

• **Plan**

• **Build Partnerships**

• **Evaluate**

Asset-Building: A Positive Approach to Substance Abuse Prevention

Asset-building is an approach that many communities are embracing in their efforts to build healthy communities. This approach is based on the **40 developmental assets** developed by the Search Institute in Minneapolis. Developmental assets are positive experiences, opportunities, and personal qualities that all children and adolescents from many cultural backgrounds need to grow up to be responsible, successful and caring. This approach can be applied in schools, communities and families and when all are working together the results are nothing but positive.

The benefit to individuals, schools and communities is huge. The more assets young people experience, the less likely they are to engage in a wide range of risky behaviours such as drug use and violence, and the more likely they are to engage in positive behaviours such as doing well in school and maintaining good health.

The Search Institute offers the following six key concepts to guide asset building action:

- 1. Everyone can build assets.** Building assets requires consistent messages across a community.
- 2. All young people need assets.** While it is crucial to pay attention to those youth who have the least (economically or emotionally), nearly all young people need more assets than they have.
- 3. Relationships are key.** Strong relationships between adults and young people, young people and their peers, and teenagers and children are central to asset building.
- 4. Asset building is an ongoing process.** Building assets starts when a child is born and continues through high school and beyond.
- 5. Consistent messages are important.** Young people need to receive consistent messages about what's expected and what's important from their families, schools, communities, the media, and other sources.
- 6. Intentional redundancy is important.** Assets must be continually reinforced across the years and in all areas of a young person's life.

FAST FACTS

Facts about Developmental Assets:

- **Young people with more assets are less likely to engage in risk-taking behaviours such as alcohol or other drug use.** Young people with 10 or fewer assets say they are involved in an average of about 4.5 high-risk behaviours. Young people with 31 assets or more report an average of less than one high-risk behaviour.
- **The average young person surveyed has 18 of the 40 assets.**
- **Assets that decrease in frequency between 6th and 12th grade are:** #31: restraint; #12: school boundaries; and #15: positive peer influence
- **Assets that increase in frequency between 6th and 12th grades are:** #10: safety; #37: personal power; and #28: integrity.

[Click here](#) to view the 40 developmental assets

"One generation plants the trees.
Another gets the shade."

Chinese Proverb



Available Resources & Workshops

Making Decisions Series

A leading education initiative to combat drug and alcohol abuse and encourage social responsibility.

Grades 4, 6, 7, 8 & 9 [<more info](#)

Parents as Preventors™

Workshops designed for parents, emphasizing the central role parents play in influencing their children to make healthy choices regarding alcohol, tobacco and other drugs. [<more info](#)

Professionals as Preventors™

A customized drug prevention workshop for professionals at Pro-D days or community based events. [<more info](#)

drugfacts.ca
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For more information please visit our website ades.bc.bc or contact our office.

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ASK AN EXPERT

WHY DO SOME KIDS GROW UP WITH EASE.... WHILE OTHERS STRUGGLE?

While economic circumstances, genetics, trauma and many other factors play a role, research by Search Institute of Minneapolis has identified 40 values, qualities and experiences all young people need in their lives to become caring, competent and responsible adults. They're called Developmental Assets and everyone working in the Prevention field has experienced them personally and has the opportunity to introduce or enhance them in the lives of children and young people every day. It doesn't matter whether you're a parent, a grandparent, a teacher, a police officer, or a neighbour. Each of us can help kids acquire these important life building blocks.

Asset building is NOT a program but a return to the notion "It takes a village to raise a child". We can all be involved in teaching and modeling values like honesty, respect, tolerance, enthusiasm and industry. It's about being more aware of these life building blocks and their capacity to promote positive behaviours, at the same time protecting young people from the destructive forces and behaviours that deplete their potential.

Developmental Assets, are simply 40 concrete, positive experiences and qualities that offer young people values and tools that help them make wise decisions, choose positive paths, and grow up to responsible, caring, and competent adults.

Here are the 8 Categories of Assets That All Kids Need

- **Support** – the kind young people need to experience from families, neighbours, organizations, and institutions who care about them;
- **Empowerment** – the need of all people to be valued by their community and have opportunities to contribute;
- **Boundaries & Expectations** – the need of young people to know what's expected of them, what activities and behaviours are in-bounds or out-of-bounds;
- **Constructive Use of Time** – the need young people have to be involved in constructive, enriching activities and to spend quality time at home;
- **Commitment to Learning** – the lifelong kind that comes from being with adults whose lifestyles

demonstrate that they value education;

- **Positive Values** – the need for youth to learn and refine attitudes and beliefs that guide their choices;
- **Social Competencies** – an acknowledgement that all young people need skills and confidence to build relationships with peers and adults alike;
- **Positive Identity** – young people need to acquire a sense of their own power, purpose, worth, and promise.

Across Canada hundreds of adults are helping thousands of boys and girls of all ages acquire and enhance assets in their lives.

For further information:
www.search-institute.org

Keith Pattinson

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ACTIVITY CORNER

Teachers can make asset-building part of their teaching. Occasionally begin or end a class with an asset building activity. Here is one to get you started:

Asset Bingo Mixer

Purpose: To help participants think about their roles as asset builders.

Suggested Group Size: 12 to 100

Estimated time: 12 to 15 minutes

Materials Needed: [Asset Bingo sheet](#) (one for each person) - you may have to adapt statements to be age appropriate; pens; prizes (optional)

Directions:

1. Divide the class into teams of 4 to 8 people. Have the entire group play Asset Bingo by collecting signatures (initials) of individuals who fit the description in each box. The goal for participants is to fill a row, column, or diagonal completely. If the group is large enough, specify that each person should only sign the sheet once. Allow about 5 minutes.

2. Reconvene the small teams to count the total number of signatures for their group. If groups are not of equal size, have teams figure out the average number of signatures per team member. Optional: Award winning the team members a small prize.

Source: Get Things Going: 50 Asset-Building Activities for workshops, presentations, and meetings, Search Institute, 2000

RESOURCES

1. Neal Starkman, Ph.D., Peter C. Scales, Ph.D., and Clay Roberts, 2006, **Great Places to Learn: Creating Asset-Building Schools That Help Students Succeed, Second Edition**

[Click here](#) for description and ordering

2. Search Institute, **Pass it On Schools: Activity Handouts for Creating Caring Schools**

[Click here](#) for description and ordering

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