

Dear Lynn,

In April of this year you wrote an article about the 20 External Assets from the Search Institute that help young people grow up to be healthy, caring and responsible adults. Can you tell me about the Internal Assets young people need?

Sincerely,
For Youth

Dear For Youth,

Great question, while young people receive external assets from the positive experiences from the world around them, Internal Assets are those characteristics and behaviors that reflect positive internal growth and development of young people. They are broken down into the following four categories.

Commitment to Learning

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

Positive Values

26. *Caring* -Young person places high value on helping other people.
27. *Equality and Social Justice* -Young person places high value on promoting equality and reducing hunger and poverty.
28. *Integrity* -Young person acts on convictions and stands up for her or his beliefs.
29. *Honesty* -Young person "tells the truth even when it is not easy."
30. *Responsibility* -Young person accepts and takes personal responsibility.
31. *Restraint* -Young person believes it is important not to be sexually active or to use alcohol or other drugs.

Social Competencies

32. *Planning and Decision Making* -Young person knows how to plan ahead and make choices.
33. *Interpersonal Competence* -Young person has empathy, sensitivity, and friendship skills.
34. *Cultural Competence* -Young person has knowledge of and comfort with people of different cultural/racial/ethnic backgrounds.
35. *Resistance Skills* -Young person can resist negative peer pressure and dangerous situations.
36. *Peaceful Conflict Resolution* -Young person seeks to resolve conflict nonviolently.

Positive Identity

37. *Personal Power* -Young person feels he or she has control over "things that happen to me."
38. *Self-Esteem* -Young person reports having a high self-esteem.
39. *Sense of Purpose* -Young person reports that "my life has a purpose."
40. *Positive View of Personal Future* -Young person is optimistic about her or his personal future.

I hope this helps build your understanding. For more information regarding the Development Assets, visit the Search Institute at: <http://www.search-institute.org/>