

Subject: The Constructive Use of Time Category of Developmental Assets

All work and no play can be boring and stressful

The pace of everyday life varies depending on the activities young people participate in. These fluctuations are normal, even healthy. As long as young people don't consistently have too much to do or not enough to do, they're right on track. Problems arise when the balance begins to tip too far to one side or the other. Too much involvement can lead to stress or anxiety. Too little involvement can be a sign of depression or isolation. Ensure that young people constructively use their time for both fun and learning. **Constructive Use of Time** is one of eight asset categories that make up Search Institute's 40 Developmental Assets, the qualities, experiences, and relationships that help young people grow up healthy, caring, and responsible.

Here are the facts

Research shows that young people are more likely to grow up healthy when they have opportunities to learn new skills and interests through both structured and unstructured activities. Search Institute has identified four assets in the Constructive Use of Time category that are crucial for helping young people grow up healthy: Creative Activities, Youth Programs, Religious Community, and Time at Home.

Tips for building these assets

Playing and spending time alone is important for everyone. But so is structured activity with other people. Help young people find the right mix by offering them a variety of choices: music, art, youth programs, and spiritual organizations that help them tap into their creative energy, provide new experiences, and teach new skills.

Also try this

In your home and family: Periodically, take an "activity inventory." Check in with your children to find out: how happy they are with their different activities; if the activities they are involved in are stimulating and challenging; if they're making friends with caring, thoughtful adults and peers; and if they're learning new skills, and more about themselves.

In your neighborhood and community group: Help create a safe, inviting place where young people can meet for clubs or other structured activities, or just hang out. For example, a park, playground, or community center.

In your school or youth program: Provide constructive before- and after-school programs for young people who would otherwise spend the time unsupervised.

Want to know more about Search Institute's other seven asset categories or the 40 Developmental Assets and ideas for helping young people build them? Visit www.search-institute.org/assets.

Developmental Assets® are positive factors within young people, families, communities, schools, and other settings that research has found to be important in promoting the healthy development of young people. From *Instant Assets: 52 Short and Simple E-Mails for Sharing the Asset Message*. Copyright © 2007 by Search Institute®, 877-240-7251; www.search-institute.org. This message may be reproduced for educational, noncommercial uses only (with this copyright line). All rights reserved.