

Additional Children’s Health Issues

Developmental Assets In Young People

- ◆ Children and adolescents in Rhode Island can reach their full potential through a combination of thriving (e.g., succeeding in school), being resilient (i.e., rebounding in the face of adversity) and avoiding the initiation of behaviors that might compromise their physical and/or mental health.¹
- ◆ Adolescent risk behaviors such as substance use, violence toward themselves or others, eating disorders, gambling, and problems in school such as school failure and dropping out, can be lessened or prevented by protective factors, sometimes referred to as “developmental assets.”²
- ◆ The developmental assets framework created by the Search Institute is one of many models that identify different types of relationships, opportunities, skills, character traits and other strengths that promote healthy development among young children and teens.³
- ◆ The 40 assets in the Search Institute Framework are organized in eight categories and are divided evenly between external assets (those in a young person’s family, school and community) and internal assets (the values, competencies and skills youth have within themselves).⁴
- ◆ The average young person in the U.S. reports having 19 of the 40 assets.⁵ Youth of all races and ethnicities benefit similarly from these assets, regardless of their socioeconomic status, although the importance of particular categories varies by race and ethnicity.⁶ Assets promote positive development regardless of risk context; they are important to high-risk and to low-risk youth.⁷
- ◆ The development of opportunities in schools and communities that build assets can result in improvements to the overall health of young people in Rhode Island.

Framework of Developmental Assets

External Assets	Internal Assets
SUPPORT	COMMITMENT TO LEARNING
1. Family support	21. Achievement motivation
2. Positive family communication	22. School engagement
3. Other adult relationships	23. Homework
4. Caring neighborhood	24. Bonding to school
5. Caring school climate	25. Reading for pleasure
6. Parent involvement in schooling	
POSITIVE VALUES	EMPOWERMENT
7. Community values youth	26. Caring
8. Youth as resources	27. Equality and social justice
9. Service to others	28. Integrity
10. Safety	29. Honesty
	30. Responsibility
	31. Restraint
BOUNDARIES AND EXPECTATIONS	SOCIAL COMPETENCIES
11. Family boundaries	32. Planning and Decision Making
12. School boundaries	33. Interpersonal competence
13. Neighborhood boundaries	34. Cultural competence
14. Adult role models	35. Resistance skills
15. Positive peer influence	36. Peaceful conflict resolution
16. High expectations	
CONSTRUCTIVE USE OF TIME	POSITIVE IDENTITY
17. Creative activities	37. Personal power
18. Youth programs	38. Self-esteem
19. Religious community	39. Sense of purpose
20. Time at home	40. Positive view of personal future

Source: *40 Developmental Assets*. (2004). Minneapolis, MN: Search Institute.

Protective Factors Among Rhode Island High School Students, 2003-2004

- ◆ There were several questions on the 2003-2004 School Accountability for Learning and Teaching (SALT) Student Survey that assessed protective factors among Rhode Island's high school students.
- ◆ The level of protective factors experienced by Rhode Island students vary by gender, ethnicity, grade level and economic status.⁸

Caring School Climate

Feels they can talk to a teacher or other staff member at school about academic issues most of the time or always	46%
Feels they can talk to a teacher or other staff member at school about personal or family problems most of the time or always	18%

After School Supervision

Take care of themselves after school for more than 3 hours 3+ days per week without an adult present	35%
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Academic Expectations

Thinks they will graduate from high school	85%
Thinks they will go to college	78%

Constructive Use of Time

Participated in at least one extracurricular activity or program not including paid work in past year	59%
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Homework

Spend at least one hour per week night doing homework	40%
Parents often make sure that students do their homework assignments	31%

Reading for Pleasure

Spend more than one hour per day reading	10%
Have read 1-2 books in the past 3 months that weren't required by school	36%

Source: *Rhode Island SALT Survey Reports, School Year 2003-2004*. Rock Island, IL: National Center on Public Education and Policy.

The Role of Assets in Substance Abuse Prevention

- ◆ National research has shown that the more developmental assets young people have, the less likely they are to engage in the following eight types of substance use: using alcohol, smokeless tobacco, marijuana, inhalants or other illicit drugs, binge drinking, drinking and driving, and smoking cigarettes.⁹
- ◆ Youth with six or fewer assets are more likely to engage in three or more types of substance use, while those with 20 or more assets are likely to engage in less than one of these substance-related behaviors.¹⁰
- ◆ Students who report an increase in the number of assets between middle and high school show a significant decrease in substance use. Those who report a decrease in assets show an increase in substance use.¹¹

References

- ¹ Benson, P. (2001). *Building developmental assets: A new strategy for preventing high risk behavior*. Mounds View, MN: Central Center for the Application of Prevention Technologies.
- ^{2,3,7,9,10,11} *Tapping the power of community: Building assets to strengthen substance abuse prevention*. 2(1), 1-14. Minneapolis, MN: Search Institute.
- ⁴ *40 developmental assets*. (2004). Minneapolis, MN: Search Institute.
- ⁵ *Levels of assets among young people*. Minneapolis, MN: Search Institute. Retrieved February 5, 2005 from www.search-institute.org.
- ⁶ *Unique strengths, shared strengths: Developmental assets among youth of color*, 1(2), 1-13. Minneapolis, MN: Search Institute.
- ⁸ Felner, R. D. (2004). *Rhode Island SALT survey reports: school year 2003-2004*. Rock Island, IL: National Center on Public Education and Policy. Retrieved January 21, 2005 from <http://www.infoworks.ride.uri.edu>.