

Connect!

LEARNING ACTIVITIES TO STRENGTHEN ASSETS

I



Homework

WRITTEN AND COMPILED BY:
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Introduction

THE CONNECT! I LEARNING ACTIVITIES TO STRENGTHEN ASSETS

Curriculum is based on strengthening the “Developmental Assets” of Youth. These 40 “Developmental Assets” as identified by the Search Institute of Minneapolis have proven to be crucial building blocks that youth and families need in order to succeed in life.

Throughout the country, organizations and schools recognize that these assets can be built and strengthened in our youth with the quiet revolution termed “mentoring.” A mentor is defined as a “wise and trusted friend; or someone that shows the way.”

In the 1997 Summit on America’s Future, leaders from all across the country hailed mentoring as one of the necessary solutions to help ensure a stable future for America’s Youth. They were supported by research proving that mentoring works. Goals were set to find and enlist two million mentors by the year 2000. That goal has been met!

Volunteer mentors come with a variety of education and experience. Asking mentors to work in a structured program to build or strengthen “Developmental Assets” in youth without prior training, raises serious concerns. In order for meaningful interaction to occur between mentors and youth, a basic asset-related curriculum was needed. **CONNECT! I** was developed out of this need.

CONNECT! I is designed to give meaningful interaction during the time mentors spend with their youth. It is designed to be flexible enough to be conducted informally on a one-on-one basis, or it can also be used during family trainings or family activity nights. The activities are designed to help the youth develop life-long competencies based on the “Developmental Assets” model.

From the volunteer/mentor perspective, **CONNECT! I** is a readily available, concrete set of materials and activities that can be prepared and used quickly. **CONNECT! I** will help mentors effectively meet the individual needs of each youth.

Using This Book: To The Mentor

Each of the Units/chapters in this curriculum is dedicated to one of the “40 Developmental Assets” as identified by the Search Institute. The Individual units or chapters are designed to: 1) identify the asset or quality that you, would like to work on with your youth, 2) give specific instructions for fun, active learning activities, and 3) follow up with concrete discussion questions that will help the youth achieve higher level thinking and processing skills. Each unit is self-contained. Activities can be printed off for use to be used individually by one or several sets of mentors and their youth.

Goal And Objective Page

Following the title page is a goal and objective page. This page lists the asset or quality, followed by the goal the youth is expected to meet if successfully achieving that quality. Each goal is broken into three concrete objectives for you and your youth to work on. To the right of each objective is a list of activities that can be completed by you and your youth.

Activity Page

The activity pages are written so that at a quick glance, you can see:

1. Topic of the activity
2. Whether the activity is better as a one-on-one or as a whole group activity
(This is indicated by the two-people graphic or the group graphic)
3. Time required to complete the activity
4. Necessary materials
5. How to set up the activity
6. Detailed directions to conduct the activity
7. Discussion topics to focus and reinforce the purpose of the activity
8. Specific questions to guide the youth’s thinking and processing

Checklist Page

Following each set of activity pages, is a Checklist page. After completing the activities, use this page to evaluate the progress your youth is making on a particular asset. Mentally answer the questions. If the youth is not ready to move on to the next objective, additional activity and resource suggestions are included.

Handouts

At the end of each set of activities there will be a copy of any related activity sheets or handouts to be copied for the youth. Make as many copies of this material as you need for your youth.

HOMEWORK

ASSET #23

GOAL: The youth reports doing at least one hour of homework every school day.

OBJECTIVES

The youth will:

	PAGE
Set up a home study area.	Activity 1 Ideal Study Center 6
	Activity 2 Home Study Area 7
Put together a homework survival kit.	Activity 1 Survival Kit Checklist 9
	Activity 2 Homework Survival Kit 10
Complete and return homework to school on time.	Activity 1 Homework 12
	Activity 2 Homework Habits 13

Ideal Study Center

GOAL: The youth reports doing at least one hour of homework every school day.

Objective

The youth will set up a home study area.

Materials

- A large sheet of newsprint or paper (one for each individual or pair)
- Markers

Activity (30 minutes)

- Distribute paper and markers. Have each youth draw what they think an ideal study hall should look like. Encourage the youth to be creative and include such details as types of furniture and illustrations of how people are behaving.
- After the youth are finished, have each one hang his/her picture on the wall and have the youth explain why they included the various items in their picture.

Discuss

- Talk about the important elements needed in an ideal study area.

Ask

- Which important elements are missing in your illustrations?
(Take time to have the youth include crucial elements in their illustration.)
- What are some elements that detract or interfere with productive homework?
- Are any of these present in your illustration? (If needed, have the youth make adjustments on their illustrations.)

Home Study Area

GOAL: The youth reports doing at least one hour of homework every school day.

Objective

The youth will set up a home study area.

Materials

- Illustration from Activity 1
- A large sheet of newsprint or other paper (one for each individual or pair)
- Markers

Activity (1.5-2 hours)

- The youth will do a better job on homework if they have an appropriate place in which to study, and all necessary supplies at hand. Encourage the youth to study in a quiet, well-lighted place, as free from distractions as possible.
- Using their ideal study illustration, have the youth choose the best area in their home that would be quiet and conducive to studying. Now, have them illustrate this area and include as many crucial elements as they have available, such as: lighting, table/desk, supplies, etc. Remember, the more detail the better!
- Using their illustration, the youth will set up their home study area.

Discuss

- Explain how a good study area will improve school performance.

Ask

- Where is your study area located?
- Why did you select this area?
- Is your study area in a quiet place? Well-lighted? Free from distractions?
- What decorations or “personal touches” could you add to make it a more pleasant, inviting study area?

Homework

GOAL: The youth reports doing at least one hour of homework every school day.

After completing activities 1 and 2, is the youth ready to move on?

1. Does the youth have a designated study area in his/her home?	YES	NO
2. In his/her study area well-lighted?	YES	NO
3. Is his/her study area free from distractions?	YES	NO
4. Is his/her study area pleasant?	YES	NO
5. Did the youth personalize his/her study area?	YES	NO

If you answered “yes” to at least 4 of the 5 questions, you are ready to move on to the follow-up questions. Otherwise, continue with the activities listed below.

More Activities

- Visit a library or an office building. Make note of important elements that make it an effective environment.
- Go through an office supply catalog and make a “wish list” for an ideal home study area.
- Brainstorm the ways in which a study area could be personalized.
- Build a 4-H Lamp. (Available through a 4-H catalog)
- Do a woodworking project such as refinishing a desk for youth’s study area.

Follow-Up Questions

- Why is it important to have a designated home study area?
- Name some elements needed for an effective study area.

Additional Resources

- Tips for Homework Hassles (www.theparentingnetwork.com)
- What Teens Need to SUCCEED by Benson, P. L., Galbraith, J. & Espeland, P. (Minneapolis: Free Spirit Publishing, Inc. 1998).
- Helping Your Child with Homework (U.S. Department of Education).

Homework Survival Kit Checklist

GOAL: The youth reports doing at least one hour of homework every school day.

Objective

The youth will put together a homework survival kit.

Materials

- Pencil
- Lined paper
- Homework Survival Checklist

Activity (15 minutes)

- Youth often have trouble doing assignments at home because he/she doesn't have the necessary supplies on hand. Explain to the youth that just as he/she needs materials in class to get his/her work done; he/she also needs materials at home to do homework.
Have the youth do the following:
- Brainstorm and list on paper all the supplies that he/she may need to do his/her homework.
- Compare his/her brainstorm list to the Homework Survival Checklist.
- Put a check in the box by the supplies that appear on both lists.
- Check any additional boxes of supplies that he/she may have overlooked.
- Add any additional supplies that he/she thought of that were not on the checklist.

- Explain why a Survival Kit is crucial to homework success.

Ask

- Why do you think the Survival Kit Checklist is important?
- Which of the supplies are most important to you? Why?

Homework Survival Kit Checklist

Pencils

Pens

Writing paper

Colored pencils

Markers

Pencil sharpener

Erasers

Glue or paste

Tape

Construction paper

Hole punch

Stapler

Scissors

Paper clips

White out

Assignment book

Folders for reports

Index cards

Intermediate dictionary

Atlas

Thesaurus

Almanac

Rubber bands

Additional Supplies



Homework Survival Kit

GOAL: The youth reports doing at least one hour of homework every school day.

Objective

The youth will put together a homework survival kit.

Materials

- Copy of [Survival Kit Checklist](#) from Activity 1
- Shoe box (or similar size box)
- Anything else the youth want to decorate kit (stickers, pictures, etc.)
- Construction paper
- Markers

Activity (30 minutes)

- Ask the youth to bring a shoe box (or similar size box). Reinforce the importance of having the needed materials at home to do their homework. Tell the youth they will be able to decorate their kit.
- First, establish guidelines; their kit needs to reflect ideas. . .
 - They will be proud of.
 - They won't get tired of.
 - That represents them!
 - That is positive!
- Second, verbally brainstorm together some of the varied and unusual ideas the youth could use to decorate their kit (staying within the guidelines).
- Finally, the youth are given the next 20 minutes to visually express their ideas by decorating their own kit.

Discuss

- The youth are now given time to write at least three fortunes or positive statements and put them in the cookie jar. When the youth are finished, give them the opportunity to select, read, and discuss their chosen fortune from the cookie jar.
- Talk about the benefits of making your own kit instead of buying one.

Ask

- After reviewing the Survival Kit Checklist, what supplies do you already have at home to put into your kit?
- Which supplies do you still need? How will you get them? Develop a plan.
- Where will your kit be placed within your study area?

Homework

GOAL: The youth reports doing at least one hour of homework every school day.

After completing activities 1 and 2, is the youth ready to move on?

1. Has the youth completed the Homework Survival Kit Checklist?	YES	NO
2. Has the youth personalized a Homework Survival Kit of his/her own?	YES	NO
3. Does his/her Homework Survival Kit contain the necessary supplies?	YES	NO
4. Does the youth have a designated place for his/her Homework Survival Kit in his/her study area?	YES	NO
5. Is the youth using his/her Homework Survival Kit to do his/her homework?	YES	NO

If you answered “yes” to at least 4 of the 5 questions, you are ready to move on to the follow-up questions. Otherwise, continue with the activities listed below.

More Activities

- Make an additional kit for school, grandma’s house, etc.
- Help a sibling put together a survival kit of his/her own.

Follow-Up Questions

- Why is it important to have a Homework Survival Kit in your study area?
- What makes your Homework Survival Kit unique?
- What materials could you still add to your Homework Survival Kit?

Additional Resources

- Homework Central (<http://www.homeworkheaven.com/>).
- StudyWEB (<http://www.studyweb.com/>).
- Becoming a Master Student by David B. Ellis (Boston, MA: College Survival, 1997).

Homework Pie

GOAL: The youth reports doing at least one hour of homework every school day.

Objective

The youth will complete and return homework to school on time.

Materials

- Homework Pie worksheet
- Pencil
- Ruler

Activity (30 minutes)

- Have the youth think about the time they spend on homework each week.
- Is it at least one hour or more per school day? (Or about five or more hours each week?) Why or why not?
- Using the Homework Pie worksheet, divide the pie to show about how much of his/her homework time is spent on each subject.

Discuss

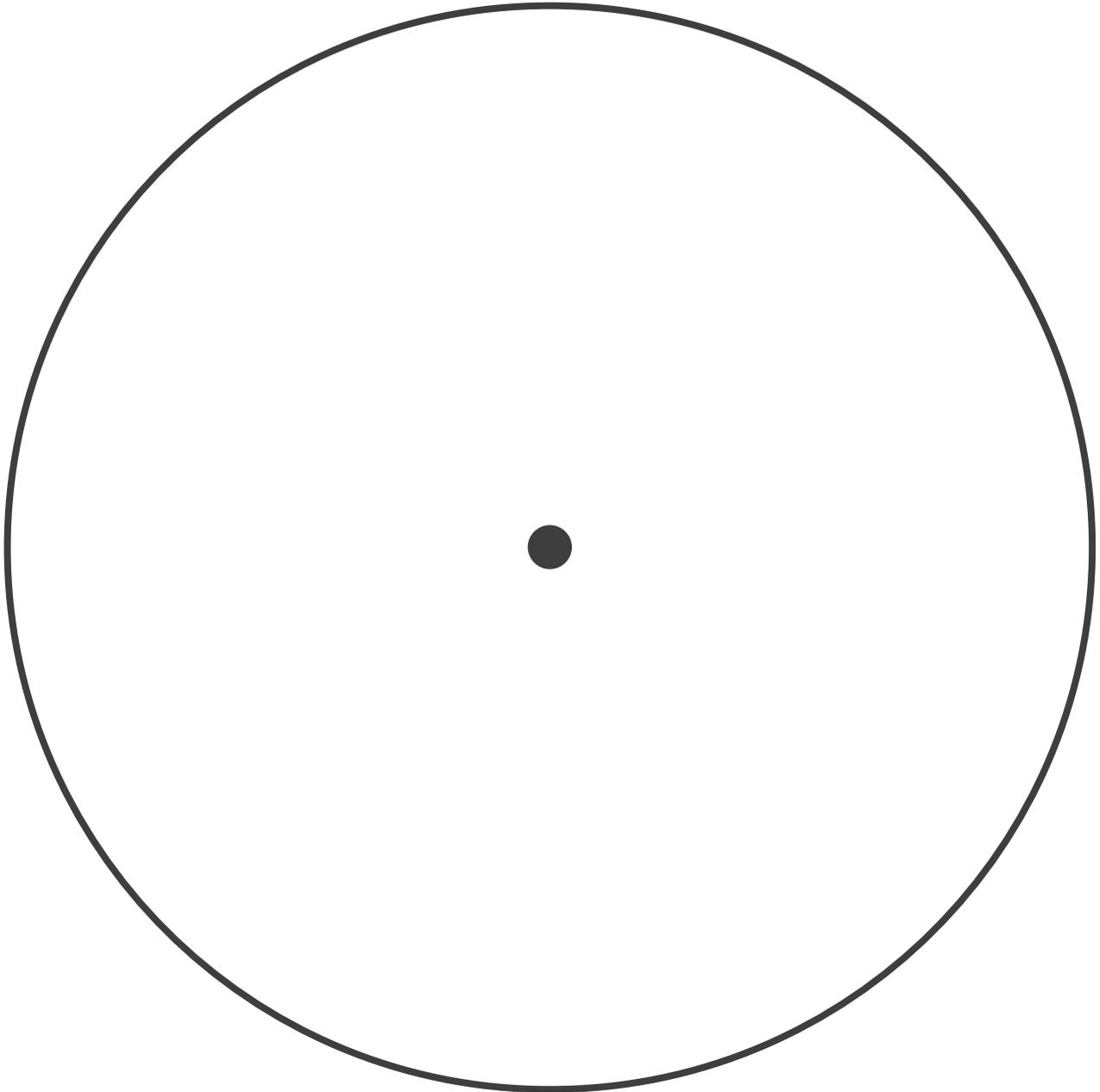
- Evaluate the youth's Homework Pie.

Ask

- In which subject do you spend the most time doing homework? Why?
- In which subject do you not do any homework? Why?
- How much time are you spending on homework each week?
- Should you be doing more homework? Less? Is the time you spend about right? Explain.
- Do you have a specific time set aside to do your homework? If so, does this work out well for you? If not, when would be a better time?
- How do you spend the rest of your homework time? Is it worthwhile? How could it be better?

Homework Pie

Number of hours doing homework each week: _____



Homework Habits

GOAL: The youth reports doing at least one hour of homework every school day.

Objective

The youth will complete and return homework to school on time.

Materials

- Homework Habits Chart
- Weekly Homework Sheet
- Pencil

Activity (30 minutes)

- Youth often become frustrated when they do not get homework assignments in on time or leave their assignments at home. Help them develop responsible habits by giving them some organizational tips. Talk about the importance of completing and returning assignments on time. Have the youth do the following:
 - Brainstorm all the possible homework habits that will help them to complete and return homework on time.
Example:
I will complete all assignments.
I will turn in quality work.
I will turn in work that is neatly done.
I will turn in work on time.
I will make up missed homework.
- From their brainstorming list, have them select their top 5-7 homework habits and complete the [Homework Habits Chart](#).
- Weekly Homework Sheet: Guide the youth as they fill out the homework sheet for the week. Discuss tips such as using different colors, check marks, placement of assignments and completions inside each box, etc..

Homework Habits Continued...

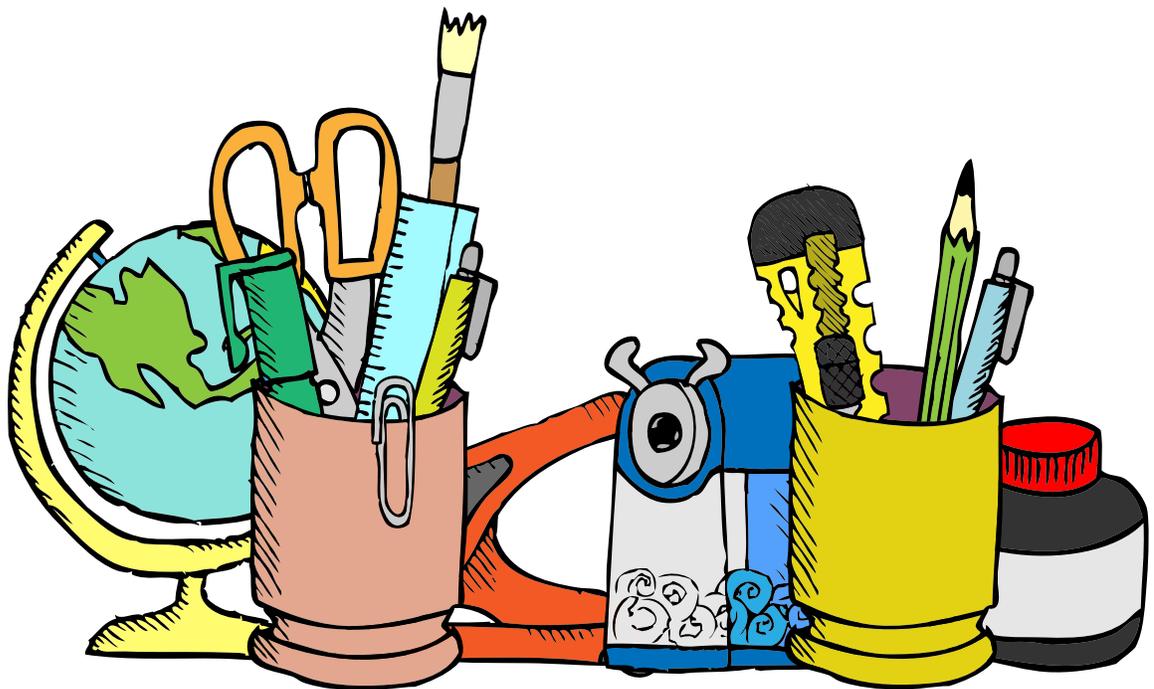
Discuss

- Talk about the importance of keeping track of when homework assignments are due and which ones are completed and turned in.

Ask

- What are your top three choices of homework habits? Why?
- Where do you put your homework after you are finished to make sure it gets turned in on time?
- Which homework habits do you have? Which ones do you need to work on?
- What organizational tips have helped you?
- Is there anything that you can change on the homework sheet to make it more effective for you?

Homework Habits



Homework Sheet

Name _____

Mon					
Tue					
Wed					
Thur					
Fri					

Parent Signature

Homework

GOAL: The youth reports doing at least one hour of homework every school day.

After completing activities 1 and 2, is the youth ready to move on?

1. Is the youth spending at least one hour a day (or five or more hours) each week on homework?	YES	NO
2. Does the youth work on his/her homework at a specific time each night?	YES	NO
3. Is his/her Homework Habits Chart posted in his/her study area?	YES	NO
4. Does the Homework Habits Chart help him/her stay focused on his/her homework completion?	YES	NO
5. Is the youth using the Weekly Homework Sheet to help him/her keep track of assignments?	YES	NO

If you answered “yes” to at least 4 of the 5 questions, you are ready to move on to the follow-up questions. Otherwise, continue with the activities listed below.

More Activities

- Make a monthly calendar to help keep track of the “big” projects.
- Keep a “brag” folder of the work that was turned in and sufficiently completed.

Follow-Up Questions

- How has your Homework Pie changed after talking about your homework habits?
- Which changes have made the biggest difference?
- Which homework habits helped you the most in completing your Weekly Homework Sheet?

Additional Resources

- [Internet Homework Helper](#) (Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice-Hall Computer Books, 1996).
- [Encyclopedia Britannica online](http://www.eb.com/) (http://www.eb.com/).
- Last Minute Study Tips by Ron Fry (Franklin Lakes, NJ: Career Press, 1996).



Utah's Youth and Families with Promise Program (YFP) is designed to address youth problems through early intervention with at-risk youth, ages 10-14, and their families. YFP is a mentoring program designed to reduce and prevent delinquent behavior. The program addresses three goals:

- 1) improve academic performance
- 2) increase interpersonal competence
- 3) strengthen family bonds.



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