

# Developmental Assets® for Early Childhood (ages 3 to 5)

Search Institute® has identified the following building blocks of healthy development—known as Developmental Assets®—that help young children grow up healthy, caring, and responsible.

## EXTERNAL ASSETS

### SUPPORT

1. **Family support**—Parenting adults provide children with high levels of consistent and predictable love, physical care, and positive attention in ways that are responsive to the child’s individuality.
2. **Positive family communication**—Parenting adults express themselves positively and respectfully, engaging young children in conversations that invite their input.
3. **Other adult relationships**—With the family’s support, the children experience consistent, caring relationships with adults outside the family.
4. **Caring neighbors**—Children’s networks of relationships include neighbors who provide emotional support and a sense of belonging.
5. **Caring climate in child-care and educational settings**—Caregivers and teachers create environments that are nurturing, accepting, encouraging, and secure.
6. **Family partnerships with education and childcare**—Families, schools, and childcare work together to create a consistent and supportive approach to fostering the child’s successful growth.

### EMPOWERMENT

7. **Community values young children**—Children are welcomed and included throughout community life.
8. **Children are seen as resources**—Communities demonstrate that children are valuable resources by investing in systems of family support and resources to meet children’s physical, social, educational, and emotional needs.
9. **Service to others**—Children have opportunities to take simple but meaningful and caring actions for others.
10. **Safety**—Parenting adults, teachers, neighbors, and the community take action to ensure children’s health and safety.

### BOUNDARIES AND EXPECTATIONS

11. **Family boundaries**—Families provide consistent supervision for children and maintain reasonable guidelines for behavior that children can understand and achieve.
12. **Boundaries in childcare and educational settings**—Caregivers and educators use positive approaches to encourage self-regulation and acceptable behaviors.
13. **Neighborhood boundaries**—Neighbors encourage children to act appropriately and to avoid negative activities. When needed, neighbors intervene in constructive, nonthreatening ways.
14. **Adult role models**—Parenting adults and others model self-control, social skills, engagement in learning, and healthy lifestyles.
15. **Positive peer relationships**—Family members give children opportunities to interact positively with other children.
16. **Positive expectations**—Family members, teachers, and others encourage and support children in acting appropriately, undertaking challenging tasks, and doing activities to the best of their abilities.

### CONSTRUCTIVE USE OF TIME

17. **Play and creative activities**—Children have daily opportunities to play and do creative, artistic activities that encourage self-expression, physical activity, and interaction with peers and adults.
18. **Out-of-home and community programs**—Children experience well-designed programs led by competent, caring adults in well-maintained settings.

## INTERNAL ASSETS

### COMMITMENT TO LEARNING

21. **Achievement expectation and motivation**—Children are motivated to do well in school and other activities.
22. **Children are engaged in learning**—Children are responsive, attentive, and actively engaged in learning.
23. **Stimulating activity and homework**—Parenting adults and teachers encourage children to explore and engage in stimulating activities. Children do homework when it's assigned.
24. **Enjoyment of learning and bonding to school**—Children enjoy learning and care about their schools.
25. **Reading for pleasure**—Children and adults read together for at least 30 minutes a day. Children also enjoy reading or looking at books or magazines on their own.

### POSITIVE VALUES

26. **Caring**—Children are encouraged to help other people.
27. **Equality and social justice**—Children begin to show interest in making the community a better place.
28. **Integrity**—Children begin to act on their convictions and stand up for their beliefs.
29. **Honesty**—Children begin to value honesty and act accordingly.
30. **Responsibility**—Children begin to accept and take personal responsibility for age-appropriate tasks.
31. **Healthy lifestyle and sexual attitudes**—Children begin to value good health habits and learn healthy sexual attitudes.

### SOCIAL COMPETENCIES

32. **Planning and decision making**—Children begin to learn how to plan ahead and make choices at appropriate developmental levels.
33. **Interpersonal skills**—Children interact with adults and make friends. They articulate their feelings and empathize with others.
34. **Cultural competence**—Children know about and are comfortable with people of different cultural, racial, ethnic, or other backgrounds that are different from their own.
35. **Resistance skills**—Children start developing the ability to resist negative peer pressure and dangerous situations.
36. **Peaceful conflict resolution**—Children try to resolve conflicts nonviolently.

### POSITIVE IDENTITY

37. **Personal power**—Children begin to feel they have control over things that happen to them.
38. **Self-esteem**—Children report having high self-esteem.
39. **Sense of purpose**—Children report that their lives have purpose and actively engage themselves in that focus.
40. **Positive view of personal future**—Children are hopeful and positive about their personal future.