



The 40 Developmental Assets are building blocks for healthy, happy and engaged children. Developed by the Search Institute, the New Canaan YMCA promotes these assets which enable young people to develop into successful and contributing adults.

## ASSET OF THE MONTH

### #10 SAFETY

Young person feels safe at home, at school, and in the neighborhood. Feeling safe at home, at school, and in the community is necessary for young people's health and wellbeing. There are multiple elements of safety for young people, all of which are important to help children thrive. These elements include safety from accidents and hazards, safety from crime and violence, and safety from bullying and harassment, just to name a few. For young people, feeling unsafe often results in physical, emotional, and social consequences. Youth who feel unsafe skip school more often, achieve less academically, have fewer friends, and are more likely to bring weapons to school.

### BE INTENTIONAL

## ABOUT THE ASSETS

#### CONVERSATION STARTERS

**Whether at the dinner table or in the car, get the conversation going...**

The following discussion topics can help young people identify the ways and locations where they do, and do not, feel safe, and promote conversations about how to improve safety for themselves and others.

- Overall, are you happy with how many different things you do with your time?
- Are your activities stimulating and challenging?
- Are you making friends with caring, responsible adults in your activities?
- Are you learning new skills and talents, and acquiring new knowledge?
- Do these activities bring out your best?

While safety is a critical concern, it's also important that adults help young people understand that small risks are normal. Sometimes overstressing safety can lead children to avoid healthy risks that help them grow. Helping young people learn to manage their own safety and react in case of emergency will help them develop confidence and independence that will serve them well throughout their lives.

#### LIVE THE ASSETS

Here are tips for promoting the assets wherever you are.

- Does everyone understand the rules about answering the phone, opening the door to strangers, spending time at home alone? Work together on rules that everyone can agree upon and follow.
- Does everyone understand where to go and what to do in a fire or other emergency? Practice fire drills so that children can easily recall the instructions during the stress and confusion of an actual event. Together, identify at least three neighbors to whom your children can go in case of an emergency at home.
- Hold honest, open, and age-appropriate discussions with your children about personal safety, avoiding dangerous situations, and what to do if they feel threatened.
- Talk to your children about bullying, including what to do if they or their peers are being bullied. Bullying is a form of intimidation, and directly impacts young people's sense of personal safety and comfort.

#### Additional Resources

- Take 25 (<http://www.take25.org>) is a program of the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children encouraging parents to take 25 minutes to discuss safety issues with their children. Their list of conversation starters at [http://www.take25.org/res/pdf/Take\\_25\\_Conversation\\_Starters.pdf](http://www.take25.org/res/pdf/Take_25_Conversation_Starters.pdf) covers online and offline personal safety topics for young children, tweens, and teenagers.
- Electronic bullying online or through mobile phones, known as "cyberbullying," is a growing phenomenon, especially with the relative anonymity for bullies. A good resource to help youth understand the issues is <http://www.stopcyberbullying.org>. For adults, <http://www.cyberbullying.us> serves as a clearinghouse for the latest research and information about cyberbullying.

Learn more about the assets at [www.searchinstitute.org](http://www.searchinstitute.org)

The enclosed information is provided by Project Cornerstone's Asset-a-Month program. For more information, visit [www.projectcornerstone.org](http://www.projectcornerstone.org).