

The

Voice

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Looking Towards the Future, Youth of Today



The Forty Developmental Assets Of Inclusion

Inclusion is defined as being a welcomed participant in recreation activities of one's choice, regardless of ability level (Anderson & Kress, 2003). It is often thought of as something charitable and is conceived as something done FOR the youth with a disability. It is typically regarded as doing a social good, with the benefit mostly being derived for the child with a disability. Yet research consistently shows that inclusion has benefits that extend well beyond the child or youth being included. In fact, when analyzed in relation to the forty developmental assets, refined by the Search Institute (1997, 2006), inclusion can be viewed as key in helping to support youth in their positive development, regardless of disability.

The forty developmental assets, grouped as external or internal assets, are defined as building blocks that help youth grow into responsible and caring adults (Search Institute, 2006). Inclusion contributes to almost every building block or asset. Figure 1 shows each group of developmental assets, and how inclusion contributes to developing and strengthening each of them.

Inclusion is not charity, nor is it something done only for the child with a disability. Inclusion is good for ALL youth! And, when people are included as children, they grow into competent, contributing adults in a society that values diversity more than ever. In fact, a recent study showed that 87% of the American public would choose to frequent a business that hires people with disabilities over one that doesn't (Siperstein et al, 2006). Be a part of helping develop ALL youth into competent, caring adults. It is good for everyone (even the bottom line!).

EXTERNAL ASSETS

Support

1. Family support—Family life provides high levels of love and support.

2. Positive family communication—Young person and her or his parent(s) communicate positively, and young person is willing to seek advice and counsel from parents.
3. Other adult relationships—Young person receives support from three or more non-parent adults.
4. Caring neighborhood—Young person experiences caring neighbors.
5. Caring school climate—School provides a caring, encouraging environment.
6. Parent involvement in schooling—Parent(s) are actively involved in helping young person succeed in school.

Empowerment

7. Community values youth—Young person perceives that adults in the community value youth.
8. Youth as resources—Young people are given useful roles in the community.
9. Service to others—Young person serves in the community one hour or more per week.
10. Safety—Young person feels safe at home, school, and in the neighborhood.

Boundaries and Expectations

11. Family boundaries—Family has clear rules and consequences and monitors the young person's whereabouts.
12. School Boundaries—School provides clear rules and consequences.
13. Neighborhood boundaries—Neighbors take responsibility for monitoring young people's behavior.
14. Adult role models—Parent(s) and other adults model positive, responsible behavior.
15. Positive peer influence—Young person's best friends model responsible behavior.
16. High expectations—Both parent(s) and teachers encourage the young person to do well.

Constructive Use of Time

17. Creative activities—Young person spends three or more hours per week in lessons or practice in music, theater, or other arts.
18. Youth programs—Young person spends three or more hours per week in sports, clubs, or organizations at school and/or in the community.
19. Religious community—Young person spends one or more hours per week in activities in a religious institution.
20. Time at home—Young person is out with friends “with nothing special to do” two or fewer nights per week.

INTERNAL ASSETS

Commitment to Learning

21. Achievement Motivation—Young person is motivated to do well in school.
22. School Engagement—Young person is actively engaged in learning.
23. Homework—Young person reports doing at least one hour of homework every school day.
24. Bonding to school—Young person cares about her or his school.
25. Reading for Pleasure—Young person reads for pleasure three or more hours per week.

Positive Values

26. Caring—Young person places high value

on helping other people.

27. Equality and social justice—Young person places high value on promoting equality and reducing hunger and poverty.
28. Integrity—Young person acts on convictions and stands up for her or his beliefs.
29. Honesty—Young person “tells the truth even when it is not easy.”
30. Responsibility—Young person accepts and takes personal responsibility.

Social Competencies

31. Restraint—Young person believes it is important not to be sexually active or to use alcohol or other drugs.
32. Planning and decision making—Young person knows how to plan ahead and make choices.
33. Interpersonal Competence—Young person has empathy, sensitivity, and friendship skills.
34. Cultural Competence—Young person has knowledge of and comfort with people of different cultural/racial/ethnic backgrounds.
35. Resistance skills—Young person can resist negative peer pressure and dangerous situations.
36. Peaceful conflict resolution—Young person seeks to resolve conflict nonviolently.

Positive Identity

37. Personal power—Young person feels he or she has control over “things that happen to me.”
38. Self-esteem—Young person reports having a high self-esteem.
39. Sense of purpose—Young person reports that “my life has a purpose.”
40. Positive view of personal future—Young person is optimistic about her or his personal future.

References

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- Search Institute. (1997, 2006). *The 40 developmental assets*. Minneapolis, MN: Search Institute. Retrieved on 10/7/07 from www.search.institute.org/assets/.
- Siperstein, G.N., Roman, N., Mohler, A., & Parker, R. (2006). A national survey of consumer attitudes toward companies that hire people with disabilities. *Journal of Vocational Rehabilitation, 24*(1), 3-4.

By Dr. Lynn Anderson, Inclusive Recreation Resource Center at SUNY Cortland

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FIGURE ONE. Relationship of Developmental Assets to the Inclusion Process. (Anderson, L.)

EXTERNAL ASSETS	INCLUSION
<p>SUPPORT</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Family support—Family life provides high levels of love and support. 2. Positive family communication—Young person and her or his parent(s) communicate positively, and young person is willing to seek advice and counsel from parents. 3. Other adult relationships—Young person receives support from three or more non-parent adults. 4. Caring neighborhood—Young person experiences caring neighbors. 5. Caring school climate—School provides a caring, encouraging environment. 6. Parent involvement in schooling—Parent(s) are actively involved in helping young person succeed in school. 	<p>Inclusion is about providing support to others. Through engagement in the inclusion process in recreation activities, youth learn not only how to receive support, but how to create it and sustain it. Youth experience caring “micro-communities” in inclusive recreation activities that role model what it means to be valued and supported, regardless of ability level. The lessons learned in supportive, inclusive recreation environments carry over to all aspects of a youth’s life.</p>
<p>EMPOWERMENT</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 7. Community values youth—Young person perceives that adults in the community value youth. 8. Youth as resources—Young people are given useful roles in the community. 9. Service to others—Young person serves in the community one hour or more per week. 10. Safety—Young person feels safe at home, school, and in the neighborhood. 	<p>Inclusion provides a multitude of opportunities for youth to provide valued service to others, and to fulfill a valued role. Research shows consistently that youth assisting other youth with disabilities in being included in recreation activities is one of the most effective strategies for successful inclusion. Inclusion helps youth feel safe, as they see some of society’s more vulnerable members being supported and respected.</p>
<p>BOUNDARIES AND EXPECTATIONS</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 11. Family boundaries—Family has clear rules and consequences and monitors the young person’s whereabouts. 12. School Boundaries—School provides clear rules and consequences. 13. Neighborhood boundaries—Neighbors take responsibility for monitoring young people’s behavior. 14. Adult role models—Parent(s) and other adults model positive, responsible behavior. 15. Positive peer influence—Young person’s best friends model responsible behavior. 16. High expectations—Both parent(s) and teachers encourage the young person to do well. 	<p>Inclusion is about helping everyone learn how to meet high expectations, and how to respect the boundaries of others. Inclusion, when it is implemented well, even with youth with behavioral issues, provides clear and consistent structures for all youth, even though the youth that need behavioral support may benefit most. Youth see adults role model respect and acceptance of youth with differences in inclusive recreation programs, and they learn to help each other be caring and supportive. Inclusion is about “doing programs well,” and that includes setting clear boundaries and high expectations.</p>
<p>CONSTRUCTIVE USE OF TIME</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 17. Creative activities—Young person spends three or more hours per week in lessons or practice in music, theater, or other arts. 18. Youth programs—Young person spends three or more hours per week in sports, clubs, or organizations at school and/or in the community. 19. Religious community—Young person spends one or more hours per week in activities in a religious institution. 20. Time at home—Young person is out with friends “with nothing special to do” two or fewer nights per week. 	<p>Inclusion is a creative process. It happens one person at a time. Across programming areas, and in one’s “hanging out” time, learning how to include someone with obvious challenges and differences makes youth’s use of time even more constructive.</p>

INTERNAL ASSETS	INCLUSION
<p>COMMITMENT TO LEARNING</p> <p>21. Achievement Motivation—Young person is motivated to do well in school.</p> <p>22. School Engagement—Young person is actively engaged in learning.</p> <p>23. Homework—Young person reports doing at least one hour of homework every school day.</p> <p>24. Bonding to school—Young person cares about her or his school.</p> <p>25. Reading for Pleasure—Young person reads for pleasure three or more hours per week.</p>	<p>Inclusion is a learning process. When youth observe a peer with a disability meet a challenge to learn something new, even against all odds, they can be inspired and uplifted. When youth are a part of helping that child with a disability learn, the bonding that occurs is strong and deep and meaningful.</p>
<p>POSITIVE VALUES</p> <p>26. Caring—Young person places high value on helping other people.</p> <p>27. Equality and social justice—Young person places high value on promoting equality and reducing hunger and poverty.</p> <p>28. Integrity—Young person acts on convictions and stands up for her or his beliefs.</p> <p>29. Honesty—Young person “tells the truth even when it is not easy.”</p> <p>30. Responsibility—Young person accepts and takes personal responsibility.</p>	<p>Inclusion perhaps contributes most to building this group of developmental assets. Inclusion is about caring, about equality, and about social justice. By being a part of including a peer with a disability in a recreation experience, youth can experience integrity, honesty, and responsibility.</p>
<p>SOCIAL COMPETENCIES</p> <p>31. Restraint—Young person believes it is important not to be sexually active or to use alcohol or other drugs.</p> <p>32. Planning and decision making—Young person knows how to plan ahead and make choices.</p> <p>33. Interpersonal Competence—Young person has empathy, sensitivity, and friendship skills.</p> <p>34. Cultural Competence—Young person has knowledge of and comfort with people of different cultural/racial/ethnic backgrounds.</p> <p>35. Resistance skills—Young person can resist negative peer pressure and dangerous situations.</p> <p>36. Peaceful conflict resolution—Young person seeks to resolve conflict nonviolently.</p>	<p>Inclusion helps build social competencies in youth with and without disabilities. Youth become comfortable with differences in intellectual ability, speaking ability, physical ability, and emotional control. They learn to resist pressure to bully and tease, and to resolve conflicts within groups of varying abilities. Youth use empathy and sensitivity and develop friendships with people who are different than themselves in recreation experiences that include children with disabilities.</p>
<p>POSITIVE IDENTITY</p> <p>37. Personal power—Young person feels he or she has control over “things that happen to me.”</p> <p>38. Self-esteem—Young person reports having a high self-esteem.</p> <p>39. Sense of purpose—Young person reports that “my life has a purpose.”</p> <p>40. Positive view of personal future—Young person is optimistic about her or his personal future.</p>	<p>Inclusion builds a sense of purpose and meaning for all youth. When a child without a disability is able to make a positive difference for a child with a disability in a recreation experience, self-esteem is improved, and a sense of control is heightened. Inclusion builds positive identity in all youth!</p>