

Feel free to add your own asset building ideas or examples!

## An Asset a Week

(Explanation that can be used after each asset tip.)

Children First provides these tips on building the 40 developmental assets. *Children First: It starts with you. The St. Louis Park community bringing out the best in kids.* For more info visit: [www.children-first.org](http://www.children-first.org)

### SUPPORT

#### #1 – Family Support

Did you know 69% of St. Louis Park young people report their family life provides high levels of love and support? Have you told your children, niece, nephew or grandchild lately that you care about them? In what ways can you support teens in your family? One of the best ways to find out is to ask.

#### #2 Positive Family Communication

Did you know 31% of St. Louis Park young people report that they and their parents communicate positively and they are willing to seek parent advice and counsel? Are you surprised by that percentage? Do you have a consistent time to check in with the kids in your family? What is going on in their lives? What is important to them?

#### #3 Other Adult Relationships

Did you know 46% of St. Louis Park young people report receiving support from at least three non-parent adults? Are you that caring supportive adult for the youth in your neighborhood and community? Even though they might not say it, our kids need you! Start a conversation and take interest in the young people around you today.

#### #4 Caring Neighborhood

Did you know 40% of St. Louis Park young people report they experience caring neighbors? Do you know the youth in your neighborhood? Do you know their names, where they live, what they like to do? It simply starts with a hello and a smile. Invite youth of all ages to be involved in planning and attending neighborhood activities.

#### #5 Caring School Climate

Did you know 36% of St. Louis Park young people report their school provides a caring, encouraging environment? What can you do? Get involved! Volunteer at your local school as a caring adult or join a parent/teacher organization. Talk to young people around you. Tell them what it was like when you were in school and ask them how it's change. Ask them what they would do to improve school climate.

#### #6 Parent Involvement in Schooling

Did you know 32% of St. Louis Park young people report that their parents are actively involved in helping them succeed in school? As your children grow older, it may seem like they don't need your help, but they do need you to be involved! Go to school conferences. Make it a priority to attend school events. Keep track of them on a family calendar. Even if you're not a parent, share with young people how what they learn in school (math, writing, problem solving) relates to your job.

### EMPOWERMENT

#### #7 Community Values Youth

Did you know 28% of St. Louis Park young people perceive that adults in the community value them? Teens say this starts as simply as greeting young people as you pass them on the street, just as you would an older person or a young child. Surprise a "unique" looking young person by looking them in the eye and saying hello or holding the door open for them.

#### #8 Youth as Resources

Did you know 30% of St. Louis Park young people report being given useful roles in the community? Invite young people to serve in leadership positions in community organizations, from being a committee member to serving on the board. Or ask a young person to teach you how to do something like how to program your cell phone or use a computer program.

#### #9 Service to Others

Did you know 51% of St. Louis Park young people volunteer in the community at least one hour a week? Volunteer as a family to demonstrate the importance of serving others. Look for opportunities for youth to help others through organized programs or by helping a neighbor or older relative.

## **#10 Safety**

Did you know 53% of St. Louis Park young people feel safe at home, school and in their neighborhood? Be a neighbor that welcomes young people. Encourage them to use your basketball hoop. Let a neighborhood family know that if their children are scared or locked out of their house, they can come to your house.

## **BOUNDARIES & EXPECTATIONS**

### **#11 Family Boundaries**

Did you know 47% of St. Louis Park young people feel they have clear rules and consequences at home and their parents monitor their whereabouts? Simple, positive and reasonable boundaries can improve youth's lives by setting family rules and consequences. Be clear about rules such as curfew and when you expect them to check in. Let your child help establish what a consequence will be for breaking a rule before it happens.

### **#12 School Boundaries**

Did you know 44% of St. Louis Park young people say their school provides clear rules and consequences? Explicit school boundaries show what is needed in order to have respectful relationships conducive to a positive environment. If rules are not consistency enforced, students won't think they are a priority.

### **#13 Neighborhood Boundaries**

Did you know 49% of St. Louis Park young people say their neighbors take responsibility for monitoring young people's behavior? Neighborhood boundaries can be achieved by developing relationships with neighbors. When a young person needs to be told she/he is out of line, doing so respectfully will help maintain that relationship. Teens are more likely to obey rules, such as speed limits, when they see you doing the same. Praise young people when they do something right!

### **#14 Adult Role Models**

Did you know 36% of St. Louis Park young people have parents and other adults who model positive responsible behavior? Adults should *show* the qualities they hope the youth will mature into and show later generations. Young people should have five adults, besides their parents, they can turn to for help and advice. Identify the young people around you that you can build relationships with.

### **#15 Positive Peer Influence**

Did you know 72% of St. Louis Park young people report that their best friends model responsible behavior? Get to know your children's friends and acknowledge their positive actions. Make your home a welcoming environment where kids can hang out and will have supervision.

### **#16 High Expectations**

Did you know 50% of St. Louis Park young people report that their parents and teachers encourage them to do well? The performance and actions of students can be greatly improved with expectations, not out of reach or too low, from parents and teachers. Provide positive encouragement and encourage persistence.

## **CONSTRUCTIVE USE OF TIME**

### **#17 Creative Activities**

Did you know 22% of St. Louis Park young people spend at least three hours a week involved in creative endeavors such as music, theater or other arts? Creative activities allow young people to expand their mind in ways that they otherwise would not. Expose children to the arts at a young age. Check out free programs offered in the community at places like the library or parks.

### **#18 Youth Programs**

Did you know 64% of St. Louis park young people are involved in sports, clubs or organizations at school or in the community at least three hours a week? Encourage your children and their friends to try something new. Take them skiing or to the theater or to a neighborhood association meeting to develop their appetite for further involvement.

### **#19 Religious Community**

Did you know 60% of St. Louis Park young people spend at least an hour a week in activities at religious institutions? Attend activities with your children or another young person. Have conversations at home about spirituality.

## **#20 Time at Home**

Did you know that 51% of St. Louis Park young people report being out with friends with no special plans two or fewer nights a week? Time at home is necessary in developing family bonds and strengthening family trust. Place a priority on spending time with your children or young relatives. Participate in enjoyable activities such as a family game night or regular family meals.

## **EDUCATIONAL COMMITMENT**

### **#21 Achievement Motivation**

Did you know 68% of St. Louis Park young people are motivated to do well in school? Talk to a young person about how a subject, such as Language Arts and Writing, are important in the job you do. Praise them for a job well done and encourage them to persevere when something is difficult by helping break the job into smaller tasks.

### **#22 School Engagement**

Did you know 62% of St. Louis Park young people are actively engaged in learning? Talk with teens about what they are learning in school. Discuss how their studies relate to what's happening in the world.

### **#23 Homework**

Did you know 56% of St. Louis Park young people report doing at least an hour of homework every school day? Develop a homework routine including where and when to do it. Do your own paperwork or reading while your child is studying.

### **#24 Bonding to School**

Did you know 57% of St. Louis Park young people care about their school? Encourage teens to find one activity at school helping them connect to other students and staff. If you need help, contact a counselor at your child's school to identify activities of interest.

### **#25 Reading for Pleasure**

Did you know 26% of St. Louis Park young people read for pleasure at least three hours a week? As a family, participate in the community-reading project, Bookmark in the Park, and read the selected book together. Help young people find books about an area that interests them. Read a book based on a movie, see the movie together and talk about how the two are similar and different.

## **VALUES**

### **#26 Caring**

Did you know 50% of St. Louis Park young people place a high value on helping others? As a family, help those around you. Shovel a neighbor's driveway, make a meal for the family of a hospitalized friend or stop and give someone directions.

### **#27 Equality and Social Justice**

Did you know 52% of St. Louis Park people place a high value on promoting equality and reducing hunger and poverty? Work together on a food drive through your congregation or community group. Discuss with young people situations that seem unfair and actions you can take to make a difference.

### **#28 Integrity**

Did you know 70% of St. Louis Park young people act on convictions and stand up for their beliefs. Talk to teens about their beliefs---and listen to what they have to say. Teens like to share their opinions.

### **#29 Honesty**

Did you know 65% of St. Louis Park young people tell the truth even when it's not easy? Demonstrate the importance of being honest by returning money when a clerk makes a mistake or telling the real age of your child, even if it means a more expensive admission fee.

### **#30 Responsibility**

Did you know 63% of St. Louis Park young people accept and take personal responsibility? Don't rescue your teen when he/she has done something wrong. Let your child face the consequences or make it right.

### **#31 Restraint**

Did you know 53% of St. Louis Park young people believe it is important not to be sexually active or use alcohol or other drugs? Practice with your teen how to address situations that require restraint. What should they do? Come up with a phrase that they can use when calling you which is a code to come get out of a situation that makes them uncomfortable.

## SOCIAL COMPETENCIES

### **#32 Planning & Decision Making**

Did you know 32% of St. Louis Park young people report knowing how to plan ahead and make choices? The way we learn these skills is through practice. Encourage your child to help with household planning, menus, grocery shopping or how to manage cell phone minutes. Work together to plan family vacations or outings. Help them break larger projects into a series of steps.

### **#33 Interpersonal Competence**

Did you know 46% of St. Louis Park young people have empathy, sensitivity and friendship making skills? When a teen has a conflict with a friend, offer to role-play some possible responses to help them think through next steps. When you see a young person demonstrating one of these skills, let them know you admire how they handled the situation.

### **#34 Cultural Competence**

Did you know 47% of St. Louis Park young people have knowledge or and comfort with people of different racial, cultural or ethnic backgrounds. Discuss images of people from different backgrounds from TV or the newspaper. Talk about stereotypes and how to spot them. Identify differences you admire.

### **#35 Resistance Skills**

Did you know 50% of St. Louis Park young people report they can resist negative peer pressure and dangerous situations? As an adult you can help teens develop this skill by sharing examples of how you resisted peer pressure. Encourage them to express their feelings and opinions. This is not a one-time discussion. Look for opportunities to talk about the importance of resisting risky situations.

### **#36 Peaceful Conflict Resolution**

Did you know 55% of St. Louis Park young people report resolving conflict non-violently? Admit to a young person when you responded poorly to conflict. Apologize and work out a new solution.

## POSTIVE IDENTITY

### **#37 Personal Power**

Did you know 47% of St. Louis Park young people report they have control over things that happen to them? As a parent, teacher or adult friend, ask a young person where they feel they have personal power. Create opportunities where they can choose what they will do. Support them when they see a problem they want to address.

### **#38 Self-esteem**

Did you know 50% of St. Louis Park young people report having a high self-esteem and boys are more likely to have this asset than girls? It is important when praising young people to avoid false praise and acknowledge them for specific things they have worked hard accomplishing.

### **#39 Sense of Purpose**

Did you know 63% of St. Louis Park young people report their life has a purpose? What gives your life purpose? Talk about it with a young person.

### **#40 Positive View of Personal Future**

Did you know 70% of St. Louis Park young people report being optimistic about their future? Ask a young person about their hopes or plans for their future. Share stories from your own life. Find examples of positive things that are happening in the world to counteract all the negative information young people hear.