
40 DEVELOPMENTAL ASSETS FOR TODDLERS

Search Institute has identified a preliminary framework of 40 developmental assets for toddlers (13 to 35 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 toddlers in positive ways. Parents respond to toddlers in a reasonable amount of time and respect their needs.
3. **Other adult relationships**—Parents have support from three or more adults and ask for help when needed. Toddlers receive additional love and comfort from at least one adult other than their parents.
4. **Caring neighborhood**—Toddlers experience caring neighbors.
5. **Caring out-of-home climate**—Toddlers are in caring, encouraging environments outside the home.
6. **Parent involvement in out-of-home situations**—Parents are actively involved in helping toddlers succeed in situations outside the home. Parents communicate toddlers' needs to caretakers outside the home.

Empowerment

7. **Community values children**—The family places toddlers at the center of family life and recognizes the need to set limits for toddlers. Other adults in the community value and appreciate toddlers.
8. **Children are given useful roles**—The family involves toddlers in family life.
9. **Service to others**—Parents serve others in the community.
10. **Safety**—Toddlers 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 toddlers' preferences and adapt the environment to suit toddlers' needs. Parents set age-appropriate limits for toddlers.
12. **Out-of-home boundaries**—Child-care settings and other out-of-home environments have clear rules and consequences to protect toddlers while consistently providing appropriate stimulation and enough rest.
13. **Neighborhood boundaries**—Neighbors take responsibility for monitoring and supervising toddlers' 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**—Toddlers 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 toddlers' development at this age. Parents encourage development without pushing toddlers beyond their own pace.

Constructive Use of Time

17. **Creative activities**—Parents expose toddlers to music, art, or other creative, age-appropriate activities each day.
18. **Out-of-home activities**—Parents expose toddlers to limited but stimulating situations outside the home. The family keeps toddlers' needs in mind when attending events.
19. **Religious community**—The family regularly attends religious programs or services while keeping toddlers' needs in mind.

20. **Positive, supervised time at home**—Parents supervise toddlers 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 toddlers.
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 toddlers to explore and provide stimulating toys that match toddlers' emerging skills. Parents are sensitive to toddlers' dispositions, preferences, and level of development.
24. **Enjoyment of learning**—Parents enjoy learning and express this through their own learning activities.
25. **Reading for pleasure**—Parents read to toddlers every day and find ways for toddlers to participate in enjoyable reading experiences.

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 toddlers.
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 toddlers 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 toddlers and model safe behavior. As toddlers 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 toddlers use actions and words to express their feelings, seeing those expressions as cues to toddlers' needs.
34. **Cultural observation**—Parents know and are comfortable with people of different cultural, racial, and/or ethnic backgrounds, and model this to toddlers.
35. **Resistance observation**—Parents model resistance skills through their own behavior. Parents aren't overwhelmed by toddlers' needs and demonstrate appropriate resistance skills.
36. **Peaceful conflict resolution observation**—Parents behave in acceptable, nonviolent ways and assist toddlers 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 toddlers, so toddlers begin to learn that they have influence over their immediate surroundings.
38. **Family models high self-esteem**—Parents create an environment where toddlers can develop positive self-esteem, giving toddlers 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 model these beliefs through their behaviors. Toddlers are curious and explore 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.