

# Developmental Assets®

**Building Blocks for  
Positive Child & Youth Development**

**March 4, 2026**



# Search Institute

- Non-profit organization with a sixty-plus-year history of collaboration with partners to conduct and apply research that promotes positive youth development and advances equity.
- Apply that research to create frameworks that inform youth development practice.
  - [Developmental Assets® Framework](#)
  - [Developmental Relationships® Framework](#)



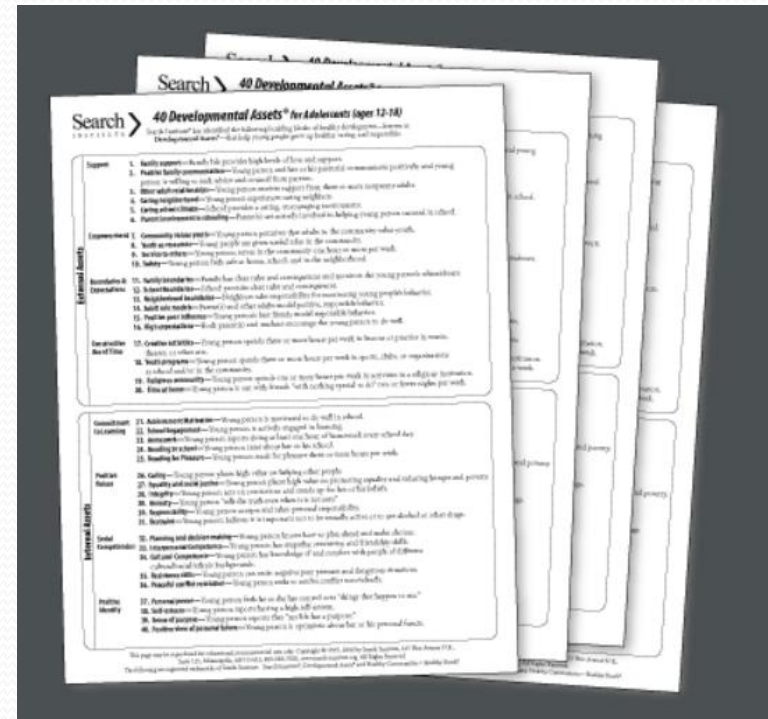
# Strength-Based Frameworks

## Principles

- **Everyone** can build assets
- **All young people need assets**
- **Consistent** messages are important
- **Asset building is an ongoing process**
- Intentional **repetition** is important
- **Relationships** are key

# Developmental Assets®

- Positive experiences, skills, opportunities, qualities and values (What kids need to succeed)
- Best provided through relationships with caring, responsible people—both adults and young people themselves



# Developmental Assets<sup>®</sup>

## External Assets

- Support
- Empowerment
- Boundaries and Expectations
- Constructive Use of Time

## Internal Assets

- Commitment to Learning
- Positive Values
- Social Competencies
- Positive Identity



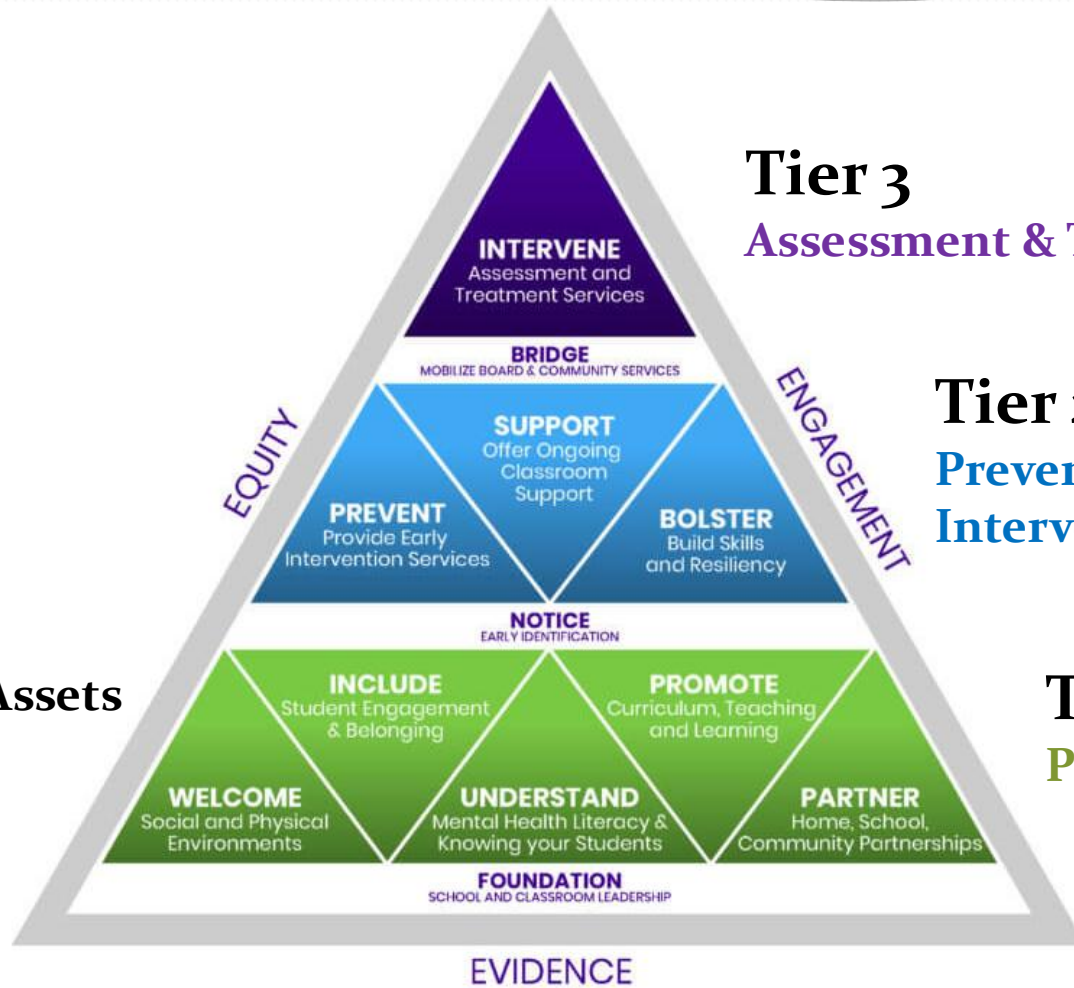
Internal characteristics and strengths

External strengths, relationships and connections

Capacity for Resilience and Success



Developmental Assets



School  
Mental Health  
Ontario

Santé mentale  
en milieu scolaire  
Ontario

The more assets that young people have, the less likely they are to engage in a wide range of high-risk behaviors and the more likely they are to thrive.

Research shows that youth with the most assets are *more* likely to:

- Do well in school
- Be civically engaged
- Value diversity

Research shows that youth with the most assets are *least* likely to have problems with:

- Alcohol use
- Violence
- Illicit drug use
- Sexual activity

**MORE IS BETTER!**

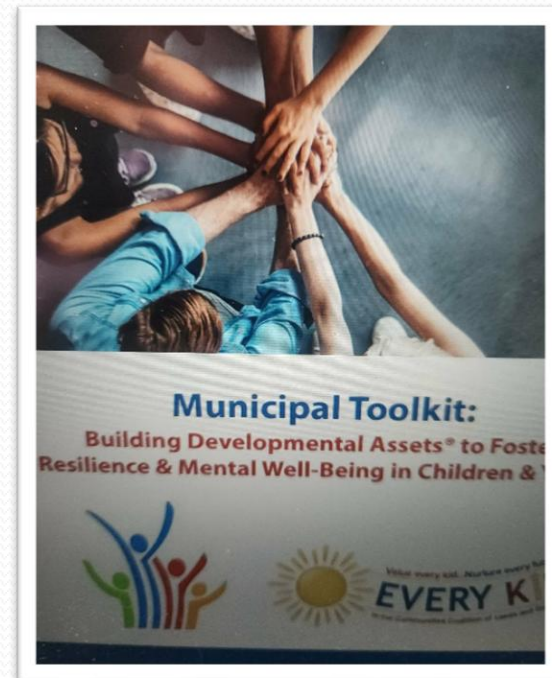
# Developmental Relationships®

- Search Institute has identified five elements—expressed in 20 specific actions—that make relationships powerful in young people’s lives.
  - Express Care
  - Challenge Growth
  - Provide Support
  - Share Power
  - Expand Possibilities

Young people need to be surrounded by 3 or more non-parent adults, who love, care for, appreciate, and accept them.  
*(Search Institute)*

# Work Plan Highlights

- Search archives for existing DA resources to reinvigorate & refresh
  - Examples include: Start With Hello Campaign Materials & Municipal Toolkit: Building Developmental Assets to Foster Resilience and Well-Being in Children and Youth



# Work Plan Highlights

- Present Asset Builder Awards 2025 **Should we Continue?**
- Continue “Start With Hello” campaign **Should we continue, next targets?**



# Work Plan Highlights

- Offer partners, businesses, and communities help in building youth friendly asset building strategies. **Ideas and Suggestions welcome**
- Work with municipalities around their Community Safety & Well-being Plans and in follow up to United Way's community conversations through updating Mental Well-Being and Resiliency for Youth in Lanark, Leeds & Grenville. **Do we have the capacity?**

# For More Information:

Search Institute Website:

[www.search-institute.org](http://www.search-institute.org)

EKIOC Website:

[www.everykid.on.ca](http://www.everykid.on.ca)



# THANK YOU!

