

Introduction to the 40 Developmental Assets for Children and Youth



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Welcome/Introduction of the topic

This is a good time to welcome staff, remind people to get last refreshments, silence cell-phones, and establish ground rules for the training.

On a piece of chart/poster paper write the word Agreements

Ask the group what are their expectations of others during the training session? Write these responses on the paper and post when complete (3-5 minutes)

At this time, you will introduce the topic you will be talking about. You can give a brief summary of what will be covered, or ask if anyone knows of the developmental assets and can provide an example to share.

Once the topic is introduced, move to slide 2 for the icebreaker activity: Spider Web

Spider Web



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Spider Web

Materials: either balls of yarn or rolls of crepe paper and large (12 -15 inch) balloons. 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.

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/her aloft!"

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.")

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.

Debrief

Ask the following questions:

- 1) How successful were their efforts to keep all the balloons 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?

To stay “aloft” children need:

- Asset positive environments
- Emotional Support
- Personal Values
- Social Skills



Adults build support networks for children by providing:

- Role models
- Safe places to go
- Experiences that are constructive and empowering

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Explain:

Children need assets-positive environments, emotional support, personal values, and social skills-to succeed in developing to their full potential.

Adults build support networks for children by providing role models, safe places to go, and experiences that are constructive and that empower children.

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 system intact and provide continuous support for the children we work with.

This workshop will look at what those assets are and how afterschool programs can become “asset-builders.”



**CT-QSAT
Program Area 1:**

**Relationships –
Interactions and
Engagement**

A quality program is one where:

- 1 Adults are role models of positive and respectful relationships with both fellow staff and children/youth.
- 2 Adults build a sense of community and a welcoming, positive social/emotional climate.
- 3 Adults actively implement strategies to build positive relationships with each and every child/youth participant.
- 4 Adults are actively engaged with the children/youth as observed through their enthusiasm, interest, and interactions.
- 5 Children/youth are shown how to make responsible choices and offered opportunities to practice these skills.
- 6 Children/youth are empowered to request, design, and/or select activities that follow emerging interests.
- 7 Children/youth are active participants in leadership activities that may include program planning, activity leading, evaluation, and community outreach.
- 8 Both adults and children/youth promote physical and emotional safety through a culture of support, inclusion and mutual respect.

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Connecticut Program Quality Self-Assessment Tool
Share the handout which includes this excerpt from “Connecticut After 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. Ask someone to read the 8 indicators. Ask, “What do these look like in practice”. After 3-4 examples move to slide 5.



DEVELOPMENTAL ASSETS FRAMEWORK



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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.

(Distribute handouts of the 40 Assets and Developmental Relationships Framework)

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.) Take a few moments for participants to review the 40 Assets.

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.

“All it takes to help prevent youth from dropping out of school is one caring adult, one.”

(Balfanz, 2007)



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Review of Assets: 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.

Assets can last a lifetime.

Principles of Asset Building

1. All young people need assets
2. Asset building is an ongoing process
3. Everyone can build assets



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Principals of Asset Building

1. All young people need assets
 - Some assets are internal (attitudes, values, social competencies)
 - Some assets are external (family, community, school)
 - The more assets a child has the greater the likelihood they will succeed.
 2. Asset building is an ongoing process
 - Improvement in one asset area can affect improvement in other areas
 - Relationships are KEY!
 - Consistent positive messages are crucial
 - Results can last a life time!
 3. Everyone can build assets
 - Adults can be intentional about asset building (Research evaluations on Big Brothers/Big Sisters shows that children who have mentors in this program 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.)
 - 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.
3. 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.

Who were your asset builders?



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Looking Back

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.

“Personal commitments to building relationships with youth are critical. 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.”

Peter L. Benson, Former President

Search Institute & Architect of the 40 Developmental Assets

www.search-institute.org

Relationships are critical. Review the CT-QSAT Relationships section once more. These are not only the things we need to do to be a good program but what we must do if we want to be effective in our work with children.

For more information visit the Search Institute
www.search-institute.org

Continue the discussion...book an on-site professional development session

The Connecticut After School Network's Training and Consultation Service

For more information about the 40 Developmental Assets visit the web site for the Search Institute at <http://www.search-institute.org/>

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.

Please ask participants to complete the Evaluation Form that is included in this kit and return these to the CT After School Network. This will help us to improve existing topics and to expand our listing. Thank you!