

The 40 Developmental Assets™ for Early Childhood (Ages 0-5)

Prototype Early Childhood Assets Framework

External Categories and Assets

Support

Family Support – Primary caregivers, at least one of whom is a member of the child’s immediate family, consistently and predictably provide high levels of love, physical care, attention, and nurturing in a way responsive to the child’s individuality.

Positive Family Communication – Primary caregivers communicate positively, openly and respectfully, expressing themselves in a language and style appropriate to children’s age, developmental level, and individuality.

Other Adult Relationships – With the support of their family, children experience interactions and relationships with non-familial adults, including caregivers, relatives, older people, and community figures. These interactions are characterized by investment, enrichment, consistency, and caring.

Caring Neighbors – Young children know neighbors that extend both the child’s network of relationships and sense of safety and protection.

Caring Alternative Care and School Climate – Alternative caregivers and teachers, whether within or outside of the home, are nurturing and accepting, and provide stability and security.

Parent Involvement in Early Care & Education – Parents, teachers, and caregivers communicate with each other in order to attain a consistent and understanding approach to young children. Parents play various roles in the childcare and educational setting.

Empowerment

Community Cherishes and Values Young Children – Communities are responsive to issues relevant to the wellbeing of young children, offering an array of activities and quality resources, including those that promote physical health, appropriate to their developmental characteristics and needs.

Young Children Receive and Are Seen as Resources – Communities show their caring and investment in young children’s futures through community system building and by providing families what they need to function as a “child rearing system” and alternative caregivers and child care programs with adequate financial subsidy.

Young Children are Able to Make a Contribution – Young children are provided opportunities to offer assistance and help with simple chores that bring pleasure and order to their environment, and enable them to feel valued.

Young Children Feel and Are Safe – Adults, including parents, caregivers, and neighbors are able to reassure young children that their safety and well-being are a high priority, and that they are protected. The community provides physical safety, opportunity for physical development, and access to adequate health care.

Boundaries and Expectations

Family Boundaries – The family makes reasonable, developmentally appropriate guidelines for acceptable behavior by young children in ways that are understandable and attainable by young children.

Alternative Care or Out-of-Home Boundaries – Alternative care and early education programs use positive ways of implicitly and explicitly teaching young children acceptable behavior; they avoid inappropriate and punitive methods that confuse, shame and isolate.

Neighborhood Boundaries – Neighbors encourage positive and acceptable behavior in young children in a supportive, non-threatening way.

Adult Role Models – Adults serve as role models by showing the same kind of self-regulation, empathy, acceptance of others and engagement with learning that they would expect and value in young children.

Positive Peer Relationships – Young children’s peers offer inclusion and acceptance, opportunity for having fun in constructive play, and opportunity for developing and practicing pro-social skills.

Positive Expectations – Adults expect young children to behave appropriately, undertake challenging tasks with their assistance, and to do well at an activity within the child’s capacity to perform by giving encouragement; and avoid negative labeling if the child does not succeed.

Constructive Use of Time

Play and Creative Activities – Young children have daily opportunities to play with a variety of developmentally appropriate materials both structured and unstructured, that allow self-expression, physical activity, and interaction with others.

Out of Home and Community Programs – Young children are exposed to developmentally appropriate, out of home programs staffed with competent adults that offer a variety of well maintained, suitable materials. Children are periodically taken to community settings such as parks, museums, and theatres that offer stimulating experiences.

Religious Experiences – Young children participate in age appropriate spiritual activities that reflect the family’s faith and beliefs such as the role of faith in building feelings of security, optimism, and caring for others; and that address their own emerging interest in religious issues.

Time at Home – Young children spend a major portion of their time at home where they receive individual attention from primary caregivers, participate in family activities, play with a variety of materials, interact with non-family visitors of all ages, and view TV minimally.

Internal Assets and Categories

Engagement in Learning

Motivation to Mastery – Young children respond to novelty and new experiences with interest, curiosity and energy reflective of physical wellbeing, leading to successful and pleasurable experiences.

Active Participation in Learning Experiences – Young children are engaged and invested in developmentally appropriate materials and experiences.

Bonding to Alternative Care Programs – Young children feel positive about their ongoing attendance in and out-of-home care and educational programs, and after an initial period of adjustment, attend willingly.

Home-School Connection – Young children experience security, connection and consistency between home and school or other out-of-home program as a result of mutual concern by adults at each site, and through sharing information about concerns, interests, and activities.

Early Literacy – Young children increasingly show interest in print material and representational symbols (pictures, letters, numbers) as a result of being involved in language rich activities particularly being read to frequently and being exposed to print materials.

Positive Values

Caring – Young children begin showing empathy, understanding and awareness of others’ feelings, and make comforting and accepting gestures to peers and others in distress.

Equality and Social Justice – Young children show concern for people who are at a disadvantage or who are excluded from activities because they are different.

Integrity – Young children express their world views in various ways, which include asking questions, making comments, and enacting play episodes. They are also increasingly able to stand up for their own sense of justice.

Honesty – Young children come to understand the pro-social value of honesty and are truthful to the extent their construction of and perception of reality permits it.

Responsibility – Young children can carry out or follow through on simple tasks that help or benefit others.

Social Competencies

Interpersonal Skills – Young children have “friendship skills.” They can play harmoniously with their peers through cooperation, give and take of ideas, increasing ability to share, and by showing interest in and awareness of the feelings of others.

Self-Regulation – Young children increasingly can identify the emotions they are feeling, are able to regulate their emotions in conflictual and stressful situations, and can focus their attention when needed on a matter at hand.

Planning & Problem Solving – Young children can intentionally plan for the immediate future, make a choice among several options, and attempt to solve problems or surmount frustrations.

Cultural Awareness & Sensitivity – Young children show positive and accepting attitudes toward people who are racially, physically, culturally or ethnically different from themselves.

Resistance Skills – Young children have an increasingly accurate sense of danger appropriate to their expanding sense of self and environmental knowledge, seek protective help from trusted adults and resist pressure from peers to participate in unacceptable behavior.

Conflict Resolution – Young children are increasingly able to mediate harmonious responses to conflicts by being helped to see the other person's perspective and learning how to compromise in a mutually respectful way.

Positive Identity

Personal Power – Young children have a sense of being able to make something happen that matters to them and to others.

Positive Self-Esteem – Young children have a growing sense that they are valued and that their presence and activities gain positive responses from others.

Positive View of Personal Future – Young children feel a sense of optimism—that life is exciting and enjoyable, and that they have a positive place within it.

Sense of Purpose – Young children look forward to appropriate milestones that will energize and confirm their growth such as upcoming birthdays, holidays, kindergarten and school entrance.