

A Snapshot of Our Youth

Data Collected from the 2023 Administration of the
Profiles of Student Life: Attitudes and Behavior Survey



Essex County Asset Builder Network
60 Pleasant St.
Newburyport, MA 01950

REGIONAL



A regional approach to helping all youth thrive

The Essex County Asset Builder Network is a partnership of communities (Amesbury, Georgetown, Newbury, Rowley, Salisbury and Newburyport) who utilize a positive youth development (PYD) approach to provide supports for youth to grow into healthy adults. We utilize the 40 Developmental Asset® framework and promote a PYD approach through trainings, resources, and building connections among community partners.



Youth from all four school districts meet at La Vida Outdoor Adventure Center for an annual leadership training

Every two years youth in grades 6-12 are surveyed to get a sense of the strengths and needs of the young people in the Network. This survey includes a measure of the 40 Developmental Assets (protective factors) as well as questions about risky behaviors such as alcohol or drug use and time spent watching screens. There are also questions about stress, anxiety and mental health. This data gives us a picture of the highest needs of our young people and programming is built to support those needs. This packet includes the results from the 2021 administration of this survey. We feel it is important for everyone in the community to have access to this data and join in the conversation about how we can support the youth and families in our communities.

ECAB Partners gather at our Annual Leader's Breakfast to celebrate our successes and look ahead to the new year.



40 DEVELOPMENTAL ASSETS® : ATTITUDES AND BEHAVIORS

SUPPORT: Young people need to be surrounded by people who love, care for, appreciate, and accept them.

1. Family Support - Family life provides high levels of love and support.	82%
2. Positive Family Communications - Young person and her or his parent(s) communicate.	39%
3. Other Adult Relationships - Young person receives support from three or more nonparent adults.	55%
4. Caring Neighborhood - Young person experiences caring neighbors.	44%
5. Caring School Climate - School provides a caring, encouraging environment.	36%
6. Parent Involvement in School - Parent(s) are actively involved in helping young person succeed in school.	38%

EMPOWERMENT: Young people need to feel valued and valuable. This happens when youth feel safe and respected.

7. Community Values Youth - Young person perceives that adults in the community value youth.	29%
8. Youth as Resources - Young people are given useful roles in the community.	33%
9. Service to Others - Young person serves in the community one hour or more per week.	40%
10. Safety - Young person feels safe at home, school, and in the neighborhood.	51%

BOUNDARIES AND EXPECTATIONS: Young people need clear rules, consistent consequences for breaking rules, and encouragement to do their best.

11. Family Boundaries - Family has clear rules and consequences, and monitors the young person's whereabouts.	48%
12. School Boundaries - School provides clear rules and consequences.	64%
13. Neighborhood Boundaries - Neighbors take responsibility for monitoring young people's behaviors.	44%
14. Adult Role Models - Parent(s) and other adults model positive, responsible behavior.	44%
15. Positive Peer Influence - Young person's best friends model responsible behavior.	84%
16. High Expectations - Both parent(s) and teachers encourage the young person to do well.	59%

CONSTRUCTIVE USE OF TIME: Young people need opportunities - outside of school - to learn and develop new skills and interests with other youth and adults.

17. Creative Activities - Young person spends three or more hours per week in lessons or practice in music theater, or other arts.	18%
18. Youth Programs - Young person spends three or more hours per week in sports, clubs or organizations at school and/or in community organizations.	66%
19. Religious Community - Young person spends one or more hours per week in activities in religious institution.	24%
20. Time at Home - Young person is out "with nothing special to do" two or fewer nights per week.	65%

* This data is from the 2023 administration of Search Institute's Profiles of Student Life: Attitudes and Behaviors survey to students in grades 6-12 in the region. The percentages listed indicate the number of young people who report experiencing that asset.

SURVEY RESULTS (2023) REGIONAL DATA

COMMITMENT TO LEARNING: Young people need a sense of the lasting importance of learning and a belief in their own abilities.

21. Achievement Motivation - Young person is motivated to do well in school.	75%
22. School Engagement - Young person is actively engaged in learning.	82%
23. Homework - Young person reports doing at least one hour of homework every school day.	41%
24. Bonding to School - Young person cares about his or her school.	64%
25. Reading for Pleasure - Young person reads for pleasure three or more hours per week.	19%

POSITIVE VALUES: Young people need to develop strong guiding values or principles to help them make healthy life choices.

26. Caring - Young person places high value on helping other people.	67%
27. Equality and Social Justice - Young person places high value on promoting equality and reducing hunger and poverty.	71%
28. Integrity - Young person acts on convictions and stands up for his or her beliefs.	70%
29. Honesty - Young person tells the truth even when it is not easy.	73%
30. Responsibility - Young person accepts and takes personal responsibility.	73%
31. Restraint - Young person believes it is important not to be sexually active or to use alcohol or other drugs.	55%

SOCIAL COMPETENCIES: Young people need the skills to interact effectively with others, to make difficult decisions, and to cope with new situations.

32. Planning and Decision Making - Young person knows how to plan ahead and make choices.	36%
33. Interpersonal Competence - Young person has empathy, sensitivity, and friendship skills.	51%
34. Cultural Competence - Young person has knowledge of and comfort with people of different cultural/racial/ethnic backgrounds.	56%
35. Resistance Skills - Young person can resist negative peer pressure and dangerous situations.	51%
36. Peace Conflict Resolution - Young person seeks to resolve conflict nonviolently.	54%

POSITIVE IDENTITY: Young people need to believe in their own self-worth and to feel that they have control over the things that happen to them.

37. Personal Power - Young person feels he or she has control over “things that happen to me.”	39%
38. Self-Esteem - Young person reports having a high self-esteem.	43%
39. Sense of Purpose - Young person reports that “my life has a purpose.”	58%
40. Positive View of Personal Future - Young person is optimistic about his or her personal future.	70%

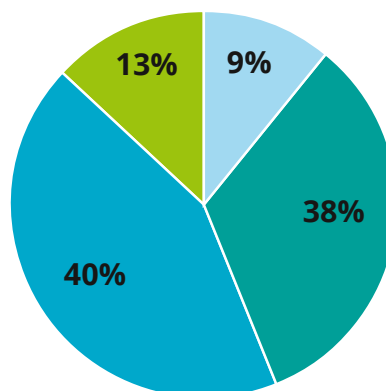
To learn more about how you can build Assets® for youth, visit our website and contact us at www.ECABNetwork.org



THE ASSET CHALLENGE IN OUR COMMUNITY

HOW MANY ASSETS DO YOUTH HAVE?

This graph shows the number of youth who fall into each Asset category. The average number of assets for young people in the region is 21.1. While there is no “right number” of assets for young people, there is the greatest decline in risk behaviors for youth who have over 20 assets.



Number of assets

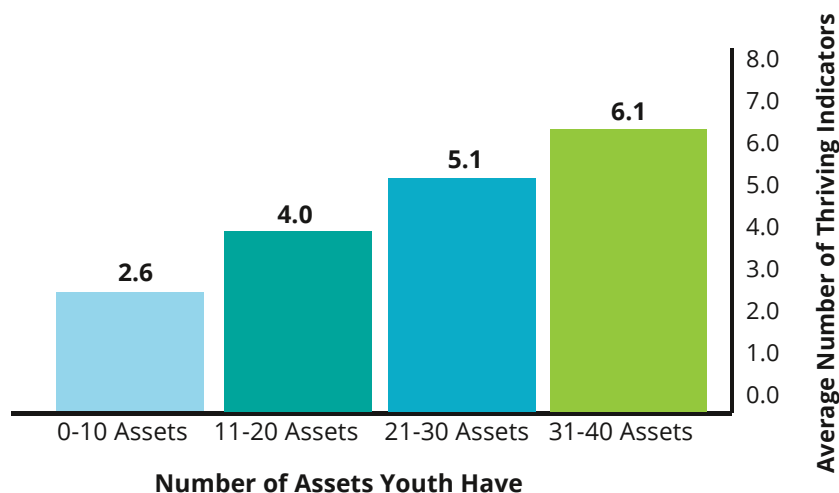
0 - 10 Assets

11 - 20 Assets

21 - 30 Assets

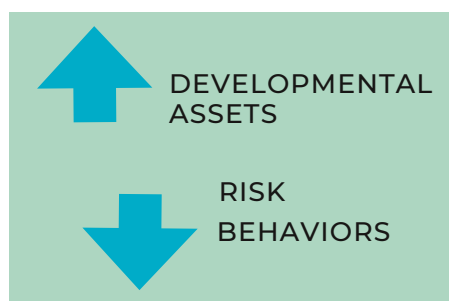
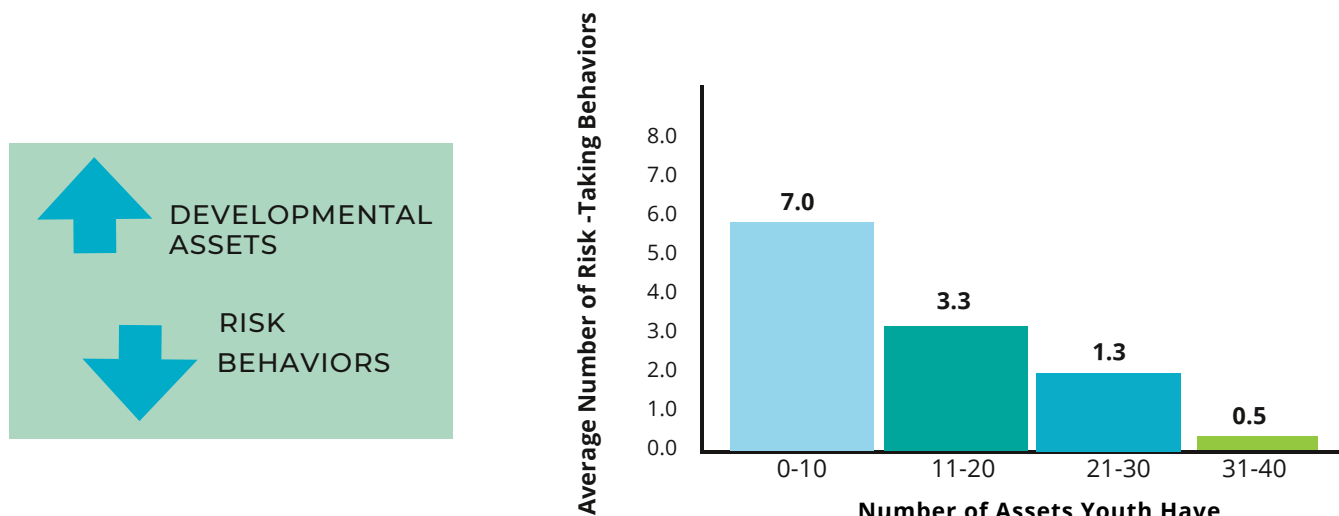
31 - 40 Assets

POWER OF DEVELOPMENTAL ASSETS TO PROMOTE THRIVING INDICATORS



We know that the more assets youth have, the more likely they are to thrive (Left). The opposite is also true. The more assets youth have, the less likely they are to participate in risk behaviors (Below).

POWER OF DEVELOPMENTAL ASSETS TO PROTECT AGAINST RISK-TAKING BEHAVIORS



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REPORT ON RISK BEHAVIORS

Overall the number of risk behaviors youth participate in increases as youth get older.

This is developmentally appropriate. The table below shows the percent of use among all youth (6th - 12th grade) and the use among high school seniors.

Risk Behavior		% All Youth	% 12th Grade Youth
Alcohol	Used alcohol in last 30 days	13%	35%
	Got drunk once or more in last 2 weeks	6%	18%
Tobacco	Smoked cigarettes in the last 30 days	2%	7%
	Used smokeless tobacco in last year	2%	7%
Marijuana	Used marijuana in the last 30 days	7%	23%
Other Drugs	Used heroin or narcotics in last year	1%	4%
Driving while intoxicated	Drove after drinking once or more in last 12 months	2%	10%
	Rode with a driver who had been drinking in past year	18%	23%

The perception that that substance use is harmful goes down as youth get older.

Perception of harm is lowest for marijuana, where only 63% of youth think smoking once or twice a week is a moderate or great risk.

Perception of Harm	Moderate or Great Risk	% Overall Who Agree
Alcohol	5 or more drinks once or twice a week	80%
Tobacco	One or more packs of cigarettes a day	90%
Marijuana	Smoking once or twice a week	68%
Prescription drugs	Taking pills not prescribed to you	92%

Most youth believe their parents would disapprove of any type of substance use.

When asked if they believe their peers would disapprove of each substance, the marijuana data can be concerning. Overall, only 76% of young people think their peers would disapprove of smoking marijuana.

Looking by grade, it is concerning that a majority of freshman think their peers would disapprove of smoking marijuana but only 41% of seniors believe their peers would disapprove. This belief that marijuana use is acceptable among peers can lead to increase use among youth.

Disapproval		% of youth who say their parents would disapprove of this behavior	% of youth who say their peers would disapprove of this behavior
Alcohol	Drinking regularly	96%	86%
Tobacco	Smoking cigarettes	97%	87%
Marijuana	Smoking marijuana	92%	79%
Prescription drugs	Taking pills not prescribed to you	98%	93%

REGIONAL MENTAL HEALTH, LGBTQ+ and BIPOC SPECIFIC DATA

MENTAL HEALTH

There has been an increase in reports of anxiety and depression among teens, a trend that started prior to the pandemic and has been exacerbated since.

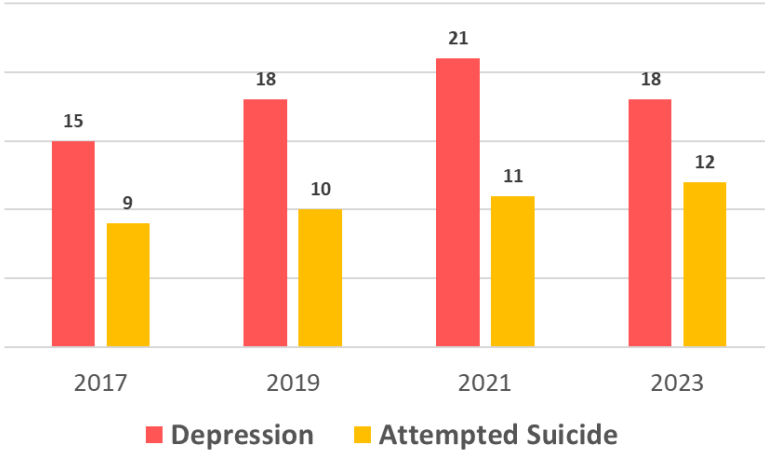
STRESS AND ANXIETY

Local youth reported higher levels of stress and anxiety as they get older, with **53%** of youth surveyed reporting not being able to stop or control worrying at least several days a week and **66%** reporting feeling nervous, anxious or on edge at least several days of the week.

DEPRESSION and ATTEMPTED SUICIDE

Rates of reported depression increase as youth get older. Across time, local rates of depression have been on the rise, increasing from 15% (2017), to 18% (2019) to 21% (2021), to 18% this year. Additionally, youth who are at higher risk (have less than 10 Assets), have higher rates of depression (46%) compared to youth with over 20 Assets (6%). Youth who report depression are also more likely to report an attempted suicide, with 38% of our most vulnerable youth reporting at least one attempt in the last year.

Percentages of Depression and Attempted Suicide among Youth



LGBTQ+ SPECIFIC DATA

18% of youth in the region identify as a part of the LGBTQ+ community. This includes gender identity (transgender, non-binary, genderqueer) and sexual identity (gay, lesbian, bisexual, pansexual, queer, or asexual). This also includes individuals who are questioning either their gender or sexual identity.

These youth are less likely to have the Assets that they need to feel supported and to thrive. This is clear when looking at Positive Identity Assets. LGBTQ+ youth are two times less likely to report having high self esteem (23% vs 48% of non-LGBTQ+ youth) or have a sense of purpose (34% compared to 63%). Research on factors including isolation, acceptance, victimization and the current social climate toward the LGBTQ+ population have been shown to be contributing factors to these findings.

These factors also impact mental health, with results showing LGBTQ+ youth are **twice** as likely as non-LGBTQ+ youth to report an eating disorder, **three** times more likely to report depression and **four** times more likely to report an attempted suicide.

BIPOC SPECIFIC DATA

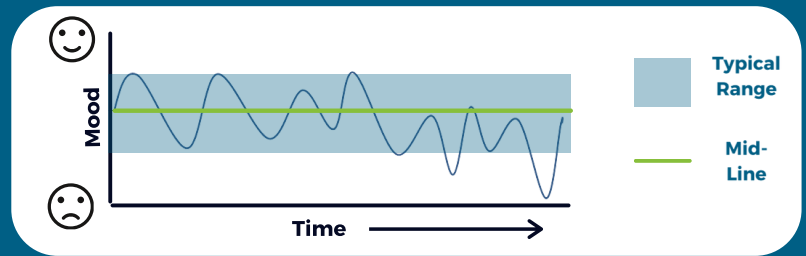
23% of youth surveyed identified as Black, Indigenous and people of color (BIPOC). This sub-group of young people have less Assets than their white peers, and a higher percentage of youth with less than 10 Assets (10% vs 6%). BIPOC youth also reported lower percentages of Positive Identity Assets such as personal power (32% vs 41%) and sense of purpose (50% vs 60% of white peers). BIPOC youth also reported higher levels of eating disorders, depression and attempted suicide than their white peers.

OVERALL IMPACT

Data for these two groups was analyzed separately to see the effects of additional lived challenges these individuals face. Local data supports national trends of the negative impacts of systemic oppression on these populations. Youth in these two groups were less likely to feel that the community values them (BIPOC 25% less likely, LGBTQ+ 50% less likely), and less likely to have positive adult role models (15% and 35% BIPOC and LGBTQ+ respectively)

SYMPTOMS OF DEPRESSION AND ANXIETY IN YOUTH

Fluctuations in mood are normal, but if a person's mood begins to consistently fall outside the typical range, it may be a sign of the bigger issue. If your child experiences this or multiple symptoms from the list below, we encourage you to reach out to your doctor to discuss things further.



Biological

- Changes in energy level
- Changes in eating or sleeping patterns
- Increased reporting of stomachaches/headaches/illness



Cognitive

- Constant worry/negative thoughts
- Trouble concentrating/making decisions
- Difficulty completing schoolwork
- Decline in grades



Social/Emotional

- Decreased interest in activities
- Avoiding friends (even virtually)
- Frequent crying, seeking parent proximity or reassurance
- Emotional outbursts
- Feeling worthless, overly self-critical, low self-esteem



Behavioral

- Decrease in proper hygiene
- Increased conflict with family/peers
- Self-injury or self-destructive behavior
- Isolating in bedroom

WHO CAN I CALL

FOR MENTAL HEALTH OR SUBSTANCE USE CRISIS SUPPORT?

24/7 Crisis Support Lines



Help is available • All ages • Free • 24/7



SCAN ABOVE FOR
LOCAL RESOURCES

Eliot Mobile Crisis Line: (888) 769-5201

For the North Shore, MA Area

National Suicide & Crisis Lifeline: 988 call or text

MA Substance Use Helpline: (800) 327-5050

or text **HOPE** to **800327**

Domestic Violence Support

Jeanne Geiger Crisis Center Hotline
(978) 388-1888

LGBTQ+ Suicide Hotline

The Trevor Project
(866) 488-7386
text **START** to **678-678**

IF YOU OR SOMEONE YOU KNOW IS IN IMMEDIATE DANGER, CALL 911.

Brought to you by The Town of Salisbury & Salisbury Youth Coalition



essex county

ASSET BUILDER
network