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Talking regularly with youth about the dangers of alcohol, tobacco and other drugs reduces their risk of using in the first place.

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## Know! Family Support for Prevention

Research Institute has identified 40 Development Assets for adolescents; a specific set of skills, experiences, relationships and behaviors that help young people flourish and mature into successful and contributing adults. Studies of more than five million children of all cultural and socioeconomic backgrounds consistently show that the more developmental assets they possess, the less likely they are to engage in four specific patterns of high-risk behavior; problem alcohol use, violence, illicit drug use and sexual activity. According to the Research Institute, as the number of assets increase for youth, the greater their chances of succeeding in school and being happy, healthy and responsible.

Youth who experience at least 31 of the 40 assets are considered to be thriving. Unfortunately however, the average youth in sixth through twelfth grade typically experiences less than half of the 40 Developmental Assets, which places them at higher risk for making poor behavioral choices.

What's a parent to do to increase their child's assets? One thing you can do is focus on your support from home. Among the list of key building blocks is **Family Support**, meaning, a child's family life provides high levels of love and support.

### Here are just a few ideas on how you can take action to strengthen your family support:

**Give them your undivided attention:** This is how children measure love. The times that matter most to our children is when we are willing to stop what we're doing to go throw the ball with them, jump on the trampoline or listen attentively to their trumpet solo.

**Give them words of affirmation:** A child's self-identity and self-worth depend highly on the words we speak to them. It is our job to correct our

children, but even in discipline our words should come from a place of love, encouragement and positive reinforcement.

**Give them space:** Just like most of us adults, teens need some alone time each day to relax and unwind.

**Hug your child:** This goes for the really big kids too. They may act like they don't want one, but they do.

**Spend time each week with your children individually:** It doesn't have to be anything extensive; take a walk with one of your children or ask one of them to run to the store with you; even picking your child up from their extra-curricular activity can provide an opportunity to have one-on-one time.

**Start family traditions and rituals:** Young people love to be spontaneous, but they also have a deep need for predictability. Choose a holiday to annually volunteer at a soup kitchen, designate a certain night of the week for family game night, or maybe start a new tradition in the way you celebrate family birthdays.

**Preserve those precious memories:** A family photo album is great, but it is also special to create a small memory book, memory box or photo album for each child to hold onto and be able to reminisce.

There are so many ways to increase family love and support for your child. The important piece is that you consistently make an effort to be active in your child's life and show them your love and affection.

To check out the full list of 40 Developmental Assets and see how your child rates, go to: <http://www.search-institute.org/content/40-developmental-assetsadolescents-ages-12-18#>.

Sources: [Search Institute: 40 Developmental Assets for Adolescents](#).  
[Willis, Dave, For Every Mom: These 5 Things Your Kids Will Remember About You Are Total Parenting Game-Changers](#).

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