

*Developmental Assets:
A Profile of Your 4th – 6th Grade Students*

Me and My World

Executive Summary

Sample Report
City, State

Prepared for:
Sample Report ONLY
City, State
April 2005

Search Institute
SURVEY
SERVICES

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Developmental Assets: A Profile of Your 4th – 6th Grade Students

Sample Report

Search Institute's framework of Developmental Assets provides a tool for assessing the health and well-being of upper elementary-age children. The asset framework represents a common core of developmental building blocks crucial for all youth, regardless of community size, region of the country, gender, family economics, or race/ethnicity. This report summarizes the extent to which children in your community experience these assets and how the assets relate to their behavior. These 40 Developmental Assets were assessed in Month, Year using the survey *Me and My World*.

The following table describes the students in your community who participated in the study.

Demographics of Students Surveyed			
		Number of Students	Percent of Total
Total Sample		2394	100
Gender*	Male	1207	51
	Female	1142	49
Grade*	4	551	23
	5	618	26
	6	1184	50
Race / Ethnicity*	American Indian or Alaska Native	70	3
	Asian	23	1
	Black or African American	41	2
	Hispanic or Latino/Latina	137	6
	Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	8	0
	White	1764	75
	Other	83	4
	Multi-racial	214	9
*Numbers may not sum to "Total Sample" due to missing information. Less than 0.5% rounded to zero.			

The Developmental Assets are grouped into two major types (see Figures 1 and 2). **External assets** are the networks of support, opportunities and people that stimulate and nurture positive development in children. **Internal assets** are the young person's own commitments, values, and competencies. Figures 1 and 2 provide the percentage of all students in your study reporting each asset.

Figure 1: External Assets

Percent of Your Students Reporting Each of 20 External Assets			
Asset Category	Asset Name	Definition	Percent
Support	1. Family support	Family life provides high levels of love and support.	84
	2. Positive family communication	Parent(s) and child communicate positively. Child feels comfortable seeking advice and counsel from parent(s).	56
	3. Other adult relationships	Child receives support from adults other than her or his parent(s).	51
	4. Caring neighborhood	Child experiences caring neighbors.	53
	5. Caring school climate	Relationships with teachers and peers provide a caring, encouraging school environment.	54
	6. Parent involvement in schooling	Parent(s) are actively involved in helping the child succeed in school.	46
Empowerment	7. Community values youth	Child feels valued and appreciated by adults in the community.	31
	8. Children as resources	Child is included in decisions at home and in the community.	47
	9. Service to others	Child has opportunities to help others in the community.	37
	10. Safety	Child feels safe at home, at school, and in her or his neighborhood.	70
Boundaries and Expectations	11. Family boundaries	Family has clear and consistent rules and consequences and monitors the child's whereabouts.	57
	12. School boundaries	School provides clear rules and consequences.	89
	13. Neighborhood boundaries	Neighbors take responsibility for monitoring the child's behavior.	47
	14. Adult role models	Parent(s) and other adults in the child's family, as well as nonfamily adults, model positive, responsible behavior.	46
	15. Positive peer influence	Child's closest friends model positive, responsible behavior.	84
	16. High expectations	Parent(s) and teachers expect the child to do her or his best at school and in other activities.	86
Constructive Use of Time	17. Creative activities	Child participates in music, art, drama, or creative writing two or more times per week.	53
	18. Child programs	Child participates two or more times per week in cocurricular school activities or structured community programs for children.	56
	19. Religious community	Child attends religious programs or services one or more times per week.	63
	20. Time at home	Child spends some time most days both in high-quality interaction with parents and doing things at home other than watching TV or playing video games.	31

Figure 2: Internal Assets

Percent of Your Students Reporting Each of 20 Internal Assets			
Asset Category	Asset Name	Definition	Percent
Commitment to Learning	21. Achievement motivation	Child is motivated and strives to do well in school.	72
	22. Learning engagement	Child is responsive, attentive, and actively engaged in learning at school and enjoys participating in learning activities outside of school.	46
	23. Homework	Child usually hands in homework on time.	75
	24. Bonding to adults at school	Child cares about teachers and other adults at school.	71
	25. Reading for pleasure	Child enjoys and engages in reading for fun most days of the week.	52
Positive Values	26. Caring	Parent(s) tell the child it is important to help other people.	85
	27. Equality and social justice	Parent(s) tell the child it is important to speak up for equal rights for all people.	68
	28. Integrity	Parent(s) tell the child it is important to stand up for one's beliefs.	84
	29. Honesty	Parent(s) tell the child it is important to tell the truth.	88
	30. Responsibility	Parent(s) tell the child it is important to accept personal responsibility for behavior.	81
	31. Healthy lifestyle	Parent(s) tell the child it is important to have good health habits and an understanding of healthy sexuality.	74
Social Competencies	32. Planning and decision making	Child thinks about decisions and is usually happy with results of her or his decisions.	45
	33. Interpersonal competence	Child cares about and is affected by other people's feelings, enjoys making friends, and, when frustrated or angry, tries to calm her- or himself.	42
	34. Cultural competence	Child knows and is comfortable with people of different racial, ethnic, and cultural backgrounds and with her or his own cultural identity.	65
	35. Resistance skills	Child can stay away from people who are likely to get her or him in trouble and is able to say no to doing wrong or dangerous things.	76
	36. Peaceful conflict resolution	Child attempts to resolve conflict nonviolently.	66
	Positive Identity	37. Personal power	Child feels he or she has some influence over things that happen in her or his life.
38. Self-esteem		Child likes and is proud to be the person he or she is.	67
39. Sense of purpose		Child sometimes thinks about what life means and whether there is a purpose for her or his life.	49
40. Positive view of personal future		Child is optimistic about her or his personal future.	58

Figure 3: Average Number of 40 Assets Your Children Report

Most young people in the United States—regardless of age, gender, or region of the country—experience too few of the 40 assets. Search Institute's research on adolescents consistently has shown a small, but observable, decrease in assets among older adolescents (9th – 12th grade youth) as compared with young adolescents (6th – 8th grade youth). Early research on students in middle childhood suggest that this trend—younger children reporting more assets than older children—continues among 4th – 6th graders. See page 9 of the Full Report for a detailed discussion of this issue. Here is the average number of assets reported by youth in your community at each grade level.

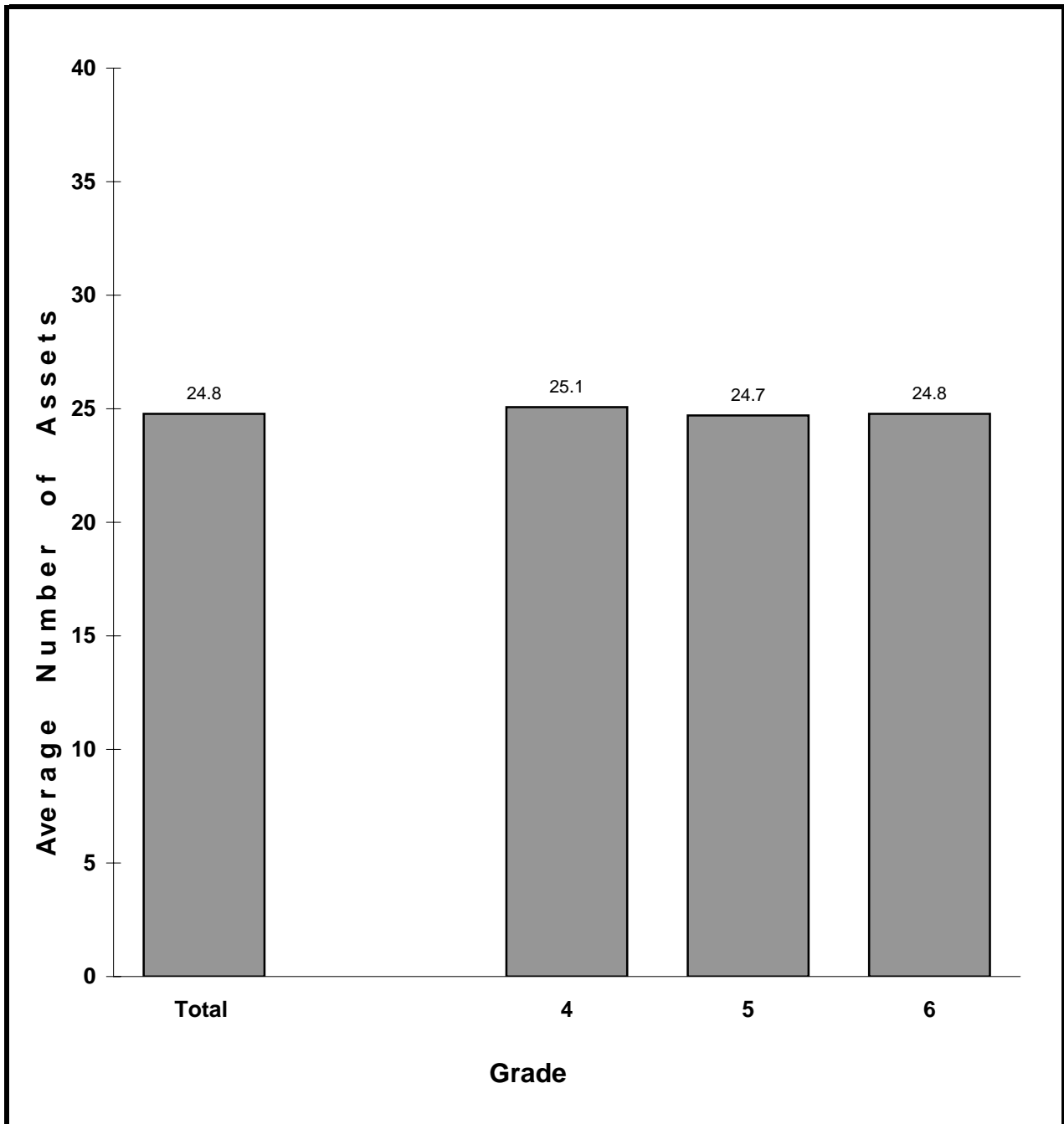


Figure 4: The Challenge for Your Community

Ideally, of course, all youth would experience 31-40 of these assets. Each community needs to establish a goal for what percentage of youth it seeks to be at this level. This process can provide an important opportunity for creating a community vision for your youth. The figure below shows the percentage of your youth who experience each of four levels of assets: 0-10, 11-20, 21-30, and 31-40.

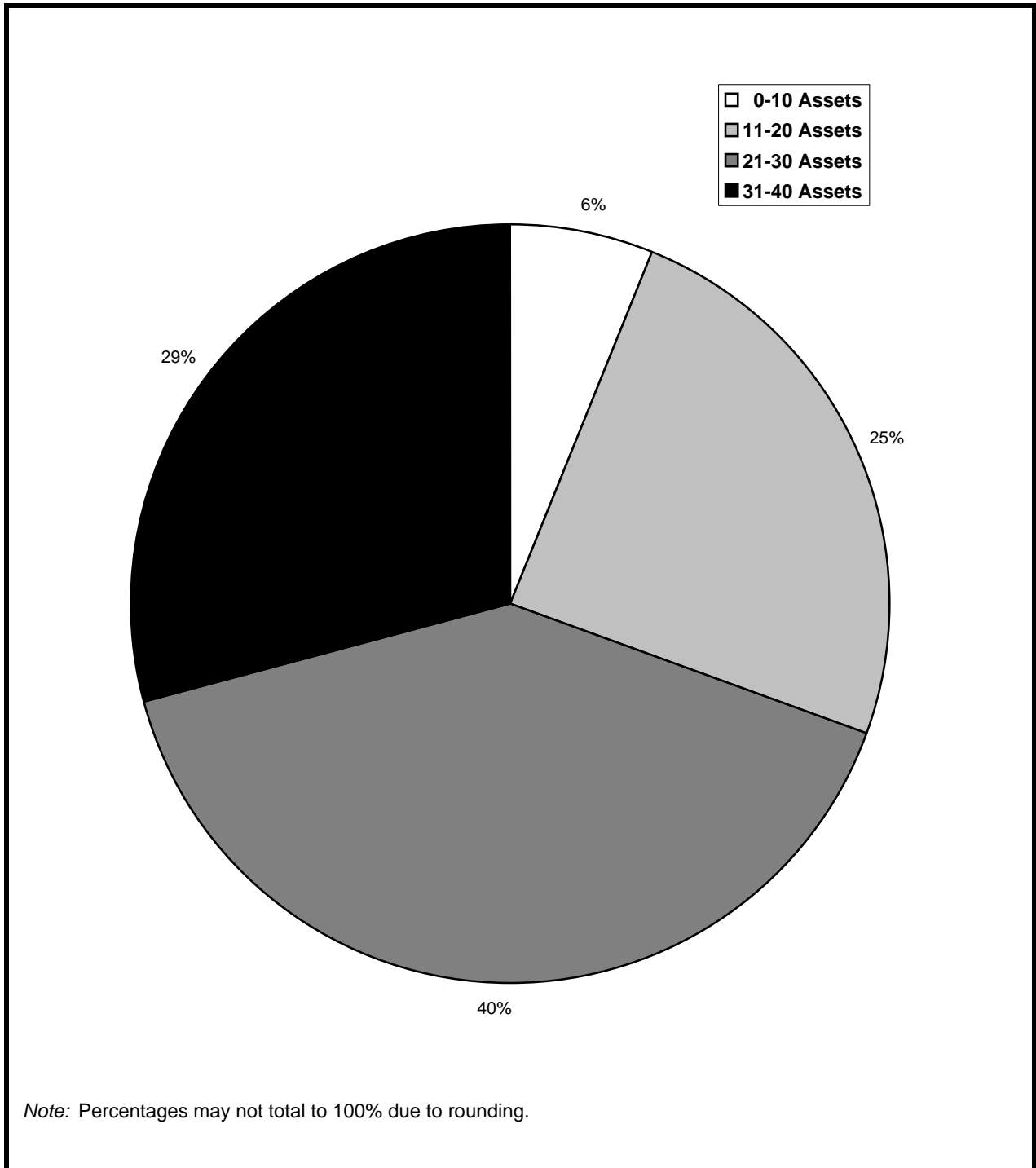


Figure 5: The Power of Assets to Protect Against Risk Behavior Patterns

This figure shows the power of assets to protect youth from risk behavior patterns. Search Institute's research consistently shows that youth with higher levels of assets are involved in fewer risk taking behaviors. Each vertical bar shows the *average number of 6 risk behavior patterns among all youth, grouped by asset level (0-10, 11-20, 21-30, and 31-40)*. The 6 risk behavior patterns are: alcohol use, smoking, marijuana use, anti-social behavior, physical aggression/violence, and sadness.

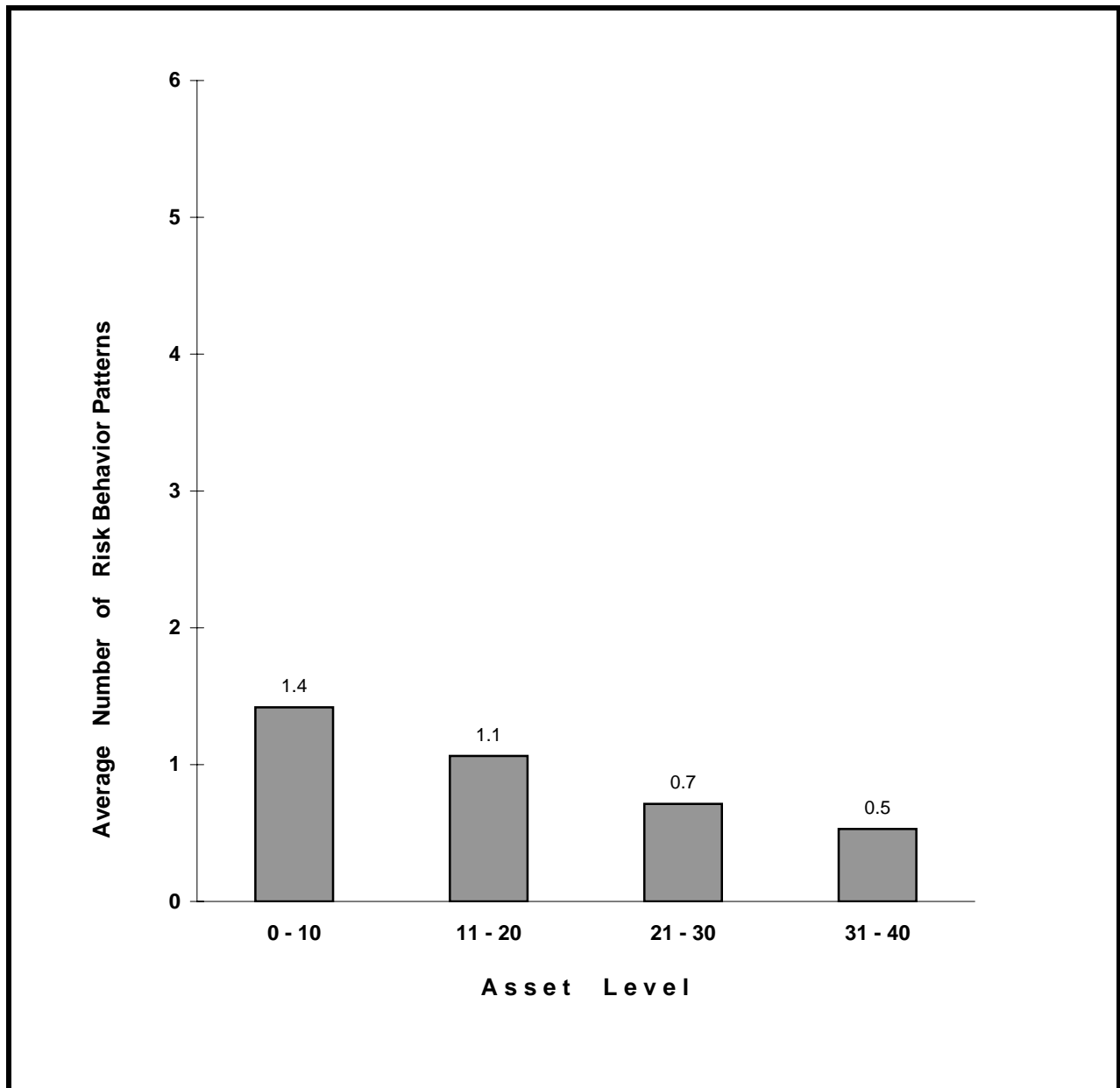
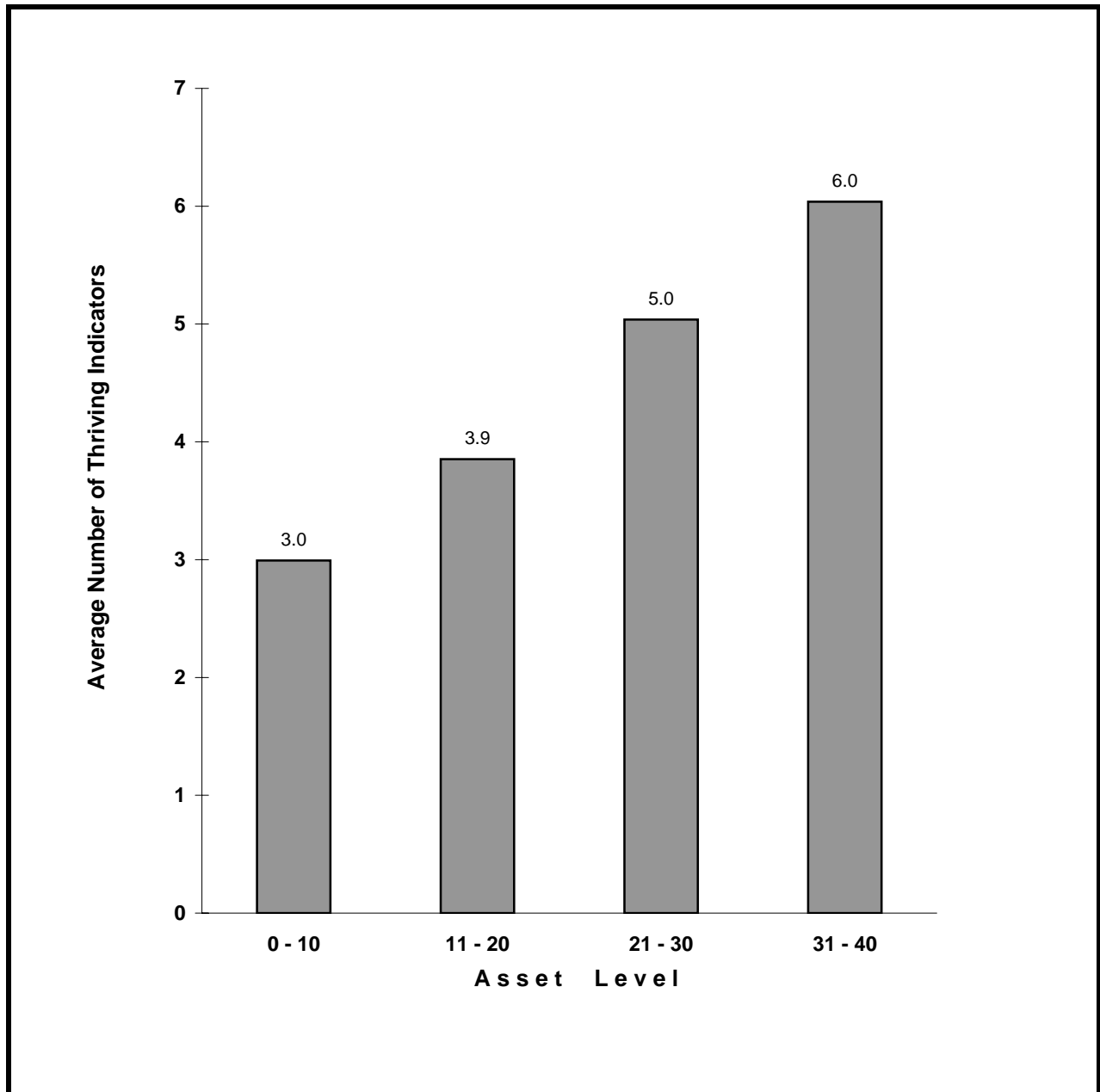


Figure 6: The Power of Assets to Promote Thriving Indicators

This figure shows the power of assets to promote thriving indicators among your youth. Search Institute's research consistently shows that youth with higher levels of assets are more likely to report more thriving indicators. Each vertical bar shows the *average number of seven thriving indicators among all youth, grouped by asset level (0-10, 11-20, 21-30, and 31-40)*. The seven thriving indicators are: school success, helps others, values diversity, delays gratification, coregulation, coping, and life satisfaction.



What Next? Moving from Awareness to Action

This report provides insights about the young people in your community and can be a powerful tool for community-wide discussion about how to improve the well-being of your youth. The good news is that everyone—parents, grandparents, educators, neighborhoods, children, teenagers, youth workers, employers, health care providers, coaches, and others—can build assets. Ideally, the whole community is involved to ensure that young people have the solid foundation they need to become tomorrow's competent, caring adults. Here are some suggestions for how to begin strengthening the assets among the youth in your community.

What adults can do . . .

- Smile at every child or adolescent you see.
- Send a "thinking of you" or birthday card, letter, or e-mail message to a child or adolescent.
- Invite a young person you know to do something together, such as playing a game or going to a park.

What young people can do . . .

- Ask your parent(s) to help you take advantage of interesting and challenging opportunities through youth programs, cocurricular activities, and congregational youth programs.
- Find a teacher you like at school and get to know her or him better.
- Find opportunities to build relationships with younger children such as service projects or tutoring.

What families can do . . .

- Model—and talk about—your own values and priorities.
- Regularly do things with your child, including projects around your house, recreational activities, and service projects.
- Talk to your children about assets. Ask them for suggestions of ways to strengthen theirs and yours.

What organizations can do . . .

- Highlight, develop, expand, or support programs designed to build assets, such as mentoring, peer helping, service-learning, or parent education.
- Provide meaningful opportunities for young people to contribute to others in and through your organization.
- Develop employee policies that encourage asset building, including flexible work schedules for parents as well as other employees, so that they can volunteer in youth development programs.

For more information about what you can do to build assets or start an asset-building initiative in your community, call Search Institute at 1 - 800 - 888-7828.

If available, the name and phone number of a local contact person or initiative appears below.

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A Profile of Your 4th – 6th Grade Students*

Me and My World

Survey Report

Sample Report
City, State

Prepared for:
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April 2005

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Search Institute will treat this report as confidential. Because the data upon which this report is based can be used to advance the understanding of child development, Search Institute reserves the right to add these data to its larger Developmental Assets database. This report is based on data from **Me and My World**, copyright © 2004 by Search Institute. For additional information, contact Search Institute's Survey Services Department, 1-800-888-7828.

I. Introduction

Since 1958, Search Institute has been proactive in working to create a world where all young people are valued and thrive. To accomplish this mission, Search Institute generates, synthesizes, and communicates new knowledge, convenes organizational and community leaders, and works with state and national organizations. The bedrock of the institute's work is the framework of 40 Developmental Assets—positive experiences, relationships, opportunities, and personal qualities that young people need to grow up healthy, caring, and responsible. Created in 1990, the framework is grounded in research on child and adolescent development, risk prevention, and resilience. The assets represent a common core of developmental building blocks crucial for all children, regardless of community size, region of the country, race/ethnicity, gender, family economics, sexual orientation, or ability status. Using data from a child self-report measure, *Me and My World* (MMW)—a Search Institute survey of Developmental Assets for grades 4 through 6, this report summarizes the extent to which children in your community experience these assets and how the assets relate to their behavior.

Overview of Search Institute's Developmental Assets Framework

Search Institute has found that focusing on the strengths and resources of all children and youth is a powerful approach that engages communities to mobilize and act in the service of their children. The Developmental Assets model recognizes that promoting healthy child and youth development requires the participation of all members of a community, because many of the core processes of positive development are increasingly absent in most towns and cities. These include adult support, positive intergenerational relationships, safe places, clear and consistent boundaries, participation in constructive activities, commitment to learning, consistent attention to values, and practice in serving others.

The fragility of this developmental infrastructure explains many of the behavioral choices children make that concern us.

Strengthening, and in some cases rebuilding, this developmental infrastructure is essential for the positive development of all young people in all communities. And, everyone has a role to play. Though support from professionals and the public sector is needed, much of the responsibility and capacity for the healthy development of children and youth is in the hands of the people who interact with young people every day—families, friends, neighbors, seniors, law enforcement, businesses, religious institutions, and other citizens.

Developmental Assets in Middle Childhood: A Paradigm of Positive Human Development

Children entering the middle childhood years as we define it (grades 4-6, or roughly 8-12 years of age) are rapidly “coming into their own,” beginning to seek the kind of autonomy and independence that typify the majority of young people during adolescence in the United States (Scales, Sesma, & Bolstrom, 2004). Additionally, in a prelude to adolescence, emotional, interpersonal, and academic demands increase for children in middle childhood. Thus, it is vital to know whether our children are well-prepared to enter into this stage of greater maturity and how parents, teachers, neighbors, and community resources can help prepare children for this developmental transition.

Search Institute's framework for positive development during the middle childhood years provides a means not only for assessing your children but also for mobilizing community-wide attention to and action on promoting the healthy development of young people.

The 40 assets for middle childhood and their definitions are listed in Figure 1. The assets are grouped into two major types:

1. **External assets** are positive developmental experiences that surround children with support, empowerment, boundaries and expectations, and opportunities for constructive use of time. When provided by many different formal and informal systems in a community, they stimulate and nurture positive development in children.
2. **Internal assets** are a young person's own commitments, values, and competencies. They are grouped into categories of educational and learning commitment, positive values, social competencies, and positive identity. As with the external assets, community is important for the development of these internal assets.

Figure 1: Developmental Assets with Definitions

External Assets		
Asset Category	Asset Name	Definition
Support	1. Family support	Family life provides high levels of love and support.
	2. Positive family communication	Parent(s) and child communicate positively. Child feels comfortable seeking advice and counsel from parent(s).
	3. Other adult relationships	Child receives support from adults other than her or his parent(s).
	4. Caring neighborhood	Child experiences caring neighbors.
	5. Caring school climate	Relationships with teachers and peers provide a caring, encouraging school environment.
	6. Parent involvement in schooling	Parent(s) are actively involved in helping the child succeed in school.
Empowerment	7. Community values youth	Child feels valued and appreciated by adults in the community.
	8. Children as resources	Child is included in decisions at home and in the community.
	9. Service to others	Child has opportunities to help others in the community.
	10. Safety	Child feels safe at home, at school, and in her or his neighborhood.
Boundaries and Expectations	11. Family boundaries	Family has clear and consistent rules and consequences and monitors the child's whereabouts.
	12. School boundaries	School provides clear rules and consequences.
	13. Neighborhood boundaries	Neighbors take responsibility for monitoring the child's behavior.
	14. Adult role models	Parent(s) and other adults in the child's family, as well as nonfamily adults, model positive, responsible behavior.
	15. Positive peer influence	Child's closest friends model positive, responsible behavior.
	16. High expectations	Parent(s) and teachers expect the child to do her or his best at school and in other activities.
Constructive Use of Time	17. Creative activities	Child participates in music, art, drama, or creative writing two or more times per week.
	18. Child programs	Child participates two or more times per week in cocurricular school activities or structured community programs for children.
	19. Religious community	Child attends religious programs or services one or more times per week.
	20. Time at home	Child spends some time most days both in high-quality interaction with parents and doing things at home other than watching TV or playing video games.

Figure 1: Developmental Assets with Definitions (Cont'd)

Internal Assets		
Asset Category	Asset Name	Definition
Commitment To Learning	21. Achievement motivation	Child is motivated and strives to do well in school.
	22. Learning engagement	Child is responsive, attentive, and actively engaged in learning at school and enjoys participating in learning activities outside of school.
	23. Homework	Child usually hands in homework on time.
	24. Bonding to adults at school	Child cares about teachers and other adults at school.
	25. Reading for pleasure	Child enjoys and engages in reading for fun most days of the week.
Positive Values	26. Caring	Parent(s) tell the child it is important to help other people.
	27. Equality and social justice	Parent(s) tell the child it is important to speak up for equal rights for all people.
	28. Integrity	Parent(s) tell the child it is important to stand up for one's beliefs.
	29. Honesty	Parent(s) tell the child it is important to tell the truth.
	30. Responsibility	Parent(s) tell the child it is important to accept personal responsibility for behavior.
	31. Healthy lifestyle	Parent(s) tell the child it is important to have good health habits and an understanding of healthy sexuality.
Social Competencies	32. Planning and decision making	Child thinks about decisions and is usually happy with results of her or his decisions.
	33. Interpersonal competence	Child cares about and is affected by other people's feelings, enjoys making friends, and, when frustrated or angry, tries to calm her- or himself.
	34. Cultural competence	Child knows and is comfortable with people of different racial, ethnic, & cultural backgrounds and with her or his own cultural identity.
	35. Resistance skills	Child can stay away from people who are likely to get her or him in trouble and is able to say no to doing wrong or dangerous things.
	36. Peaceful conflict resolution	Child attempts to resolve conflict nonviolently.
Positive Identity	37. Personal power	Child feels he or she has some influence over things that happen in her or his life.
	38. Self-esteem	Child likes and is proud to be the person he/she is.
	39. Sense of purpose	Child sometimes thinks about what life means and whether there is a purpose for her or his life.
	40. Positive view of personal future	Child is optimistic about her or his personal future.

How to Use This Report

This report contains important insights about the young people in your community. It includes information about the challenges they face and the internal strengths and external supports they have to meet those challenges.

In reading a report such as this, people may question the accuracy of individual numbers or their meanings. Some general guidelines for interpretation may be helpful:

- First, differences of 5% or more between grade levels or between males and females are worthy of thought and consideration. Please note that differences of 5% are not always statistically significant, but in the context of the overall pattern of results, community residents may find them meaningful in considering courses of action.
- Second, it is often helpful to look for patterns of findings rather than to focus on one specific asset or finding. For example, does one grade or set of grades consistently report fewer assets?
- Third, do not overwhelm others with numbers at the risk of losing their understanding of key messages. Rather, make more use of the numbers and figures that give the overall messages, such as the average number of assets your children report.

Many people in your community will benefit from the information in this report. These include educators, parents, young people, youth workers, community leaders, policy makers, media, religious leaders, employers, coaches, health care providers, and so on. Use local resources or those from Search Institute to help you communicate these findings to others. (See Appendix E for suggested asset-promoting print and video resources.)

Once you have shared information with key people and groups, your community can begin to focus on the important work of

asset building. This, of course, requires a long-term, community-wide effort. While this report gives a snapshot of children at a particular point in time, asset building begins at birth and continues through childhood, adolescence, and beyond. Section V of this report highlights some ideas for getting started as an asset-building community. Once you do, you will find that there are many individuals and groups in your own community that already are involved in asset building. You also will find that many people and organizations have creative new ways to build assets. Asset building is not a program—it is a catalyst for connecting and empowering all sectors of your community in a long-term effort. Your data—and this report—should be seen as a tool to engage and mobilize all stakeholders, which includes both adults and children, to help create a social climate that supports their engagement with young people.

How Your Study Was Done

The survey *Me and My World* (MMW) was used to measure these assets among children in your community. The MMW was administered in *Month, Year* to students in *Grade List* at *School List*. Standardized administration procedures were provided to school staff by Search Institute to enhance the quality of the data. To ensure complete student anonymity, no names or identification numbers were used.

Notes about Interpreting Your Findings

In developing the MMW, great care was taken to create an instrument that addresses two key factors—reading level of respondents and creating survey questions that are suitable for the cognitive abilities of children in middle childhood (such as asking students to think about concrete examples rather than asking them to think of hypothetical or abstract concepts). Each of these factors plays an important role in the validity and reliability of the survey instrument. For the majority of the

Developmental Assets scales, the MMW has acceptable to good reliabilities and good evidence of validity.

Described below are additional factors that influence your survey findings:

Data cleaning. To create the final set of data on which these findings are based, steps were taken to ensure the data are as high quality as possible. To do so, surveys were eliminated from the dataset if students marked a grade level other than the grade level(s) being surveyed. In addition, surveys were eliminated when there was missing data on 41 or more (25%) of the 165 items in the survey. Typically, between 1 to 5 percent of surveys are discarded for these reasons. If the percentage of discarded surveys is greater than 10 percent, caution should be used in interpreting the results, as some bias may be present. For this report, XX surveys (X%) were eliminated from the dataset.

Sample characteristics. When reviewing your data, it is important to look at the characteristics of the children represented in the dataset (see Figure 2). The quality of the data is affected by the degree to which the surveyed children represent the students in the participating school(s). If a random sample was used, the sample needs to be large enough to appropriately represent the student population. Studies intended to assess all children should ideally obtain data from at least 80% of the students. Neither method produces perfect results, but both can provide quality information about your children.

Response option formats. Unlike surveys of older youth, research has shown that some younger children may have a tendency to respond using the extremes in the types of response formats used for many of the *Me and My World* survey items (e.g., a 5-point scale ranging from Strongly

Agree to Strongly Disagree)¹. It is possible that, while the survey items were understood in terms of reading level comprehension for these elementary students, the items may have been difficult for some children to answer realistically due to their stage of developmental maturity and the subsequent limitations in cognitive ability at these ages.

Ambiguous responses. Any item with greater than 20% of the responses either “Not Sure” or missing (the student did not answer the question) should be interpreted cautiously. On one hand, this may mean that many students were confused by the question and found it difficult to answer. On the other hand, it may instead mean that a relatively large percentage of students truly are not yet sure about their attitudes and the experiences in their lives. The assets pertaining to these items may provide potential points of influence for your community, as students haven’t yet “made up their minds” regarding how they feel. As community residents seek the meaning in these data, you will need to decide whether it is important to find out more about why a large proportion of your children either were unsure about, or chose not to respond to, these specific items. (See Appendix B for a list of all survey items with response option percentages.)

Maintaining anonymity. In this report, percentages are generally reported by total group, by gender, and by grade. To protect anonymity, if data are available from fewer than 30 students in any grade, percentages are reported for combinations of grades, for example combining data for your 4th and 5th grade students. Also, gender data will not be reported if there are fewer than 30 students in either gender category. When the sample sizes at the individual grade levels are 50 students or fewer, caution should be used in making comparisons among grades, unless the sample sizes

¹ Chambers, C. T., & Johnston, C. (2001). Developmental differences in children’s use of rating scales. *Journal of Pediatric Psychology*, 27, 27-36.

represent the total number of students in those grades.

Characteristics of the students participating in your study are given in Figure 2.

Figure 2: Demographics of Students Surveyed

		Number of Students	Percent of Total
Total Sample		2394	100
Gender*	Male	1207	51
	Female	1142	49
Grade*	4	551	23
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	Other	83	4
	Multi-racial	214	9
*Numbers may not sum to "Total Sample" due to missing information. Less than 0.5% rounded to zero.			

II. Portrait of Developmental Assets

In this section, information about your young people's assets is presented in various forms. Both the average number of assets your children report plus the percentage of children who report each asset are noted. Whether a child is said to have an asset is based on how he or she answered the questions that measure the asset. In order to simplify reporting and focus attention on overall trends, all assets are assessed as either present or absent in a child's life. In reality, of course, children experience assets in degrees, not as either all or nothing.

Figure 3 shows the average number of assets for all students combined, as well as by grade. Communities typically find motivation for individual and community asset-building actions by creating a shared vision for the average number of assets you want your children to experience. This approach reminds citizens that, while the total number of assets is important, there are many different asset combinations that contribute to the healthy development of children. For example, a group of children each with 26 assets is likely to have a different set of 26 in their asset profile. Thus, efforts to build all 40 assets are critical.

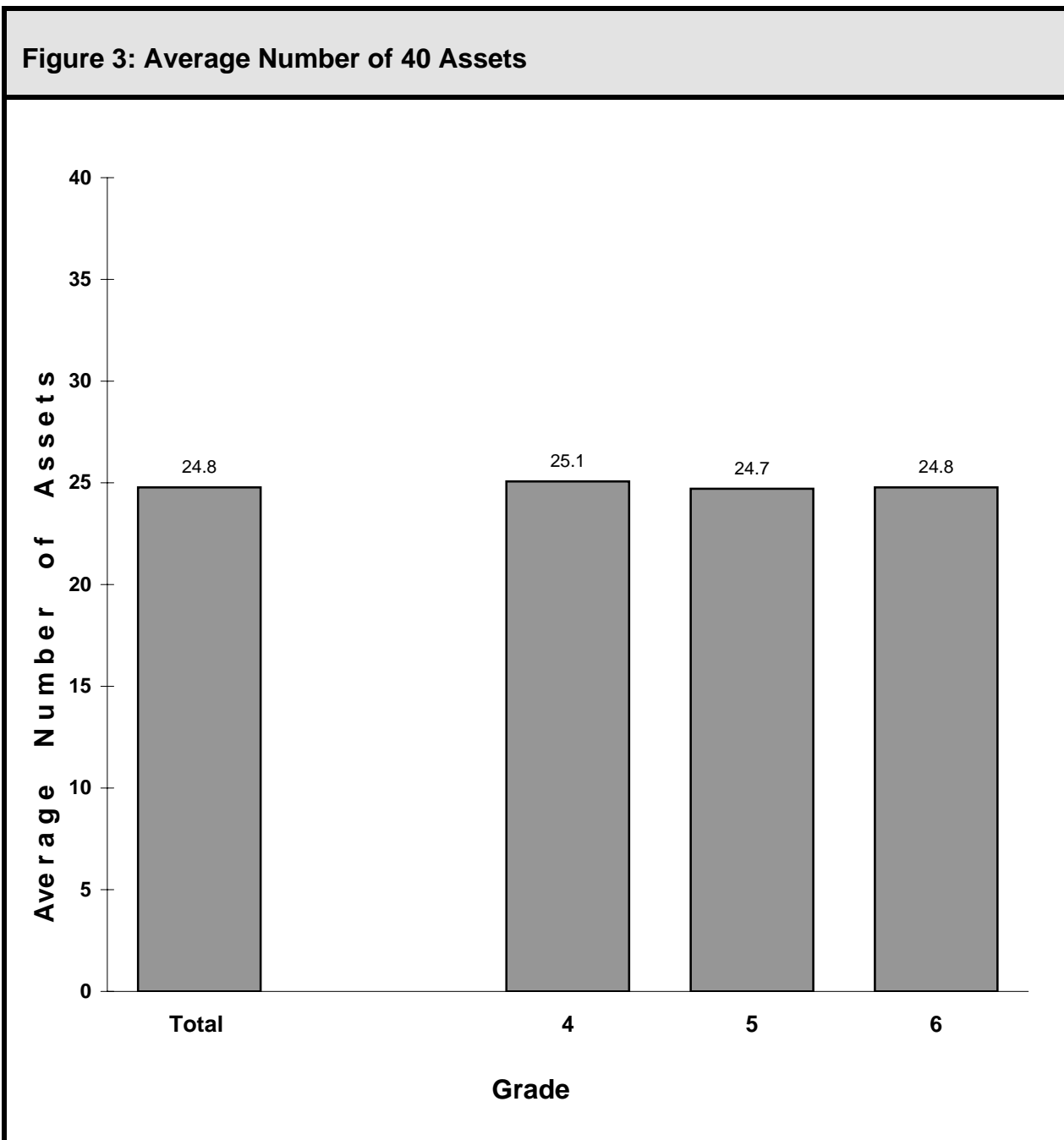
A Note on the Differences in Reported Assets between Children and Adolescents

Results from initial studies using the MMW indicate that the number of assets reported by children in middle childhood tends to be greater than the number of assets reported by adolescents. For example, 36% of the 4th – 6th graders (1,294 students) in our field tests had 31 to 37 assets (Scales, Sesma, & Bolstrom, 2004), compared to 9% of 6th – 12th graders (217,277 students) who were in the highest asset quartile (31-40 assets) (*Developmental Assets: A Profile of Your Youth*, 2001, unpublished report). It is possible that some of these striking differences are due to wording differences between the elementary and adolescent surveys that make it easier for elementary students to be scored as having some of the assets. For example, for the Constructive-Use-of-Time assets, adolescents need to report the number of hours per average week they do the activity, but elementary students are asked to report the less precise number of times per week they do the activity. Elementary students also may have a more positive bias in their reporting. But these findings also are consistent with previous research and supportive of Developmental Assets theory, in that studies consistently find preadolescents more likely than adolescents to have the relationships and opportunities needed for positive development (see Scales, Sesma, & Bolstrom, 2004, for more discussion on this topic).

Figure 3: The average number of 40 assets your children report, for the total sample and by grade level. Each student's responses are analyzed to determine whether s/he has each asset. The number of assets are then averaged across groups (total sample and grade level). Attention should be focused on increasing the

number of assets your children report having.

Questions to consider: What is the average number of assets reported by your children? How do the number of assets compare across grades? Are there any grades reporting low numbers of assets?



External Assets

Figure 4 and Figure 5 show the overall percentages of students who report each *external* asset as well as the percentages by grade and gender. The external assets are the positive experiences and supports a young person receives from formal and informal connections to others in the community. There are 20 external assets, divided into four categories: **Support**, **Empowerment**, **Boundaries & Expectations**, and **Constructive Use of Time**.

The **SUPPORT** assets refer to the way young people experience love, affirmation, and acceptance. Ideally, young people experience an abundance of support not only in their families but also from many other people in their schools and communities.

The **EMPOWERMENT** assets relate to the key developmental need for students to feel valued, valuable, and safe. The empowerment assets highlight this need,

focusing on students' perceptions of their families, schools, and communities, and opportunities for students to contribute to society in meaningful ways.

BOUNDARIES and EXPECTATIONS

assets refer to the need for children to have clear and enforced boundaries, exposure to positive role models, and consistently high expectations for behavior. Ideally, boundary assets are experienced in the settings of family, school, and neighborhood, providing a set of consistent messages about appropriate and acceptable behavior across socializing systems.

The final category of external assets is **CONSTRUCTIVE USE OF TIME**. One of the prime characteristics of a healthy community for children is a rich array of structured opportunities for children and adolescents. Whether through schools, community organizations, or religious institutions, these structured activities contribute to the development of many of the internal and external assets.

Figure 4: The percentage of your surveyed children reporting each of the external assets, listed under four general external asset categories. This bar graph gives a visual presentation of the differences in percentages in the external assets.

Questions to consider: Where are the strengths and needs of your children with respect to external assets? That is, which assets do more of your children report, and which do fewer report? Are there some *categories* of assets that are particularly high or low in general?

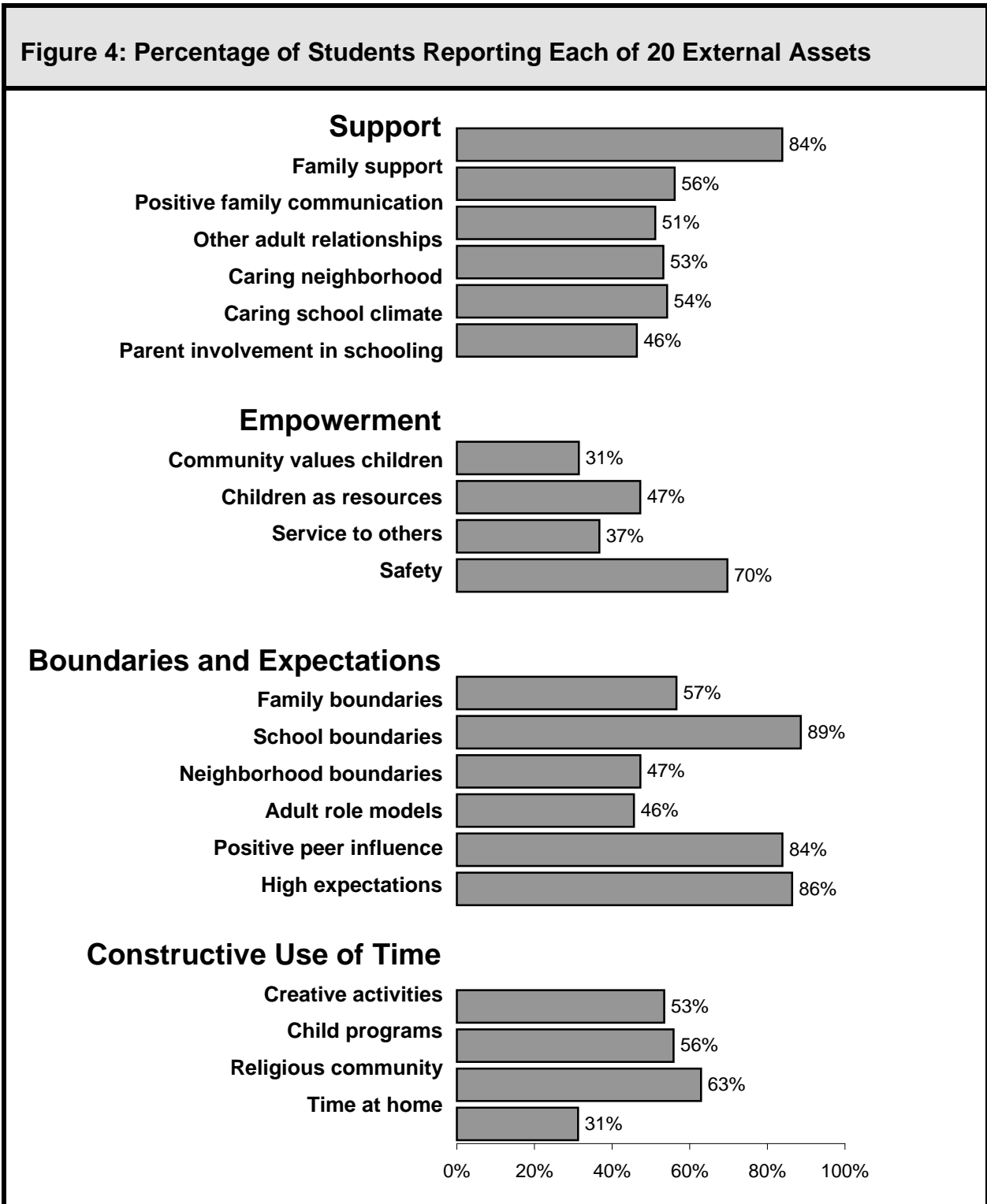


Figure 5: The percentage of your surveyed children reporting each of 20 external assets, for the total sample, by gender, and by grade. The 20 external assets are listed under the four general external asset categories. You will notice that the percentages for the total sample correspond to those presented graphically in Figure 4.

PLEASE NOTE: Percentages across rows do not add up to 100% because percentages are based on the column group membership. For example, if a value of

60% is under the 4th grade category for family support, that means that 60% of the *4th grade children you surveyed* “have” the family support asset; conversely, 40% of the *4th grade children you surveyed* do not “have” the family support asset.

Questions to consider: Are there differences between males and females? Do females report certain external assets more than males, and vice versa? Are there certain grades reporting consistently higher or lower levels of external assets?

Figure 5: Percent of Students Reporting Each External Asset, by Gender & Grade						
External Asset	Total Sample	Gender		Grade		
		M	F	4	5	6
Support						
1. Family support	84	83	86	85	84	84
2. Positive family communication	56	55	58	59	57	55
3. Other adult relationships	51	48	55	55	50	51
4. Caring neighborhood	53	49	57	53	53	53
5. Caring school climate	54	50	59	56	56	53
6. Parent involvement in schooling	46	47	46	50	45	46
Empowerment						
7. Community values children	31	27	37	34	32	30
8. Children as resources	47	43	52	46	48	48
9. Service to others	37	31	43	41	40	33
10. Safety	70	70	70	63	69	73
Boundaries and Expectations						
11. Family boundaries	57	52	61	55	54	59
12. School boundaries	89	90	88	88	90	89
13. Neighborhood boundaries	47	44	51	45	42	51
14. Adult role models	46	42	49	48	39	48
15. Positive peer influence	84	80	89	87	83	84
16. High expectations	86	86	87	85	88	87
Constructive Use of Time						
17. Creative activities	53	45	62	52	51	56
18. Child programs	56	59	53	56	60	54
19. Religious community	63	60	67	65	63	62
20. Time at home	31	26	37	33	35	29

Internal Assets

Figure 6 and Figure 7 show the overall percentage of children with each *internal* asset and the percentage by grade and gender. The internal assets are those things a community and family nurture within children so they can contribute to their own development. There are 20 internal assets divided into four categories: **Commitment to Learning, Positive Values, Social Competencies, and Positive Identity.**

COMMITMENT TO LEARNING is essential to young people in today's information-loaded society. Developing an internal intellectual curiosity and the skills to gain new knowledge and learn from experience are important characteristics for a future workforce that must adapt to rapid change.

POSITIVE VALUES involve the child's family laying the groundwork for the eventual personal ownership of a value

system by actively teaching her or him the importance of personal values. Though there are many values that parents or caregivers seek to nurture and instill in their children, the asset framework focuses on six values known to both help prevent high-risk behaviors *and* promote caring for others

SOCIAL COMPETENCIES reflect the important personal skills children need to navigate through the maze of increased choices and options they face in middle childhood. These skills also lay a foundation for the development of independence and competence in adolescence.

POSITIVE IDENTITY assets focus on children's view of themselves—their own sense of power, purpose, worth, and promise. Without these assets, young people risk feeling ineffective and without a sense of initiative and meaning.

Figure 6: The percentage of your surveyed children reporting each of the internal assets, listed under the four general internal asset categories. This bar graph gives a visual presentation of the differences in percentages in the internal assets.

Questions to consider: Where are the strengths and needs of your children with respect to internal assets? That is, which assets do more of your children report, and which do fewer report? Are there some *categories* of assets that are particularly high or low in general?

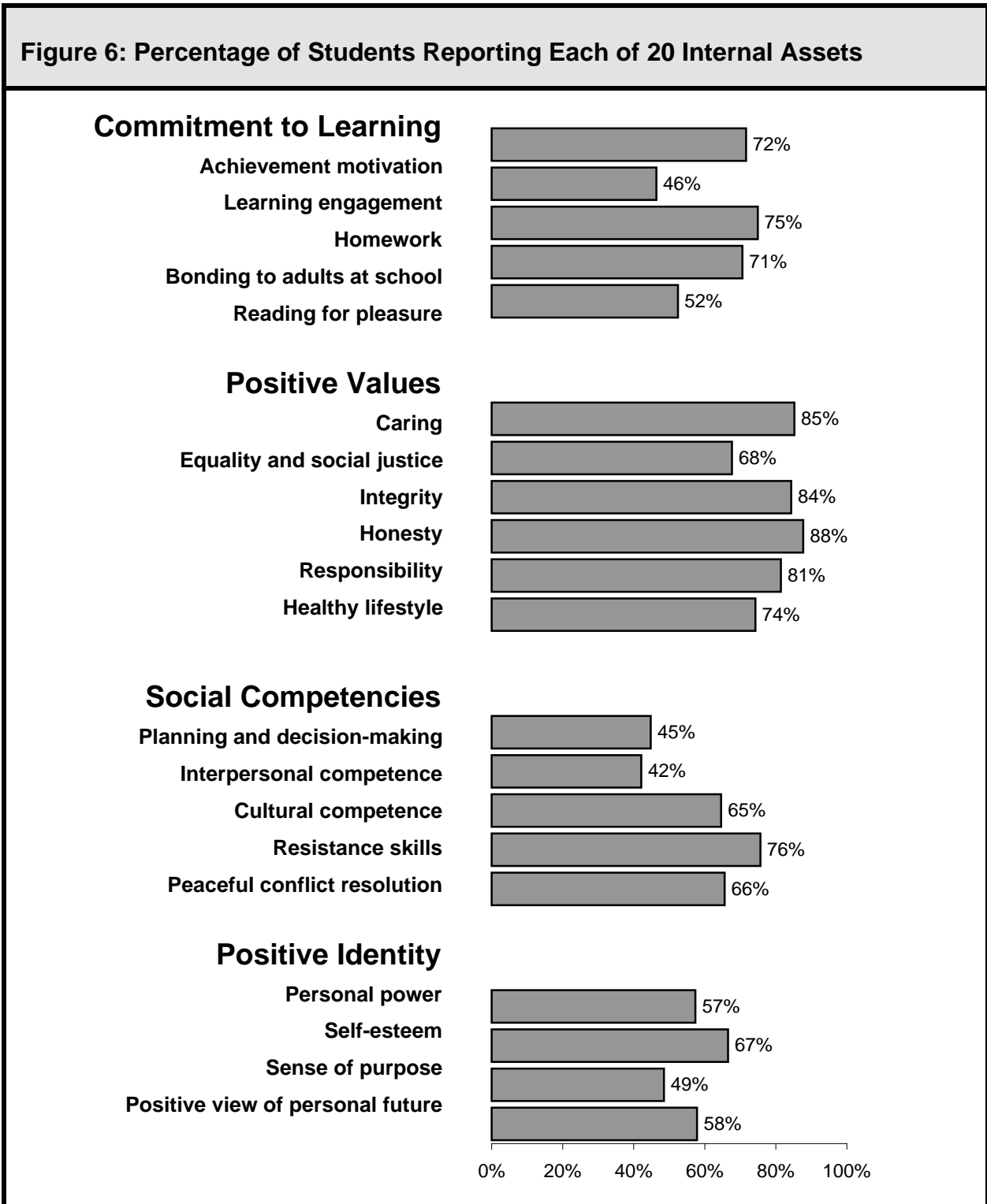


Figure 7: The percentage of your surveyed children reporting each of 20 internal assets, for the total sample, by gender, and by grade. The 20 internal assets are listed under the four general internal asset categories. You will notice that the percentages for the total sample correspond to those presented graphically in Figure 6.

PLEASE NOTE: Percentages across rows do not add up to 100% because percentages are based on the column group membership. For example, if a value of 60% is under the 4th grade category for

achievement motivation, that means that 60% of the *4th grade children you surveyed* “have” the achievement motivation asset; conversely, 40% of the *4th grade children you surveyed* do not “have” the achievement motivation asset.

Questions to consider: Are there differences between males and females? Do females report certain internal assets more than males, and vice versa? Are there certain grades reporting consistently higher or lower levels of internal assets?

Figure 7: Percent of Students Reporting Each Internal Asset, by Gender & Grade						
Internal Asset	Total Sample	Gender		Grade		
		M	F	4	5	6
Commitment to Learning						
21. Achievement motivation	72	66	78	76	75	69
22. Learning engagement	46	41	52	55	48	42
23. Homework	75	69	82	76	77	74
24. Bonding to adults at school	71	64	78	74	74	67
25. Reading for pleasure	52	45	60	56	55	50
Positive Values						
26. Caring	85	83	88	84	84	87
27. Equality and social justice	68	67	68	65	64	71
28. Integrity	84	82	87	80	83	87
29. Honesty	88	85	91	88	86	89
30. Responsibility	81	79	84	79	82	82
31. Healthy lifestyle	74	69	80	71	73	77
Social Competencies						
32. Planning and decision-making	45	39	51	47	44	44
33. Interpersonal competence	42	33	52	42	43	42
34. Cultural competence	65	61	68	62	58	70
35. Resistance skills	76	70	82	77	76	75
36. Peaceful conflict resolution	66	53	79	76	67	60
Positive Identity						
37. Personal power	57	57	58	58	57	58
38. Self-esteem	67	65	68	63	67	68
39. Sense of purpose	49	49	48	50	48	48
40. Positive view of personal future	58	56	60	54	59	60

Deficits

Assets form part of the developmental infrastructure on which healthy lives are built. Deficits are countervailing influences that can interfere with a child’s healthy development by limiting access to external assets, blocking development of internal assets, or easing the way into risky behavioral choices. Deficits are negative influences, none of which necessarily does permanent harm, but each of which makes harm more possible.

Figure 8: The percentage of your surveyed children reporting each of 3 developmental deficits, for the total sample, by gender, and by grade. Each of these deficits can interfere with the development of assets. Each also is correlated with poor developmental outcomes. Although this report advocates community-based efforts to promote Developmental Assets, communities must also focus attention

on preventing these deficits and lessening broader related deficits that make it harder for all children to thrive (e.g., poverty, racism).

PLEASE NOTE: Percentages across rows do not add up to 100% because percentages are based on the column group membership. For example, if a value of 60% is under the 4th grade category for alone at home, that means that 60% of the *4th grade children you surveyed* “have” the alone at home deficit; conversely, 40% of the *4th grade children you surveyed* do not “have” the alone at home deficit.

Questions to consider: What percentage of your children are reporting these deficits? Are there differences between males and females, or across grade levels? How do these differences in deficits relate to the differences in the assets you have already detected?

Figure 8: Percent of Students Reporting Deficits, by Gender & Grade							
Deficit	Definition	Total Sample	Gender		Grade		
			M	F	4	5	6
Alone at Home	Less than 1 hour per day of adult supervision after school	30	33	26	31	30	29
TV Overexposure	Watches TV or videos two or more hours per school day	60	63	56	54	58	64
Victim of Violence	Reports yes to “In the last year, has anyone hurt you by punching, hitting, slapping or scratching you?”	49	55	41	52	54	44

III. Portrait of Risk Behavior Patterns and Thriving Indicators

This section presents information about your children's involvement in both risky behaviors as well as positive health-promoting behaviors that suggest they are *thriving* and not merely developing adequately. While some of these indicators parallel typical behaviors measured in surveys of adolescents (e.g., helping others, valuing diversity, alcohol use), we also included other developmentally appropriate markers of thriving and risk. For example, the inclusion of "coregulation" as a thriving indicator reflects the growing importance of children helping to make decisions about matters of interest to them.

The MMW survey includes six questions about the extent to which students are involved in risk-taking behaviors. Although a single instance of a risky behavior may indicate very poor judgment, it does not necessarily indicate a serious, ongoing problem. Thus, we do not define a single occurrence of a risk behavior in the last year as a behavior problem. Two or more such instances, however, begin to reflect a **pattern** of problem behavior that, for children in middle childhood, is cause for concern. (For further discussion on the

difference between risk behaviors and risk behavior patterns, see the FAQ in Appendix A.) The risk behavior patterns studied in the survey are; use of alcohol, tobacco, marijuana, antisocial behavior, physical aggression/violence and sadness.

Note that while risk behavior patterns are measured in this survey, detailed results on how your children responded should be considered with caution. Field test results of this survey, as well as national studies of risk-taking behavior, indicate that the rate of some risk behaviors (e.g., drug use) for this age group is quite low. In cases where less than 5% of your children report engaging in any risk behavior patterns, extreme caution is advised as the number of children may be too small to enable a reliable and valid interpretation. Regardless of total sample size, these behaviors are exhibited by only a small fraction of children in grades 4-6. With the exception of violence and sadness, the risk behavior patterns we measure are rare occurrences; their explanation could have considerably more to do both with factors not measured in the MMW and by idiosyncratic experiences by individual children, rather than the overall number of assets or the effect of an intentional asset-building effort.

Figure 9: The percentage of your surveyed students reporting each of the six risk behavior patterns by gender and by grade.

conversely, 90% of the *4th grade children you surveyed did not* use alcohol more than once during the last year.

PLEASE NOTE: Percentages across rows do not add up to 100% because percentages are based on the column group membership. For example, if a value of 10% is under the 4th grade category for Alcohol, that means that 10% of the *4th grade children you surveyed* have used alcohol during the last year;

Questions to consider: What percentage of your students report engaging in risk behavior patterns? Are there differences between males and females, or across grade levels? How do these differences relate to the differences in the assets or the deficits that you have already detected?

Figure 9: Percent of Youth Reporting Risk Behavior Patterns, by Gender & Grade							
Risk Behavior Pattern	Definition	Total Sample	Gender		Grade		
			M	F	4	5	6
Alcohol	Has used alcohol more than once during the last year	8	9	6	8	11	6
Tobacco	Has smoked cigarettes more than once during the last year	2	3	2	2	2	2
Marijuana	Has used marijuana more than once during the last year	2	2	1	2	1	2
Anti-social Behavior	Has damaged property just for fun more than once during the last year	5	8	2	6	4	5
Physical Agression/ Violence	Has hit or beat someone up more than once during the last year	20	27	11	22	23	16
Sadness	Has felt sad or depressed a few or more times during the last month	44	37	51	48	48	41

Note: Less than 0.5% rounded to zero.

Figure 10: The percentage of your surveyed students reporting each of the seven thriving indicators by gender and by grade.

PLEASE NOTE: Percentages across rows do not add up to 100% because percentages are based on the column group membership. For example, if a value of 70% is under the 4th grade category for school success, that means that 70% of the *4th grade children you surveyed* “have” the school success thriving indicator;

conversely, 30% of the *4th grade children you surveyed* do not “have” the school success thriving indicator.

Questions to consider: What percentage of your students report engaging in thriving behaviors? Are there differences between males and females, or across grade levels? How do these differences relate to the differences in the assets, deficits, or risk behavior patterns that you have already detected?

Figure 10: Percent of Students Reporting Thriving Indicators, by Gender & Grade							
Thriving Indicator	Definition	Total Sample	Gender		Grade		
			M	F	4	5	6
School Success	Child gets mostly "A's, or Outstanding/ Excellent marks" or mostly "B's, or Good/ Above Average marks."	71	69	74	79	71	69
Helps Others	Child helps friends, neighbors, or others on one or more days per week.	74	69	80	74	78	73
Values Diversity	Child values having diverse friends and gets along well with people who are of a different race or culture than the child.	83	80	86	75	77	90
Delays Gratification	Child can wait for a larger reward later, rather than needing to obtain a smaller reward immediately.	48	48	49	51	48	48
Coregulation	Child often helps parents make decisions about things the child cares about.	88	88	88	84	90	88
Coping	Child regularly uses active coping skills to deal with problems.	46	42	51	39	44	51
Life Satisfaction	Child is satisfied with her or his life.	77	76	77	77	75	78

IV. The Power of Developmental Assets in Middle Childhood

Fortunately, the choices young people make about how to act, what to do, and who to be are not made simply by chance. Their decisions are made on the basis of a web of external and internal influences, including the Developmental Assets. The figures in this section reflect how the assets your children experience influence the choices they make regarding risk behavior patterns and thriving indicators.

Search Institute's studies with adolescents have consistently shown that young people who experience more of the Developmental Assets are less likely to report engaging in patterns of risky behavior and more likely to report indicators of thriving. In other words, the more assets a young person experiences, the more likely he or she will

choose a healthy lifestyle. This has been consistent regardless of age, race, gender, family economics, or region of the country.

Early research looking at the relation between assets and risk behavior patterns among students in 4th – 6th grades indicates that the differences across asset groups may be small and not as striking as it is for adolescents (6th – 12th graders). If your data show small changes in risk behaviors across asset groups, it is most likely due to two patterns seen in our middle childhood data to date: a) children in middle childhood tend to report experiencing more assets than do adolescents (see page 9 for further discussion of this issue); and b) far fewer children in middle childhood report engaging in risk behaviors than do adolescents. Each of these factors, singly or together, contributes to more modest changes across asset groups.

Figure 11: Average number of risk behavior patterns by asset levels. This bar graph illustrates the effect of assets on risk behavior patterns among your students. Your children were first grouped by the total number of assets each reported (0-10, 11-20, 21-30, 31-40), and then the average number of the 6 risk behavior

patterns was calculated for each group.

Questions to consider: What is the general pattern of risk-taking as you move across asset levels? (Does the number of risk behavior patterns decrease as the number of assets increases? If not, what are possible explanations?)

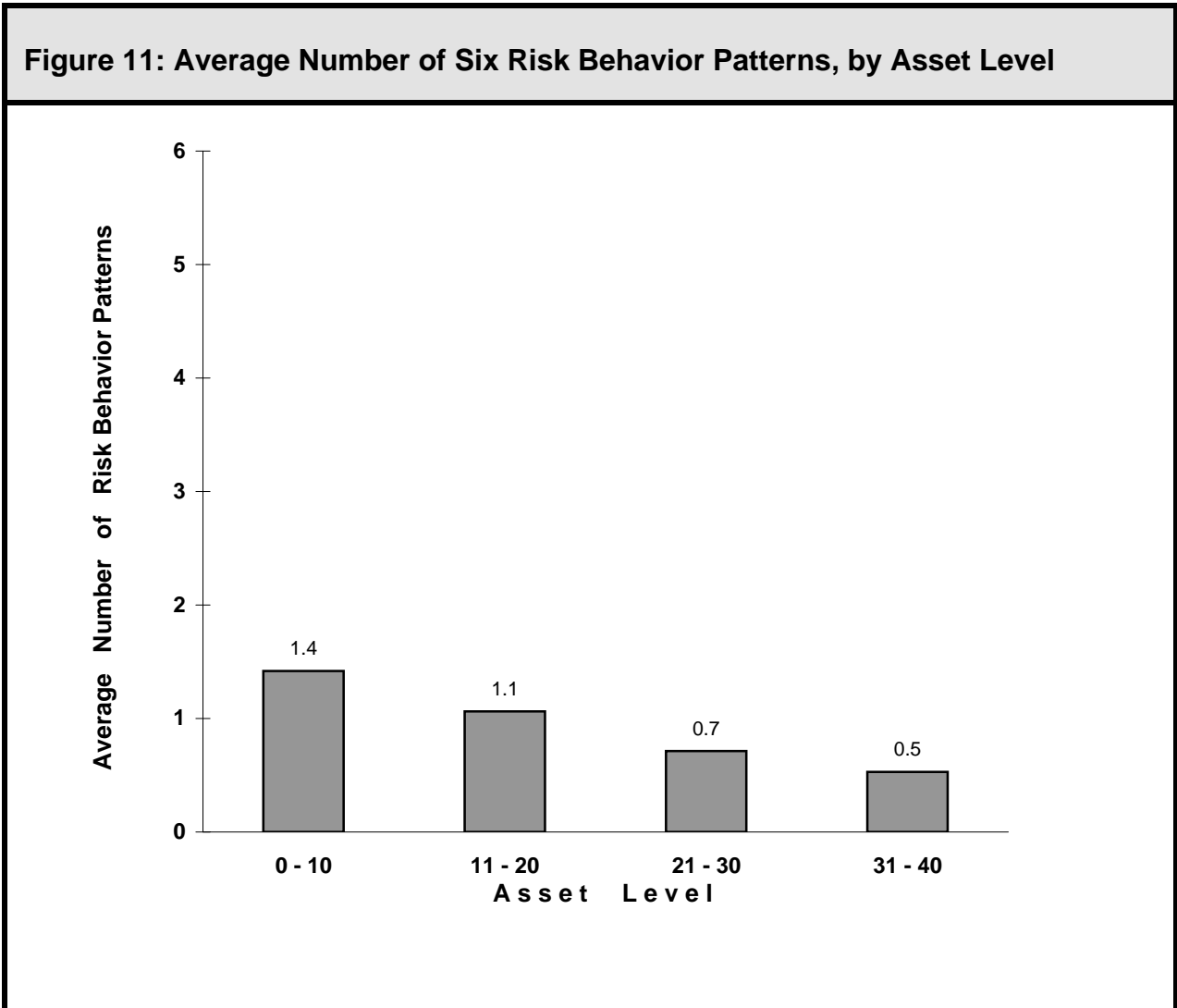


Figure 12: The protective implications of Developmental Assets—the percentage of your surveyed children reporting each of six risk behavior patterns. These findings are reported for the total sample and by asset level. This table presents the risk behavior patterns and their definitions within the survey, together with the percentage of the total sample reporting each. In addition, percentages are reported by asset level (0-10, 11-20, 21-30, 31-40). As noted on page 18, caution is advised when interpreting instances where fewer than 5% of the sample report engaging in a particular risk behavior pattern.

PLEASE NOTE: Percentages across rows do not add up to 100% because percentages are based on the column group membership. For example, if a value of 10% is under the 0 to 10 category for Alcohol, that means that 10% of your children *who report 0 to 10 assets* used alcohol more than once during the last year; conversely, 90% of your children *who report 0 to 10 assets* did not use alcohol more than once during the last year.

Questions to consider: What is the pattern of risk behaviors as you move across asset levels? Is the pattern consistent with what you would expect?

Figure 12: Percent of Students Reporting Risk Behavior Patterns, by Asset Level						
Risk Behavior Pattern	Definition	Total Sample	Number of Assets			
			0 - 10	11 - 20	21 - 30	31 - 40
Alcohol	Has used alcohol more than once during the last year	8	19	13	6	2
Tobacco	Has smoked cigarettes more than once during the last year	2	10	4	1	1
Marijuana	Has used marijuana more than once during the last year	2	7	2	1	0
Anti-social Behavior	Has damaged property just for fun more than once during the last year	5	21	7	3	1
Physical Agression/ Violence	Has hit or beat someone up more than once during the last year	20	45	31	15	10
Sadness	Has felt sad or depressed a few or more times during the last month	44	43	50	45	39

Note: Less than 0.5% rounded to zero.

Figure 13: Average number of 7 thriving indicators by asset level. Just as assets protect children against engaging in risky behaviors, they also promote engaging in positive, developmentally appropriate behaviors. As this bar graph shows, children with more assets generally report

higher levels on the seven thriving indicators.

Questions to consider: Do assets make a difference for your children? Do your children follow the typical pattern of increasing levels of thriving indicators paired with higher levels of assets?

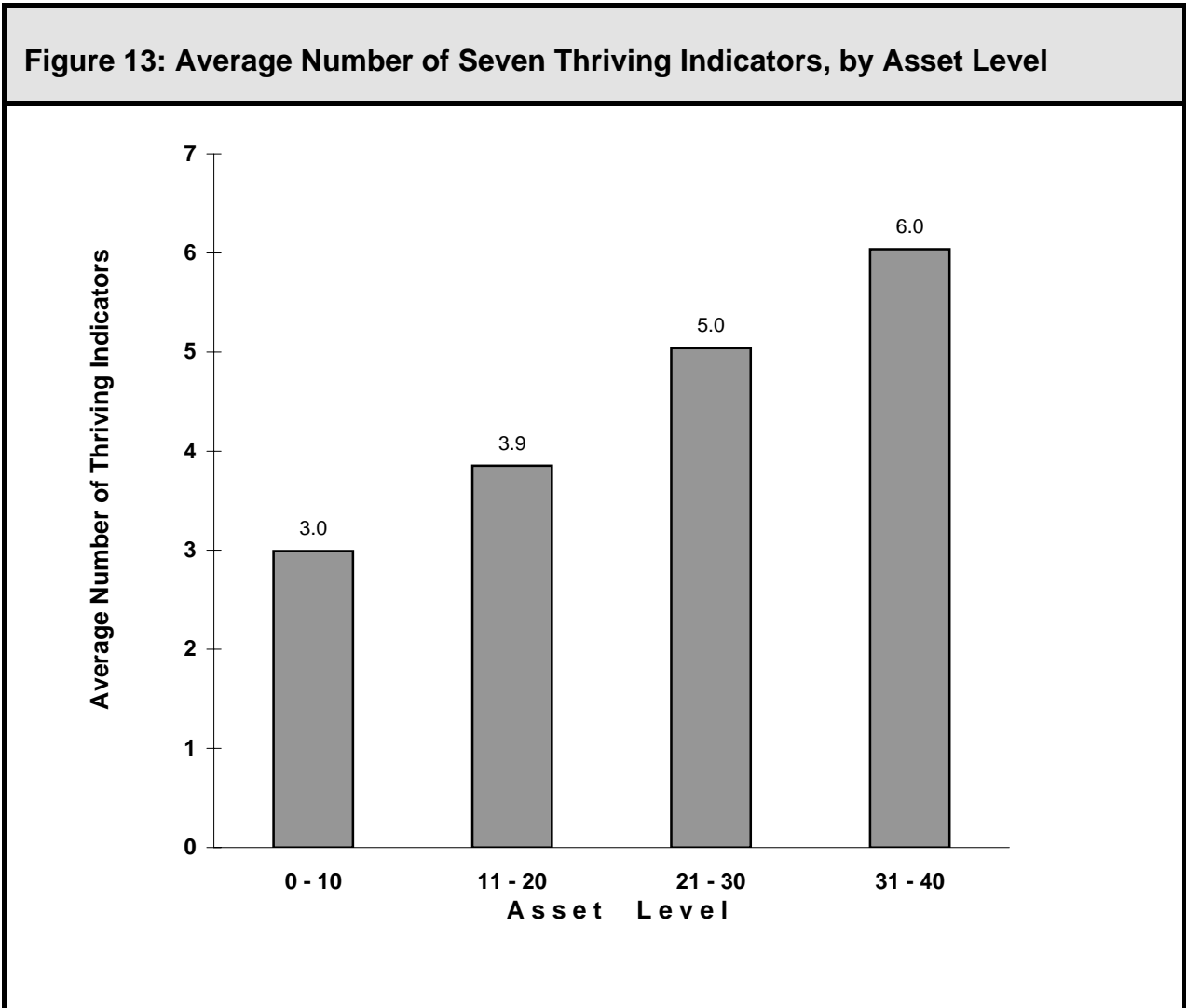


Figure 14: The positive implications of Developmental Assets—the percentage of your surveyed children reporting each of seven thriving indicators. These findings are reported for the total sample and by asset level. This table presents the thriving indicators and their definitions within the survey, together with the percentage of the total sample reporting each. In addition, percentages are reported by asset level (0-10, 11-20, 21-30, 31-40).

PLEASE NOTE: Percentages across rows do not add up to 100% because

percentages are based on the column group membership. For example, if a value of 70% is under the 0 to 10 category for school success, that means that 70% of your children *who report 0 to 10 assets* “have” the school success thriving indicator; conversely, 30% of your children *who report 0 to 10 assets* do not “have” the school success thriving indicator.

Questions to consider: What is the pattern of thriving indicators as you move across asset levels? Is the pattern consistent with what you would expect?

Figure 14: Percent of Students Reporting Thriving Indicators, by Asset Level						
Thriving Indicator	Definition	Total Sample	Number of Assets			
			0 - 10	11 - 20	21 - 30	31 - 40
School Success	Child gets mostly "A's, or Outstanding/ Excellent marks" or mostly "B's, or Good/ Above Average marks."	71	42	62	75	85
Helps Others	Child helps friends, neighbors, or others on one or more days per week.	74	31	56	77	95
Values Diversity	Child values having diverse friends and gets along well with people who are of a different race or culture than the child.	83	64	70	86	95
Delays Gratification	Child can wait for a larger reward later, rather than needing to obtain a smaller reward immediately.	48	18	28	49	72
Coregulation	Child often helps parents make decisions about things the child cares about.	88	86	83	89	92
Coping	Child regularly uses active coping skills to deal with problems.	46	19	24	46	72
Life Satisfaction	Child is satisfied with her or his life.	77	37	62	81	93

Note: Less than 0.5% rounded to zero.

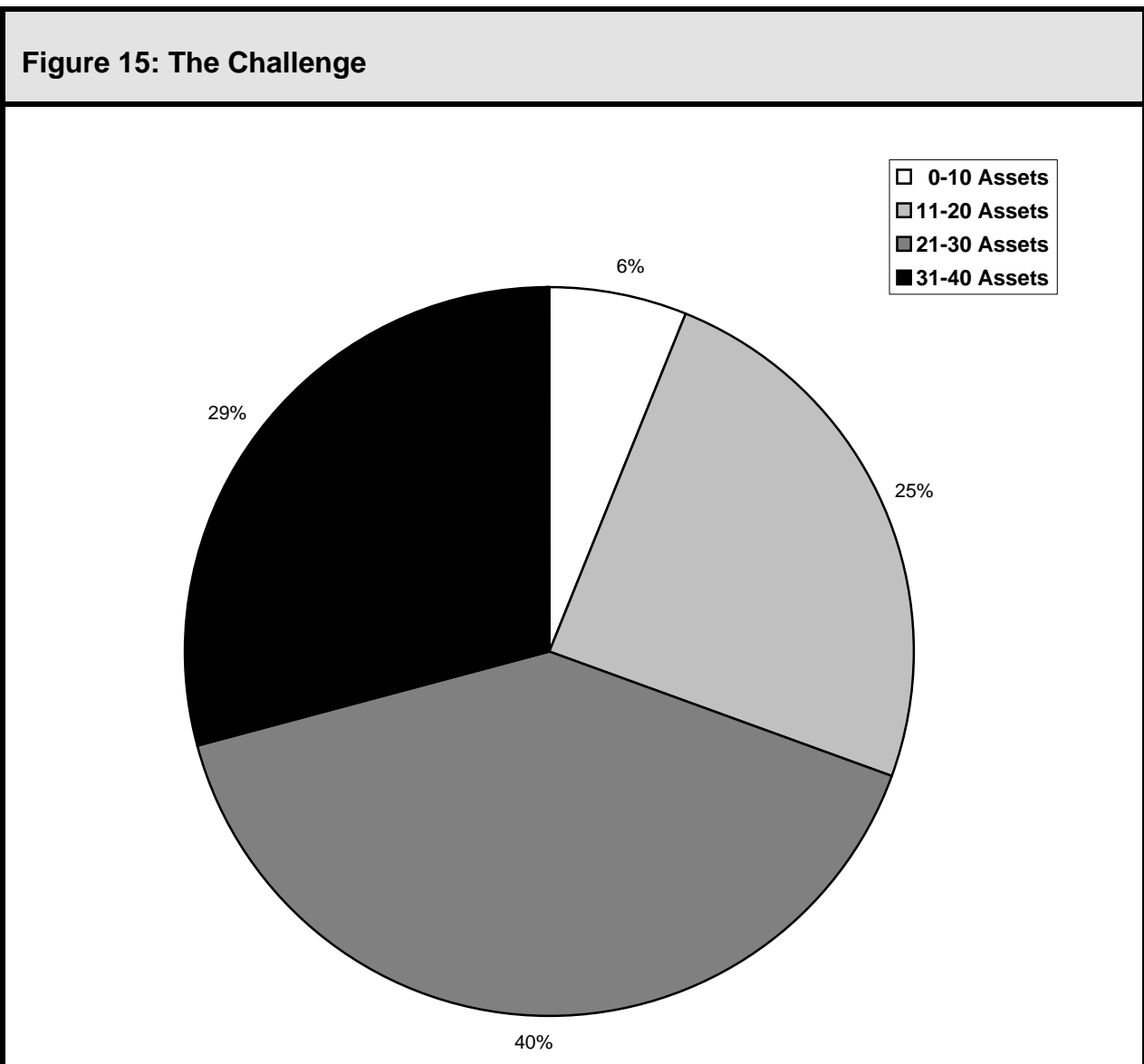
V. From Awareness to Action

The Challenge

In all communities across the country, Developmental Assets are too fragile. Ideally, a community should strive to ensure that all children and youth experience the highest level of Developmental Assets (i.e., 31-40 assets). Though our field tests as well as past research suggest that 4th – 6th graders have more assets than do adolescents, there are still too many of these 4th – 6th graders who do not have enough assets. Since studies of children across time indicate that the most typical path for students in middle and high school

is for assets to decrease overall, anything we can do to build assets during the upper-elementary years will aid in keeping young people on developmentally healthy trajectories.

Figure 15. Proportion of your children reporting 0-10, 11-20, 21-30, and 31-40 assets. A majority of your children may have more than half the assets, but examine the proportion that experience half or fewer of the assets. Which actions can your community take to ensure that these children do not continue experiencing half or fewer of these 40 assets as they move across adolescence?



Unless we are aware of the importance of Developmental Assets in the lives of children and are intentional in our actions and behaviors to promote healthy development, we will see too many young people who are susceptible to risky behaviors and negative pressure, drawn to less desirable sources of belonging, and ill-equipped to become healthy adolescents and eventually the next generation of parents, workers, leaders, and citizens. Why are we in this situation? A number of social forces likely are at work, including:

- high levels of parental absence in the lives of children;
- adult silence about boundaries and values;
- the fragmentation of many socializing systems;
- age segregation and the general disengagement of the public from building meaningful connections with children;
- the isolation of people of all ages within neighborhoods;
- over-exposure to the mass media;
- barriers to healthy development such as poverty, lack of access to programs and services, and families ill-equipped to care for their children;
- fear of involvement by adults and a sense that children and youth are the responsibility of "someone else"; and
- the too-common occurrence of schools, religious institutions, and other youth-serving organizations not being adequately equipped to be places of support, caring, and positive challenge.

This combination of factors suggests, among other things, that we are losing our capacity to be communities in which caring, connectedness, and a shared sense of purpose are common place and a commitment to children dominates public and private life.

Promoting Developmental Assets

Developmental Assets are cumulative or additive—the more, the better. Search

Institute's research has consistently shown that the more assets young people have, the less likely they are to be involved in risky behavior patterns. And, multiple forms of thriving, such as school success and helping others, increase as assets increase. Given the power of the Developmental Assets and the current too-low levels of assets among our society's children, a commitment to asset building should become a top priority. While many well-intentioned child and youth development efforts focus on the consequences of asset depletion, unless we place major energy into strengthening the asset foundation for children and youth, the problems we now see will persist—and likely increase.

How do we begin the work of strengthening the Developmental Assets for all young people? Through its work with communities across the country, Search Institute has identified six principles to help guide the process.²

- **All young people need Developmental Assets:** While it is crucial to pay special attention to those who have the least (economically, educationally, emotionally), **all** children and adolescents will benefit from having more assets than they now have.
- **Everyone can build assets:** Asset development requires positive messages across a community. All adults, youth, and children play a role.
- **It's an ongoing process:** Asset development starts when a child is born and continues through high school and beyond.
- **Relationships are key:** A central key to asset development is strong relationships between adults and young people, young people and their peers, and teenagers and children.

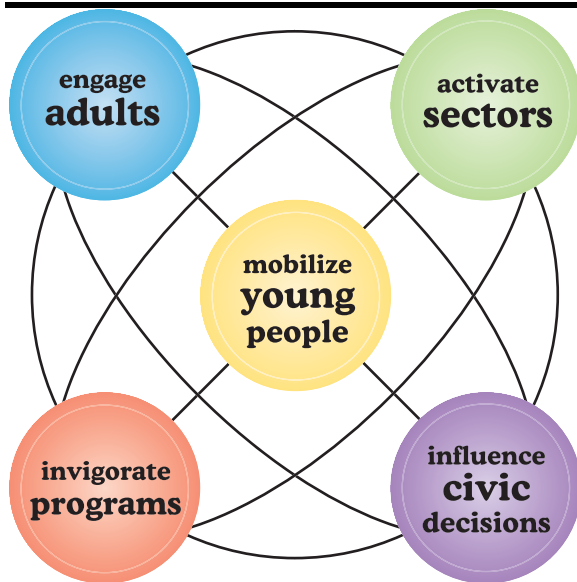
² Adapted from *Uniting Communities for Youth: Mobilizing All Sectors to Create a Positive Future* by Dr. Peter L. Benson, Search Institute, 1995.

- **Consistent messages:** Asset building requires consistent, positive messages about what is important.
- **Redundancy:** Young people need to hear the same positive messages and feel support over and over again, from many different people.

Taking Action: Search Institute’s Five Action Strategies

At Search Institute, we have studied many community change models and have observed hundreds of community initiatives that are using the framework of Developmental Assets to guide their work. We have identified five action strategies (as depicted in Figure 16) that can transform communities into more developmentally attentive places; places that are more intentional in their efforts to foster the healthy development of their children and adolescents.

Figure 16. Search Institute’s Five Action Strategies



These general strategies guide a community initiative to:

1. Engage adults. Engage adults from all walks of life to develop sustained, strength-building relationships with children and

adolescents, both within families and in neighborhoods.

- ❖ *Young people need the adults in their lives to acknowledge them, affirm them and connect with them. They need these things from the adults who are not paid to work with them, as well as the professionals who are.*
- ❖ *Engaging parents as asset builders—and affirming the many ways they already build assets—is particularly important, given their central role in children’s lives.*

2. Mobilize young people. Mobilize young people to use their power as asset builders and change agents.

- ❖ *Many youth feel devalued by adults. And most report their community does not provide useful roles for young people. It should become normative in all settings where children and youth are involved to seek their input and advice, to make decisions with them and to treat them as responsible, competent allies in all asset-building efforts.*
- ❖ *It is also important to help young people tap their own power to build assets for themselves, their peers and younger children.*

3. Activate sectors. Activate all sectors of the community—such as schools, congregations, children and youth, businesses, human services, and health-care organizations—to create an asset-building culture and to contribute fully to young people’s healthy development.

- ❖ *Young people are customers, employees, patients, participants—members of their community in many of the same ways adults are. All sectors have opportunities to examine the ways they come in contact with young people, and identify ways they can support their healthy development.*

4. Invigorate programs. Invigorate, expand, and enhance programs to become more asset rich and to be available to and accessed by all children and youth.

- ❖ *Though much asset building occurs in daily, informal interactions, programs young people take part in throughout their community must also become more intentional about asset building. Opportunities for training, technical assistance, and networking should be made available in these settings.*

5. Influence civic decisions. Influence decision makers and opinion leaders to leverage financial, media and policy resources in support of this positive transformation of communities and society.

- ❖ *Community-wide policies, messages and priorities not only shape people's perceptions of youth, but they also can motivate and support individuals, organizations, and sectors to make asset building an ongoing priority.*

The Developmental Assets framework for middle childhood, like the foundational framework for adolescence from which it is derived and with which it is fully aligned, is designed to provide a focus for these strategies. Collectively, efforts to build young people's Developmental Assets through these five action strategies are intended to have a powerful positive impact on young people's well-being, as well as on families, schools and other organizations, programs, policies, neighborhoods, and a community's overall quality of life.

There is no single model for how a community-wide, asset-building initiative is launched and sustained. We believe that each community brings a unique mix of strengths, history and existing efforts into the planning and implementation of their initiative. However, certain dynamics appear essential.

- **Cultivate a Shared Vision**—Invite community members to articulate and keep alive a shared vision for an asset-rich community. The information in this report can help you develop a shared community-wide vision centered on increasing the asset base for all children and adolescents. Know that reaching

this target cannot be rushed or done with a single new idea or program. Rather, it will take long-term commitment, multiple and coordinated changes, and a passion for the vision that will sustain your efforts.

- **Recruit and Network Champions**—Nurture relationships with people who have the passion to spread the word and help make the vision a reality. Create opportunities for these champions to learn from, support, and inspire each other.
- **Communicate**—Distribute information, make presentations, and tap the media to raise awareness about asset building and local efforts. Information from this survey can help you share with your community what young people experience. Emphasize the ability of all community members—including young people—to build assets.
- **Strengthen Capacity**—Provide or facilitate training, technical assistance, coaching, tools, or other resources that help individuals and organizations in their asset-building efforts.
- **Reflect, Learn, and Celebrate**—Reflect on and learn from current progress and challenges. Many people, places and programs already build assets. Highlight and honor existing and new asset-building efforts in the community.
- **Manage and Coordinate**—Manage and coordinate schedules, budgets and other administrative tasks, as needed.

Asset-building communities mobilize people, organizations, institutions, and systems to take action around a shared understanding of positive development. Figure 17 lists 36 characteristics of asset-building communities. Ultimately, rebuilding and strengthening the developmental infrastructure in a community is not a program run by professionals. It is a movement that creates a community-wide

sense of common purpose. It places residents and their leaders on the same team moving in the same direction, and creates a culture in which all residents are expected by virtue of their membership in the community, to promote the positive development of children and youth.

To learn more about asset-building communities across North America, **visit our web site at: www.search-institute.org/communities/**

Figure 17: Characteristics of Asset-Building Communities

<p style="text-align: center;">Engage Adults</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A vision rooted in Developmental Assets is communicated several times a year to all residents. 2. All residents understand their personal capacity to promote Developmental Assets. 3. Most residents take personal responsibility. 4. Most residents take action. 5. New residents are quickly socialized to the community vision. 6. A common core of values is named. 7. Adults model and articulate their values. 8. A common core of boundaries is named. 9. Adults model and articulate these boundaries. 10. Community programs assist adults—particularly parents—to personally reclaim Developmental Assets. 11. Most adults establish sustained relationships with children and adolescents.
<p style="text-align: center;">Mobilize Young People</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 12. Children and teenagers know the Developmental Assets. 13. Most youth take action to promote assets for themselves and for their peers. 14. Youth have many opportunities to lead, make decisions, and give input; youth are provided useful roles in community life. Youth then are actors in the reclaiming of community rather than just objects of programs. 15. All children and teenagers frequently engage in service to others. Much of this “work” is done with adults; a premium is placed on processing the experiences (i.e., service learning) 16. Most adolescents establish sustained relationships with younger children.
<p style="text-align: center;">Activate Sectors</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 17. Families are supported, taught, and equipped to elevate asset building to top priority. 18. Neighbors and community residents build caring relationships with youth and express this caring through dialogue, listening, commending positive behavior, acknowledging their presence, enjoying their company, and involving them in decision making. They know neighborhood children and adolescents by name and take time to get to know them. 19. Businesses that employ teenagers address the assets of support, boundaries, values, and social competencies. Employers also develop family-friendly policies and provide mechanisms for employees to build relationships with youth ask you about homework. 20. Religious institutions mobilize their capacity for intergenerational relationships, educating and supporting parents, structured time use, values development, and service to the community. They focus on both their own members and the larger community. 21. Schools—both elementary and secondary—place priority on becoming caring environments for all students, providing challenging and engaging curricula for all students, providing opportunities for nurturing values deemed crucial by the community, expanding and strengthening co-curricular activities, and using their connections with parents to reinforce the importance of family attention to assets.

Figure 17: Characteristics of Asset-Building Communities (Cont'd)

<p style="text-align: center;">Invigorate Programs</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 22. Youth organizations and other service providers train leaders and volunteers in asset-building strategies and provide meaningful opportunities for youth to serve their community and build citizenship and leadership skills. 23. The community invests in expanding and strengthening its systems of clubs, teams, and organizations. 24. Virtually all 7- to 18-year-olds are involved in one or more clubs, teams, or other youth-serving organizations that view building assets as central to their mission. 25. All professionals (e.g., day care providers, teachers, social workers, youth ministers) and volunteers (e.g., coaches, mentors) who work with youth receive training in asset building. 26. Current programs which intentionally build assets, like peer helping, mentoring, and service learning, are elevated to top priority and expanded to reach a higher number of youth.
<p style="text-align: center;">Influence Civic Decisions</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 27. Local government—through policy, influence, training, and resource allocation—moves asset development and community-wide cooperation to top priorities for planning, policies, and funding allocations within the municipality. 28. The media (print, radio, television) repeatedly communicate the community's vision, support local mobilization efforts, and provide forums for sharing innovative actions taken by individuals and organizations. 29. The community prizes cultural strengths and traditions. Particularly for youth of color, this heritage includes the concept of elders, the primacy of intergenerational relationships, respect for figures of authority, the value of caring for others, and a wisdom about what matters. Being in touch with and affirming these strengths represents an important dimension of cultural competence, in addition to knowledge and contact with cultures beyond one's own. 30. Teenagers have safe places "to hang". 31. All children receive frequent expressions of support in both informal public settings and in places where youth gather. 32. The community celebrates the individuals and systems that take innovative action; youth professionals and volunteers have high status in the life of the community. 33. The community-wide commitment to asset building is long-term and inclusive. 34. The community pays particular attention to helping girls develop assertiveness skills, a sense of personal control and mastery and healthy self-concept. 35. The community pays particular attention to helping boys develop and express compassion and caring. 36. Local foundations and other funders invest in asset-building strategies.

Appendices

There are five appendices included in this report.

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- Appendix A** Frequently Asked Questions about Your Survey Report

- Appendix B** Survey Item Percentages by Total Sample, Gender, and Grade

- Appendix C** Item Mapping to Assets, Deficits, Risk Behavior Patterns, and Thriving Indicators

- Appendix D** Bibliography of the Theory and Research on Search Institute's Framework of Developmental Assets

- Appendix E** Search Institute Asset-Promoting Print and Video Resources

Appendix A

Frequently Asked Questions about Your Survey Report

What is the history behind the *Me and My World* survey?

In the mid-1990s, Search Institute began conceptualizing Developmental Assets for children below 6th grade, based on its asset framework for adolescents (Leffert, Benson, & Roehlkepartain, 1997). From 2000 through 2003, Search Institute received generous support from the Donald W. Reynolds Foundation to more deeply examine the role of Developmental Assets in the first decade of life. This resulted in a newly created asset framework for children in grades 4-6 as well as a survey to measure these assets, using the adolescent framework and survey, and our prior work on assets for children, as guides. We concluded that while many of the underlying ideas present in the adolescent framework also seemed to be relevant for younger children, some modification was necessary to adequately reflect the unique developmental processes occurring during these middle childhood years.

How is the *Me and My World* survey different than the *Search Institute Profiles of Student Life: Attitudes & Behaviors* survey for adolescents?

The adolescent survey has been taken by more than 1.5 million students, and has given a powerful voice to teenagers by allowing them to report on how they view their relationships with adults, their communities, and their own competencies and skills. This information has then been used to help reshape and rebuild communities to better promote positive youth development. The goal for the MMW is to provide a voice for younger students to describe the positive experiences in their lives.

However, the 4th – 6th grade survey differs in several important respects from the adolescent survey. Since it was designed for use by younger children, it has a 4th grade reading level (Flesch Grade Level of 4.4). Moreover, although some 4th – 6th graders do engage in risk behavior patterns, most high-risk behavior is typically much less common than it is during adolescence, and so the MMW includes fewer measures of risk behavior patterns than does the similar survey for adolescents. Finally, the adolescent survey was originally designed more for public communication purposes than as a research instrument, whereas the MMW is intended to serve both communication and research purposes. Thus, more constructs are measured at acceptable levels of statistical reliability in the MMW than is the case in the adolescent survey.

What is the difference between the definitions of risk behaviors and risk behavior patterns for children and adolescence, and why are risk behaviors not reported in the MMW report, like they are in the A & B adolescent report?

Risk behaviors, on either the A&B or the MMW, are unhealthy actions done just once (MMW) or twice (A&B) by the child or adolescent in the specified time period. Risk behavior **patterns**, on the other hand, exemplify higher levels of these same unhealthy actions, i.e., two or more times in middle childhood or three or more times in adolescence during the relevant time period. We recognize that during middle childhood, just as in adolescence, children and youth sometimes engage in an isolated incidence of behavior that is bad for them. While troubling, this is not necessarily indicative of a more serious pattern of high risk behavior. So we distinguish behaviors and patterns for each developmental level, on their respective surveys. The major difference is that we apply a more stringent criterion at the middle childhood level (i.e., two or

more times versus three or more times for adolescents). We reason that adolescents, in their more sophisticated exploration and search for personal identity, on average may be able to engage in an occasional high risk behavior with less deleterious impact, both because experimentation is part of their work in identity development, and because they typically have greater skills for minimizing negative consequences or dealing with them. For younger children, however, we reason that anything more than one instance of such risk behaviors in the last year is cause for concern. Engaging in risk behaviors multiple times over a given period contributes to setting children on an adverse developmental path that has greater long-term consequences than would be the case for adolescents who participate in a similar frequency of risk behaviors.

Why did Search Institute decide to include risk behavior questions on the MMW given that risk behaviors are less prevalent for children at this age?

Market research conducted prior to the development phase of the MMW indicated that a majority of school personnel and administrators preferred to track risk behavior data. Although there are only a few national reports to date on the prevalence of these risk behaviors for 4th and 5th graders, smaller studies do indeed suggest that anywhere from a few to 20 percent may have experimented with tobacco or alcohol, depending on the sample^{3,4}. Moreover, the MMW includes students in 6th grade, a time at which some studies suggest that 40% of the sample may be experimenting with alcohol and other drugs⁵. Since indications of trend changes may be of interest to your school or community (as it is in research), examination of reported risk behaviors among 4th and 5th graders surveyed over multiple years may tell you whether the age of initial experimentation is lowering.

3 Andrews, J.A., Tildesley, E., Hops, H., Duncan, S.C., & Severson, H.H. (2003). Elementary school age children's future intentions and use of substances. *Journal of Clinical Child and Adolescent Psychology*, 32, 556-567.

4 Bush, P.J., & Iannotti, R.J. (1992). Elementary school children's use of alcohol, cigarettes and marijuana and classmates' attribution of socialization. *Drug & Alcohol Dependence*, 30, 275-287.

5 Andrews, J.A., Tildesley, E., Hops, H., Duncan, S.C., & Severson, H.H. (2003). Elementary school age children's future intentions and use of substances. *Journal of Clinical Child and Adolescent Psychology*, 32, 556-567.

Appendix B

Survey Item Percentages by Total Sample, Gender, and Grade

Survey Item	Total (%)	Gender (%)		Grade (%)		
		M	F	4	5	6
1. Age						
8	0	0	0	0	0	0
9	8	7	8	32	0	0
10	24	23	26	64	36	0
11	34	34	34	3	61	35
12	32	33	31	0	3	62
13 or older	1	2	1	0	0	3
2. Grade in school						
4th	23	23	24	100	0	0
5th	26	26	27	0	100	0
6th	50	50	50	0	0	100
3. Gender						
Boy	51	100	0	51	51	52
Girl	49	0	100	49	49	48
4. Race / ethnicity						
American Indian or Alaska Native	3	3	3	3	3	3
Asian	1	1	1	0	0	2
Black or African American	2	2	2	2	1	2
Hispanic or Latino/Latina	6	6	6	4	1	9
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	0	0	1	0	0	1
White	75	75	75	77	85	69
Other	4	4	3	5	2	4
5. Sample Page - Appendix B						
Sometimes I live with my mom and sometimes with my dad	13	14	12	15	16	12
I live with one parent	9	9	10	8	8	10
I live with one birth parent and one step-parent	11	10	12	9	9	13
I live with foster parents	0	0	0	1	0	0
I live with my grandparents or other adult relatives who take care of me	1	1	2	1	1	1
Other	4	5	3	7	3	4
How much do you agree or disagree?						
6. I care about other people's feelings						
Strongly Disagree	1	1	0	1	1	1
Disagree	1	2	1	1	1	1
Not Sure	12	15	8	16	12	10
Agree	52	55	48	45	52	54
Strongly Agree	34	27	42	37	34	33
Missing Data	0	0	0	0	0	0
7. I get along well with people who aren't the same race or culture as me						
Strongly Disagree	1	2	1	2	2	1
Disagree	2	3	2	3	4	2
Not Sure	13	14	12	21	18	7
Agree	34	35	33	34	35	33
Strongly Agree	49	44	53	39	41	58
Missing Data	1	1	0	1	0	0
8. Most of the time, when I have a big job to do, I think about the things I need to do to get it done						
Strongly Disagree	3	3	2	2	4	2
Disagree	6	7	5	7	7	5
Not Sure	22	25	19	23	20	23
Agree	45	42	48	37	46	48
Strongly Agree	24	21	26	29	23	21
Missing Data	1	1	1	1	0	1

Appendix C

Item Mapping to Assets, Deficits, Risk Behavior Patterns, and Thriving Indicators

EXTERNAL ASSETS

Support Assets	Question #	Question Text
Family support	39. 40. 41.	I get along well with my parents. My parents give me help and support. My parents let me know in lots of ways that they love me.
Positive family communication	42. 43.	If I were really worried about something, I would talk to my parents about it. It's easy to talk with my parents, even about things we don't agree on.
Other adult relationships	88. 89. 90.	Other than your family, think about other adults you have known for a long time. These could be neighbors, teachers, coaches, parents of friends. How many of the adults you've known for a long time... do you really like spending time with? do you get to talk with a lot? talk with you so you really get to know each other?
Caring neighborhood	128. 129.	Adults in my neighborhood care about me. Adults in my neighborhood know my name.
Caring school climate <u>Teachers</u> <u>Peers</u>	96. 98. 101. 97. 100.	My teachers really care about me. My teachers make me feel good about what I do at school. My teachers tell me I can do things well. The kids in my class are friendly to me. The kids in my class treat me with respect.
Parent involvement in schooling	71. 72. 73. 74. 75.	How often does one of your parents...? help you with your schoolwork? talk to you about what you are doing in school? ask you about homework? go to meetings or events at your school? talk with you about how doing well in school can help you in the future?

Sample Page - Appendix C

Appendix D

Bibliography of the Theory and Research on Search Institute's Framework of Developmental Assets

(*indicates peer-reviewed journal)

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Appendix E

Search Institute Asset-Promoting Print and Video Resources

Building Assets is Elementary: Group Activities for Helping Kids Ages 8-12 Succeed

This activity book offers practical, easy, fun strategies for building assets with groups of children in grades 4-6. Activities are flexible so group leaders can easily adapt them to any classroom or youth group setting.

Coming into Their Own: How Developmental Assets Promote Positive Growth in Middle Childhood

Children in middle childhood are approaching the cusp of early adolescence and beginning the transition toward emerging selfhood and self-regulation—they are Coming into Their Own. This new resource provides the latest research findings from studies on development of children grades 4-6 and fascinating learnings from around the world about what truly can help kids at this age grow up well and healthy.

Great Places to Learn: How Asset-Building Schools Help Students Succeed

Rooted in many years of research about the effectiveness of assets, this foundational book shines as a powerful, positive guide to infusing assets into any school community. A popular Search Institute resource for educators.

"You Have to Live It" Building Developmental Assets in School Communities

Winner of The Association of Educational Publisher's 2000 Distinguished Achievement Award, this video lets you see and hear for yourself how schools around North America are building assets for and with students from elementary to the high school level.

Ideas That Cook: Activities for Asset Builders in School Communities

Just as reading a great recipe can conjure up visions of a great meal, so too can this collection of great real-life activities inspire teachers and youth workers to "cook up" lasting good results with kids.

More Than Just a Place To Go *video*

Based on three different out-of-school programs, this video shows how to intentionally create and foster a developmentally-attentive environment, staff, and program for young people. (Call for information about More Than A Place To Go *book* and *training*.)

Powerful Teaching: Developmental Assets in Curriculum and Instruction

In response to educators' requests to do more with Developmental Assets, Search Institute has designed this resource that exclusively deals with the core of everyday classroom teaching and learning. Powerful Teaching shows education professionals how to infuse the assets into their existing curriculum and instruction without starting a new program.

Building Developmental Assets in School Communities training

Learn how to help your students succeed both academically and developmentally in this popular training.

Deepening Developmental Assets in School Communities training

Engage your whole school in asset building and climate improvement efforts with this training. It's the next step after the Building Developmental Assets in School Communities training.

What's Up With Our Kids? Survey Data Presentation

Release your *Me and My World* survey results as Search Institute presents your community or school's data.

Assets in Action: A Handbook for Making Communities Better Places to Grow Up

How can we make positive, long-lasting community change? This book covers this and much more by showing you how to establish change, from the very first steps to the later stages with engaging, easy to read stories and interviews with asset champions and research findings from the National Case Study project.

Pass It On at School: Activity Handouts for Creating Caring Schools

This activity-based resource equips everyone in the school community— teachers, students, administrators, cafeteria workers, parents, custodial staff, coaches, bus drivers, and others— with ready-to-use tip sheets and handouts to create change for the better by building Developmental Assets.

A Quick Start Guide to Building Assets in Your School: Moving from Incidental to Intentional

This book offers teachers ideas and strategies to quickly and intentionally build assets in their classrooms. Each short segment consists of dozens of asset-building activities, self-reflection questions for teachers, and school-wide strategies to get everyone involved in creating healthy, caring classrooms.

Awareness Pack

Get a variety of many of our most popular resources to help support and promote your initiative. Great for people starting or promoting asset-building initiatives and those who are engaging in public awareness campaigns.

In Our Own Words posters

Eye-catching posters feature phrases and words that 17 young people used to describe what an asset category means to them.

40 Assets posters

Show them your commitment with this colorful display poster of the 40 Developmental Assets. Bright colors and graphics make it an eye-catching message that YOUR youth are important.

For a catalog of additional resources, call Search Institute at 1-800-888-7828, or view our online resource catalog at www.search-institute.org/catalog