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## 40 DEVELOPMENTAL ASSETS FOR INFANTS

Search Institute has identified a preliminary framework of 40 developmental assets for infants (birth to 12 months) that blends Search Institute's research on developmental assets for 12- to 18-year-olds with research on healthy child development. For more information, see *What Young Children Need to Succeed* (Free Spirit, 2000) and *Starting Out Right* (Search Institute, 1997). Current and future research will flesh out the appropriate uses of the adolescent model for younger age groups and identify developmental assets that are more specific to younger children.

### External Assets

#### Support

1. **Family support**—Family life provides high levels of love and support.
2. **Positive family communication**—Parents communicate with infants in positive ways. Parents respond immediately to infants and respect their needs.
3. **Other adult relationships**—Parents have support from three or more adults and ask for help when needed. Infants receive additional love and comfort from at least one adult other than their parents.
4. **Caring neighborhood**—Infants experience caring neighbors.
5. **Caring out-of-home climate**—Infants are in caring, encouraging environments outside the home.
6. **Parent involvement in out-of-home situations**—Parents are actively involved in communicating infants' needs to caretakers and others in situations outside the home.

#### Empowerment

7. **Community values children**—The family places infants at the center of family life. Other adults in the community value and appreciate infants.
8. **Children are given useful roles**—The family involves infants in family life.
9. **Service to others**—Parents serve others in the community.
10. **Safety**—Infants have safe environments at home, in out-of-home settings, and in the neighborhood. This includes childproofing these environments.

#### Boundaries and Expectations

11. **Family boundaries**—Parents are aware of infants' preferences and adapt the environment and schedule to suit infants' needs. Parents begin setting limits as infants become mobile.
12. **Out-of-home boundaries**—Child-care settings and other out-of-home environments have clear rules and consequences for older infants and consistently provide all infants with appropriate stimulation and enough rest.
13. **Neighborhood boundaries**—Neighbors take responsibility for monitoring and supervising infants' behavior as they begin to play and interact outside the home.
14. **Adult role models**—Parents and other adults model positive, responsible behavior.
15. **Positive peer observation**—Infants observe siblings and other children interacting in positive ways. They have opportunities to interact with children of various ages.
16. **Appropriate expectations for growth**—Parents have realistic expectations for infants' development at this age. Parents encourage development without pushing infants beyond their own pace.

#### Constructive Use of Time

17. **Creative activities**—Parents expose infants to music, art, or other creative aspects of the environment each day.
18. **Out-of-home activities**—Parents expose infants to limited but stimulating situations outside the home. The family keeps infants' needs in mind when attending events.

19. **Religious community**—The family regularly attends religious programs or services while keeping infants' needs in mind.
20. **Positive, supervised time at home**—Parents supervise infants at all times and provide predictable, enjoyable routines at home.

## Internal Assets

### **Commitment to Learning**

21. **Achievement expectation and motivation**—Family members are motivated to do well at work, at school, and in the community, and model their motivation for infants.
22. **Children are engaged in learning**—Parents and family members model responsive and attentive attitudes at work, at school, in the community, and at home.
23. **Stimulating activity**—Parents encourage infants to explore and provide stimulating toys that match infants' emerging skills. Parents are sensitive to infants' dispositions, preferences, and level of development.
24. **Enjoyment of learning**—Parents enjoy learning and model this through their own learning activities.
25. **Reading for pleasure**—Parents read to infants in enjoyable ways every day.

### **Positive Values**

26. **Family values caring**—Parents convey their beliefs about helping others by modeling their helping behaviors.
27. **Family values equality and social justice**—Parents place a high value on promoting social equality, religious tolerance, and reducing hunger and poverty while modeling these beliefs for infants.
28. **Family values integrity**—Parents act on their convictions, stand up for their beliefs, and communicate and model this in the family.
29. **Family values honesty**—Parents tell the truth and convey their belief in honesty through their actions.
30. **Family values responsibility**—Parents accept and take personal responsibility.
31. **Family values healthy lifestyle**—Parents love children, setting the foundation for infants to develop healthy attitudes and beliefs about relationships. Parents model, monitor, and teach the importance of good health habits, and they provide good nutritional choices and adequate rest and playtime.

### **Social Competencies**

32. **Planning and decision-making observation**—Parents make all safety and care decisions for infants and model safe behavior. As infants become more independently mobile, parents allow them to make simple choices.
33. **Interpersonal skills observation**—Parents model positive, constructive interactions with other people. Parents accept and are responsive to how infants express their feelings, seeing those expressions as cues to infants' needs.
34. **Cultural observation**—Parents know and are comfortable with people of different cultural, racial, and/or ethnic backgrounds, and model this to infants.
35. **Resistance observation**—Parents model resistance skills through their own behavior.
36. **Peaceful conflict resolution observation**—Parents behave in acceptable, nonviolent ways and assist infants in developing these skills by helping them solve problems when they're faced with challenging or frustrating circumstances.

### **Positive Identity**

37. **Family has personal power**—Parents feel they have control over things that happen in their own lives and model coping skills, demonstrating healthy ways to deal with frustrations and challenges. Parents respond to infants, so infants begin to learn that they have influence over their immediate surroundings.
38. **Family models high self-esteem**—Parents create an environment where infants can develop positive self-esteem, giving infants appropriate, positive feedback and reinforcement about their skills and competencies.
39. **Family has a sense of purpose**—Parents report that their lives have purpose and demonstrate these beliefs through their behaviors. Infants are curious about the world around them.
40. **Family has a positive view of the future**—Parents are hopeful and positive about their personal future and work to provide a positive future for children.