Achievement Motivation** – Young person is motivated to do well in school.
- **School Engagement** – Is actively engaged in learning
- **Homework** – Reports doing at least one hour of homework every school day.
- **Bonding to School** – Cares about her or his school.
- **Reading for Pleasure** – Reads for pleasure three or more hours per week.

## POSITIVE VALUES

- **Caring** – Young person places high value on helping other people.
- **Equality and Social Justice** – Places high value on promoting equality and reducing hunger and poverty.
- **Integrity** – Acts on convictions and stands up for her or his beliefs.
- **Honesty** – “Tells the truth even when it is not easy.”
- **Responsibility** – Accepts and takes personal responsibility.
- **Restraint** – Believes it is important not to be sexually active or to use alcohol or other drugs.

## SOCIAL COMPETENCIES

- **Planning and Decision Making** – Young person knows how to plan ahead and make choices.
- **Interpersonal Competence** – Has empathy, sensitivity, and friendship skills.
- **Cultural Competence** – Has knowledge of and comfort with people of different cultural/racial/ethnic backgrounds.
- **Resistance Skills** – Can resist negative peer pressure and dangerous situations.
- **Peaceful Conflict Resolution** – Seeks to resolve conflict nonviolently.

## POSITIVE IDENTITY

- **Personal Power** – Young person feels he or she has control over “things that happen to me.”
- **Self-Esteem** – Reports having a high self-esteem.
- **Sense of Purpose** – Reports that “my life has a purpose.”
- **Positive View of Personal Future** – Is optimistic about her or his personal future.

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