

## **DEVELOPMENTAL ASSETS: A PROFILE OF PULASKI COUNTY CHILDREN**

In May 2005, a total of 410 4<sup>th</sup> (n=208) and 5<sup>th</sup> (n=202) graders in Pulaski County Schools were surveyed using the Search Institute's *Me and My World*. The surveys were anonymous.

This profile, along with the *Youth Risk Behavior Survey* administered to teens, gives our community important information about the health and wellbeing of our youth. It provides information about strengths from which to build on and challenges us individually and collectively to strengthen the asset base of Pulaski County youth.

### **THE POWER OF ASSETS**

The developmental asset framework represents a common core of developmental building blocks. Search Institute research has found that these assets are powerful influences on pre-adolescent and adolescent behavior – both promoting positive attitudes and behaviors and protecting young people from many different problem behaviors.

#### **Promoting Positive Attitudes and Behaviors**

Children with more assets are more likely to exhibit “thriving indicators” including succeeding in school, helping others, valuing diversity, delaying gratification, co regulation (helping make decisions within family), coping, and life satisfaction.

For example, **Pulaski County children** who experience 31-40 assets report an average of 5.9 of the 7 thriving indicators assessed by the Search Institute survey. In contrast, those who have 11-20 assets report an average of 3.9 of the 7 thriving indicators.

## Protecting Youth from High-Risk Behaviors

Assets have tremendous power to protect youth from many different harmful or unhealthy choices. Young people with more assets are less likely to report 6 risk behavior patterns assessed by the survey: alcohol use, smoking, marijuana use, anti-social behavior, physical aggression/violence, and sadness.

For example, **Pulaski County youth** who experience 31-40 assets report an average of 0.5 of the 6 risk behavior patterns assessed by the Search Institute survey. In contrast, youth who experience 11-20 assets report an average of 0.9 of the 6 risk behavior patterns assessed.

## EXPERIENCES OF DEVELOPMENTAL ASSETS

Developmental assets are external and internal factors that nurture healthy development in young people. Search Institute has identified 40 of these assets (20 external and 20 internal).

### Strengths to Build On

The external assets most commonly reported by **Pulaski County children** include:

ASSET	PERCENTAGE OF YOUTH REPORTING
High Expectations (#16)	91%
Positive Peer Influence (15)	79%
School Boundaries (#12)	89%
Family Support (#1)	86%
Religious Community (#19)	73%

The internal assets most commonly reported by **Pulaski County children** include:

ASSET	PERCENTAGE OF YOUTH REPORTING
All Positive Values Assets (#26-31)	≥70%
Commitment to Learning Assets: Achievement Motivation (#21), Homework (#23) & Bonding to School (#24)	≥72%
Resistance Skills (#35),	70%
Self-Esteem (#38)	66%

## The Greatest Challenges

The external assets **Pulaski County children** are least likely to experience include:

ASSET	PERCENTAGE OF YOUTH REPORTING
Time at Home (#20)	26%
Community Values Youth (#7)	34%
Service to Others (#9)	37%
Parent Involvement in Schooling (#6)	43%
Adult Role Models (#14)	55%
Neighborhood Boundaries (#13)	47%
Caring Neighborhood (#4) and Caring School Climate (#5)	54%

The internal assets **Pulaski County children** are least likely to experience include:

ASSET	PERCENTAGE OF YOUTH REPORTING
Sense of Purpose (#39)	52%
Planning and Decision-Making (#32)	45%
Interpersonal Competence (#33)	33%
Learning Engagement (#32)	46%
Reading for Pleasure (#25)	49%

## Deficits

In addition to assets, thriving indicators, and risk behaviors, the survey assesses 3 deficits. Deficits are negative influences that interfere with the development of assets and are correlated with poor developmental outcomes.

DEFICIT	PERCENTAGE OF YOUTH REPORTING
TV Overexposure (watches TV/videos 2+ hours per school day)	67%
Victim of Violence (been hurt by being punched/hit/slapped/or scratched in past year)	56%
Alone at Home (less than 1 hour/day of adult supervision after school)	26%

## **LEVELS OF ASSETS AMONG YOUNG PEOPLE**

### **The Challenge Facing the Pulaski County Community**

While the assets are powerful in young people's lives, too few youth in Pulaski County – and other towns and cities across the US – experience many of these assets. While there is no *magic number* of assets young people should have, research indicates that 31 are a worthy, though challenging, benchmark for experiencing their positive effects most strongly.