

40 Assets Preschoolers Need to Succeed

Ages 3 to 5 Years

Search Institute has identified the following key building blocks of healthy development that help young people grow up caring and competent.

CATEGORY	ASSET NAME AND DEFINITION
EXTERNAL ASSETS	Support <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Family support—Family life provides high levels of love and support. Positive family communication—Parents and preschoolers communicate positively. Preschoolers seek out parents for help with difficult tasks or situations. Other adult relationships—Preschoolers have support from at least one adult other than their parents. Their parents have support from people outside the home. Caring neighborhood—Preschoolers experience caring neighbors. Caring out-of-home climate—Preschoolers are in caring, encouraging environments outside the home. Parent involvement in out-of-home situations—Parents are actively involved in helping preschoolers succeed in situations outside the home. Parents communicate preschoolers' needs to caretakers outside the home.
	Empowerment <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Community values children—Parents and other adults in the community value and appreciate preschoolers. Children are given useful roles—Parents and other adults create ways preschoolers can help out and gradually include preschoolers in age-appropriate tasks. Service to others—The family serves others in the community together. Safety—Preschoolers have safe environments at home, in out-of-home settings, and in the neighborhood. This includes childproofing these environments.
	Boundaries and Expectations <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Family boundaries—The family has clear rules and consequences. The family monitors preschoolers and consistently demonstrates appropriate behavior through modeling and limit setting. Out-of-home boundaries—Childcare settings and other out-of-home environments have clear rules and consequences to protect preschoolers while consistently providing appropriate stimulation and enough rest. Neighborhood boundaries—Neighbors take responsibility for monitoring and supervising preschoolers' behavior as they begin to play and interact outside the home. Adult role models—Parents and other adults model positive, responsible behavior. Positive peer interactions—Preschoolers are encouraged to play and interact with other children in safe, well-supervised settings. Appropriate expectations for growth—Adults have realistic expectations for preschoolers' development at this age. Parents, caregivers, and other adults encourage preschoolers to achieve and develop their unique talents.
	Constructive Use of Time <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Creative activities—Preschoolers participate in music, art, dramatic play, or other creative activities each day. Out-of-home activities—Preschoolers interact in stimulating ways with children outside the family. The family keeps preschoolers' needs in mind when attending events. Religious community—The family regularly attends religious programs or services while keeping preschoolers' needs in mind. Positive, supervised time at home—Preschoolers are supervised by an adult at all times. Preschoolers spend most evenings and weekends at home with their parents in predictable, enjoyable routines.
	Commitment to Learning <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Achievement expectation and motivation—Parents and other adults convey and reinforce expectations to do well at work, at school, in the community, and within the family. Children are engaged in learning—Parents and family members model responsive and attentive attitudes at work, at school, in the community, and at home. Stimulating activity—Parents encourage preschoolers to explore and provide stimulating toys that match preschoolers' emerging skills. Parents are sensitive to preschoolers' dispositions, preferences, and level of development. Enjoyment of learning—Parents and other adults enjoy learning and engage preschoolers in learning activities. Reading for pleasure—Adults read to preschoolers for at least 30 minutes over the course of a day, encouraging preschoolers to participate.
	Positive Values <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Family values caring—Preschoolers are encouraged to express sympathy for someone who is distressed and begin to develop a variety of helping behaviors. 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 preschoolers. Family values integrity—Parents act on their convictions, stand up for their beliefs, and communicate and model this in the family. Family values honesty—Preschoolers learn the difference between telling the truth and lying. Family values responsibility—Preschoolers learn that their actions affect other people. Family values healthy lifestyle—Parents and other adults model, monitor, and teach the importance of good health habits. Preschoolers begin to learn healthy sexual attitudes and beliefs as well as respect for others.
	Social Competencies <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Planning and decision making practice—Preschoolers begin to make simple choices, solve simple problems, and develop simple plans at age-appropriate levels. Interpersonal interactions—Preschoolers play and interact with other children and adults. They freely express their feelings and learn to put these feelings into words. Parents and other adults model and teach empathy. Cultural interactions—Preschoolers are exposed in positive ways to information about and to people of different cultural, racial, and/or ethnic backgrounds. Resistance practice—Preschoolers are taught to resist participating in inappropriate or dangerous behavior. Peaceful conflict resolution practice—Parents and other adults model positive ways to resolve conflicts. Preschoolers are taught and begin to practice nonviolent, acceptable ways to deal with challenging and frustrating situations.
	Positive Identity <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Family has personal power—Parents feel they have control over things that happen in their own lives, demonstrating healthy ways to deal with frustrations and challenges. Preschoolers begin to learn that they have influence over their immediate surroundings. Family models high self-esteem—Parents create an environment where preschoolers can develop positive self-esteem, giving preschoolers appropriate, positive feedback and reinforcement about their skills and competencies. Family has a sense of purpose—Parents report that their lives have purpose and model these beliefs through their behaviors. Preschoolers are curious and explore the world around them. 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.