

CONNECTICUT AFTER SCHOOL NETWORK

Introduction to the 40 Developmental Assets for Children and Youth



Purpose of Session: To learn about the 40 building blocks that are key to healthy development of children and teenagers and to learn how this information can inform practice in afterschool settings.

Materials Needed: Yarn or rolls of crepe paper
Balloons
Handouts

1. 40 Developmental Assets (choose the list that most fits the ages of the children in your program)
2. The Power of the Developmental Assets
3. Connecticut Afterschool Quality Self-Assessment Tool (Section 1 – Relationships: Interaction and Engagement)

Welcome and Housekeeping: Perform introductions, state the session topic, how long it will last, when/if refreshments will be served, and the location of restrooms. Thank the host.

Trainer Tips: *An opening welcome sets the stage for training. Be sure to thank the host agency for providing meeting space and/or refreshments.*
Sharing housekeeping details such as the location of restrooms and the schedule of activities prevents interruptions during your session. Letting people know when food will be served helps participants to stay focused. Introduce any new participants or guests so all feel comfortable.

Opening Activity:	<p>Spider Web</p> <p>Materials: either balls of yarn or rolls of crepe paper and large (12 -15 inch) balloons.</p> <p>Ask participants to stand and form a tight circle. Instruct one participant to keep a grasp on the end of a ball of yarn (or crepe paper) and toss the ball to someone on the far side of the circle. Continue this until everyone is holding yarn and a web has formed in the center of the circle.</p> <p>Explain to participants that each of them is a developmental asset that helps support positive outcomes for children. Toss a balloon into the center of the circle and say, "This is a child who needs our support. Please keep him aloft!"</p> <p>Continue to add balloons to the circle. (The number of balloons will depend upon how many participants you have and the level of difficulty they experience keeping balloons aloft. Keep adding until some balloons "fall through the cracks.")</p> <p>Tap someone on the shoulder and ask that they drop the yarn and move away from the circle. Observe the results. Repeat by tapping someone else to step outside the circle. Continue until the web fully collapses.</p>
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Trainer Tips: *Ice breakers are part of a good presenter's tool kit. Ice breakers can be used for introducing a topic, team building, or tension reducing activities. Be selective when choosing an icebreaker activity. In large groups ice breakers can take a long time and waste precious content time. Make sure you include a debriefing time so participants understand the purpose of the activity.*

Debrief (1st Activity):	<p>Ask the following questions:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) How successful were their efforts to keep all the balloons up in the air? 2) What would have been needed to make it more successful? 3) Did they find it frustrating to continue when people dropped out of the circle? <p>Explain:</p> <p>Children need assets-positive environments, emotional support, personal values, and social skills-to succeed in developing to their full potential.</p> <p>Adults build support networks for children by providing role models, safe places to go, and experiences that are constructive and that empower children.</p> <p>It works well when all work together; when all the pieces are in place. Some children still fall through the cracks and it doesn't take much for the system to fall apart. Learning about the assets and how to become "asset-builders" helps to keep the <u>system intact and provide continuous support for the children we</u></p>
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	work with. This workshop will look at what those assets are and how afterschool programs can become “asset-builders.”
<i>Trainer Tips:</i>	<i>It is important to debrief after an activity so that participants understand the purpose of the activity as it relates to the topic. Adult learners want to understand why they are being asked to learn something that may be new to them.</i>
(CT-QSAT) Relationship Section:	CT-QSAT Relationship Section (see handouts) Share the handout which includes this excerpt from the “Connecticut Quality Self Assessment Tool.” Explain that these are indicators of high quality practice. Today’s topic will help us to improve our skills in this area.
Lecture:	<p>The 40 Developmental Assets are the result of many years of work by the Search Institute of Minneapolis MN. Much of the research into what children need to grow up is fragmented into separate areas such as “families,” “schools” or “communities.” The Search Institute has merged this research to give a picture of the things that children need to reach their fullest growth and potential. <i>(Distribute handouts of the 40 Assets. There are 4 lists – one for ages 3-5, 5-9, 9-12, 12-18. Please use the list that is most appropriate for the ages that your participants work with most often.)</i> Take a few moments for participants to review the 40 Assets.</p> <p>I. <u>Review of Assets:</u> The fundamental assumption of the developmental assets is that the more positive experiences children have in their lives, the greater the likelihood that they will succeed developmentally.</p> <p>A. <u>External Assets:</u> Relationships and opportunities that young people experience in their families, schools, and communities.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Support b. Empowerment c. Boundaries and Expectations d. Constructive Use of Time <p>B. <u>Internal Assets:</u> Competencies and values that youth develop internally to guide behaviors and choices.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Commitment to Learning b. Positive Values c. Social Competencies d. Positive Identity <p>II. Principals of Asset Building</p> <p>A. All young people need assets</p>

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- a. Some assets are internal (attitudes, values, social competencies)
 - b. Some assets are external (family, community, school)
 - c. The more assets are supported through Developmental Relationships there increased likelihood of academic and social success
 - Review the SEARCH Institute *Developmental Relationships Framework* and discuss what resonates with staff
- B. Asset building is an ongoing process
- a. Improvement in one asset area can affect improvement in other areas
 - b. Relationships are KEY!
 - c. Consistent positive messages are crucial
 - d. Results can last a life time!
- C. Everyone can build assets
- a. Adults can be intentional about asset building (Research evaluations on Big Brothers/Big Sisters shows that children who have mentors are more likely to get along better with family, have better attitudes about school, less likely to get involved in violent or risky behavior than peers who do not have mentors.)
 - b. Children/youth themselves can take action to build their own assets
 - Taking action to improve their own circumstances is cumulative – it empowers them to continue to take action AND it inspires peers to do the same.
 - Participation, engagement, and leadership opportunities strengthen young people’s impact on both internal and external assets.
 - c. Communities that build assets are as important as organization, family, or individual efforts. Just as it makes more sense to build a system to provide pure water than it does to cure endless cases of dysentery, it makes more sense to make communities healthy places for all youth than it does to try to make each youth resilient. A focus only on “individual treatment” of young people is inadequate to promote their full potential development.
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**Group Activity
Option 1:**
Who Were The Asset Builders in Your Life?

We all have real life experience with positive assets and “asset builders” as we work regularly with young people and were once children ourselves! Share a story about someone who was an asset builder in your own life, and then invite the participants to do the same (*call on those who wish to share but be respectful of those who want to remain silent*). Ask the group “What impact did these people have on your lives?” “How did they influence the choices that you made as young people?” “What were your feelings as you thought about these people just now?”

Brainstorm asset building activities that staff can implement. List these on large sheets of easel paper. After the workshop post these suggestions on the wall in a staff area.

Trainer Tips:

1) Asking opening questions such as “What do we already know from our own experience?” serves to recognize the very real expertise of workshop participants who are already working with children and youth and also builds a common foundation for the presenter to build on in delivering the content of the workshop.
2) Trainers should wait for replies to open ended questions. Some participants need to think about their reply for an extra few seconds. New trainers sometimes find it difficult to wait (seconds seem like hours!) and will supply the answers for participants. It is sometimes helpful to practice counting silently to ten while waiting for a reply.

RECAP Material:

As former Search Institute president Peter L. Benson (architect of the 40 Developmental Assets) writes in *All Kids Are Our Kids: What Communities Must Do to Raise Caring and Responsible Children and Adolescents* (Jossey-Bass, 1997): Personal commitments to building relationships with youth are critical to the success of the movement. No matter how much money is spent, how many elaborate programs are initiated, how many laws are passed, or how many professionals are hired, the experiences of young people do not fundamentally change unless individuals . . . take personal responsibility to contribute to young people’s healthy development. (p. 157)

For More Info go:

Search Institute® is an independent, nonprofit, nonsectarian organization committed to helping create healthy communities for every young person. Because we believe that “all kids are our kids,” we create books and other materials that welcome and respect people of all races, ethnicity, cultures, genders, religions, economic backgrounds, sexual orientations, and abilities. Our Mission: To provide leadership, knowledge, and resources to promote healthy children, youth, and communities.
<http://www.search-institute.org/>

The Power of Developmental Assets

Search Institute's 40 Developmental Assets™ are concrete, positive, common-sense experiences and qualities essential to the health of young people. These assets have the power to influence choices that young people make and to help them grow as caring, responsible persons.

The Power of Assets to Promote

Having more assets increases the chances that young people will have positive attitudes and behaviors. Research with young people in grades 6-12 has found that young people with more assets are more likely to participate in eight positive behaviors. Here are some examples of these behaviors, with the definitions used by Search Institute.

	0-10 Assets	11-20 Assets	21-30 Assets	31-40 Assets
Succeeds in School Gets mostly A's on report card.	7%	19%	35%	53%
Values Diversity Places high importance on getting to know people of other racial/ethnic groups.	34%	53%	69%	87%
Maintains Good Health Pays attention to healthy nutrition and exercise.	25%	46%	69%	88%
Delays Gratification Saves money for something special rather than spending it all right away.	27%	42%	56%	72%

The Power of Assets to Protect

Experiencing the Developmental Assets in their lives can help protect young people from making harmful and unhealthy choices. Youth with more assets are less likely to engage in 24 risky behaviors, such as tobacco use, gambling, violence, and shoplifting. Here are some examples from the research with students in grades 6-12, including the definitions used by Search Institute.

	0-10 Assets	11-20 Assets	21-30 Assets	31-40 Assets
Problem Alcohol Use Has used alcohol three or more times in the past 30 days or got drunk one or more times in the past two weeks.	53%	30%	11%	3%
Illicit Drug Use Used illicit drugs (cocaine, LSD, PCP or angel dust, heroin, and amphetamines) three or more times in the past 12 months.	42%	19%	6%	1%
Sexual Activity Has had sexual intercourse three or more times in lifetime.	33%	21%	10%	3%
Violence Has engaged in three or more acts of fighting, hitting, injuring a person, carrying a weapon, or threatening physical harm in the past 12 months.	61%	35%	16%	6%

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