



Missouri Training Program for Rural Child Welfare Workers

By:

Ruby Smith, M.Ed.
Prevention Specialist/Resource Coordinator

Missouri Training Program for
Rural Child Welfare Workers

**Southwest Missouri State University
School of Social Work**

Glenda F. Lester Short, PhD., LCSW
Principal Investigator

Diane Elliott, MSSW
Co-Principal Investigator

Mary C. Turner, LMSW
Project Director

Southwest Region Children's Division

Beverly Long, LCSW
Southwest Regional Coordinator

Community Partnership of the Ozark

Melissa Haddow
Executive Director

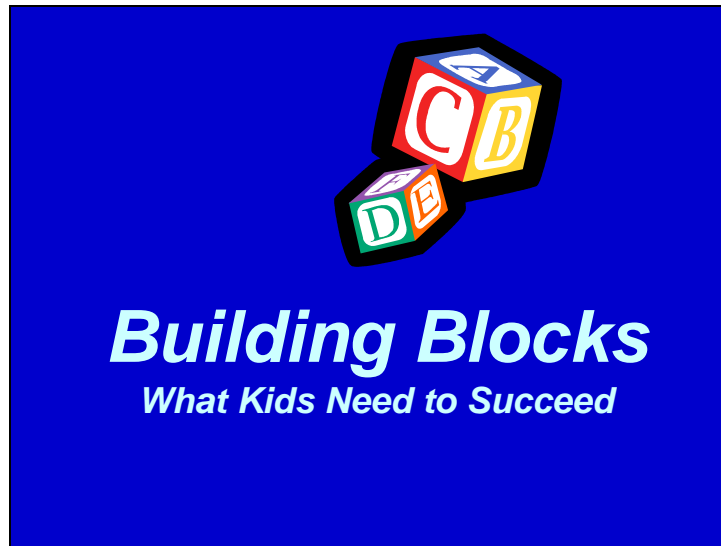
Sylvia Persky
Associate Director

149 Park Central Square
Springfield, Missouri 65806
417-895-7831 • Fax: 417-895-5611

**Funded by: Department of Health and Human Services Administration for
Children and Families Children Bureau**


ACF Grant #: 9OCT0127

Slide 1



Who Came Up With This Model?

- Developed by Peter Benson, Ph.D.
 - Search Institute, 1990
- Based on surveys of nearly 2 million youth in 600 towns & cities
- 800-888-7828 or www.search-institute.org



The framework for building blocks was developed by Peter Benson, Ph.D. the founder of Search Institute in the early 90's. It is based on relationships, skills and other strengths that promote a youth's healthy development. A majority of the funding for his research comes from foundations; the largest donor is Lutheran Brotherhood. His research is pure research because it is not tied into any government funding or restriction or self-interest groups. This research is continuous and as you can see by the slide above, Mr. Benson has examined a large audience.

Mr. Benson named the foundation of his program Developmental Assets, but when training began and that terminology was used, people thought of money and finances, so Developmental Assets are more understandably called Building Blocks in southwest Missouri. This change in terminology allows everyone to relate to the Building Block framework.

Slide 3

40 Building Blocks

- SUPPORT**
- 1. Family provides love & support
- 2. Frequently talks with parents and seeks parent's advice
- 3. Has three or more non-parent adults for support
- 4. Experiences caring neighbors
- 5. Positive & encouraging school climate
- 6. Parents are involved in school
- EMPOWERMENT**
- 7. Youth feels that adults in the community value him/her
- 8. Young people are given useful roles in the community
- 9. Serves others and the community
- 10. Feels safe at home, school and in the neighborhood
- BOUNDARIES and EXPECTATIONS**
- 11. Parents discipline & monitor whereabouts
- 12. School provides clear rules and consequences
- 13. Neighbors show they care by monitoring youth's behavior
- 14. Parents and other adults are good role models
- 15. Best friends have responsible behavior
- 16. Parents & teachers encourage youth to do well
- CONSTRUCTIVE USE OF TIME**
- 17. Involved in music, theatre or other arts 3 hours a week
- 18. Involved in youth/school clubs or sports 3 hours a week
- 19. Regularly attends religious services or activities
- 20. Regularly spends time at home with family

While there are 40 Building Blocks identified, most youth have 17-19. The more Building Blocks a youth has the less likely she/he will be involved in negative behaviors. It is recommended that youth have a minimum of 30 building blocks.

The first 20 blocks are external resources and are divided into 4 categories: **support, empowerment, boundaries and expectations.** Individual youth who have strengths in these categories are more likely to make wise choices.

Slide 4

40 Building Blocks

COMMITMENT TO LEARNING

- 21. Motivated to achieve in school
- 22. Interested in learning new things
- 23. Regularly spends time doing homework
- 24. Cares about their school
- 25. Regularly reads for pleasure 3 hours a week

POSITIVE VALUES

- 26. Believes it is important to help others
- 27. Concerned about world issues and promotes equality
- 28. Can stand up for what they believe
- 29. Tells the truth
- 30. Takes responsibility for self
- 31. Feels it is important not to be sexually active or use alcohol or other drugs

SOCIAL COMPETENCIES

- 32. Can plan ahead and make decisions and good choices
- 33. Good at making friends, empathetic & sensitive
- 34. Comfortable with people of all cultures, races, ethnic backgrounds
- 35. Can resist negative peer pressure
- 36. Seeks to resolve conflict nonviolently

POSITIVE IDENTITY

- 37. Feels “in control” of their lives
- 38. Has high self esteem
- 39. Reports that “my life has purpose”
- 40. Is optimistic about his/her personal future

The next 20 Building Blocks are internal. Strength in these categories provides an internal compass to guide wise choices. These blocks are divided into 4 categories as well: **commitment to learning, positive values, social competencies and positive identity.**

Flip back to slide 3.

Have the participants take a look at the building block category **Support.**

Ask participants, “Which building block would you suppose children have less of?”

1. Family Support 64%
2. Positive Family Communication 26%
3. Other Adult Relationships 41%
4. Caring Neighborhood 40%

5. Caring School Climate 24%
6. Parent Involvement in Schooling 29%

It is **not** important at this time for participants to be correct. It **is** important for them to realize the categories that the child may have the least of so they can begin to see how they can affect a positive change for the child.

Ask them as they suggest a category to then proceed and give an example of how a child welfare worker could contribute to a child's building this block.

Example:

2. Have child discuss with parent's what their options are for school clothes the next morning.
5. Talk to the principal about two adults at school calling the child by name on a daily basis.

Empowerment

7. Community Value Youth 20%
8. Youth as Resources 24%
9. Service to Others 50%
10. Safety 55%

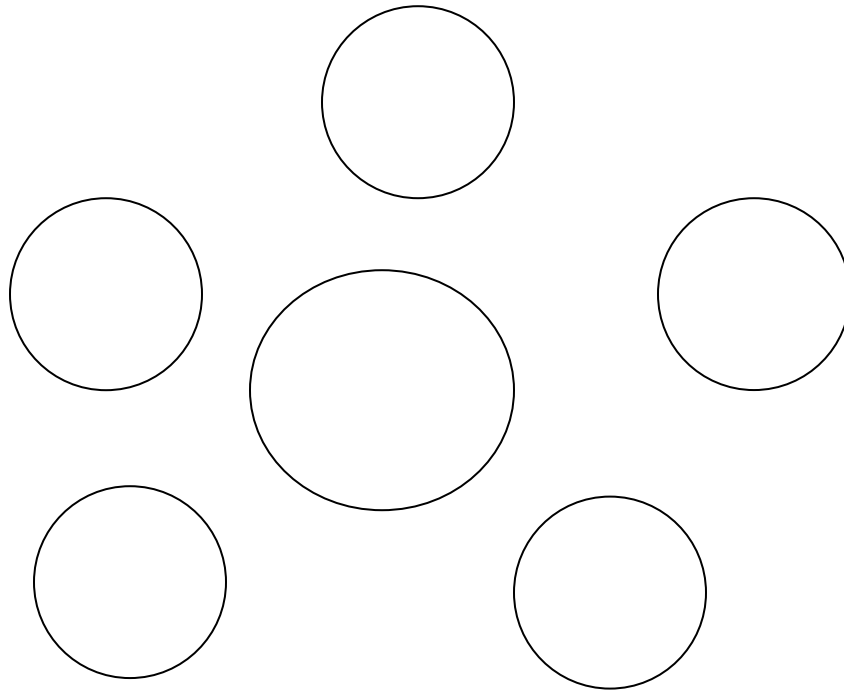
Example:

7. Take cookies to a neighbor.
8. Pick up a neighbor's paper when they are gone on vacation.

Boundaries and Expectations

When you reach the boundaries and expectation category **this activity is always done to allow the worker to identify that they need to be one of the caring adults and to begin to get them to consider the naturally occurring resources of people in the child's life.**

Use the flip chart or write on board to show how to do this activity. Have the participants take a scrap sheet of paper and draw a circle in the middle with five circles around the



major circle. (Like an eco-map)

Say the following: Think of a child. It could be someone you work with or just someone you know. Pretend for a moment you are that child and put his/her name in the circle.

Now, on three of the circles write the name of caring adults outside of his/her family the child might identify. On the remaining two put the names of two adults that he/she might

choose to get to know. Many children can not identify three caring adults. The child may need help to identify those adults who can make a difference in their lives. YOU (the child welfare worker) ARE ONE of the adults the child should be able to identify as a caring adult. If the worker does not think the child can list someone from the school as a caring adult, the worker should consider having a meeting with the teacher and other school staff to change that situation.

Boundaries and Expectations

- 11. Family Boundaries 43%
- 12. School Boundaries 46%
- 13. Neighborhood Boundaries 46%
- 14. Adult Role Models 27%
- 15. Positive Peer Influence 60%
- 16. High Expectations 41%

Constructive Use of Time

- 17. Creative Activities 19%
- 18. Youth Programs 59%
- 19. Religious Community 64%
- 20. Time at Home 50%

Example:

17. This one is more difficult and may take a little more time to develop with the child.

The child can be asked about his/her favorite music or sport. You can share yours. They

could draw the activity that he/she likes to do best. Don't be surprised if they ask you to take the picture with you. You might bring back a picture of the same activity (out of a magazine, or showing you participating in the activity) the next time you visit. The picture could be of a current star involved in that activity.

Commitment to Learning

- 21. Achievement Motivation 63%
- 22. School engagement 64%
- 23. Homework 45%
- 24. Bonding to School 51%
- 25. Reading for Pleasure 24%

Example:

25. If you have already shared block 17, you might bring something (in that child's reading level) for him/her to read. Otherwise, ask them what they read and listen to them reading you a page.

Positive Value

- 26. Caring 43%
- 27. Equality and Social Justice 45%
- 28. Integrity 63%
- 29. Honesty 63%
- 30. Responsibility 60%
- 31. Restraint 42%

* These blocks all have a higher percentage of children who have them; however the numbers are still low

Example:

31. Ask them if they know anyone in their class who (smokes, drinks, is sexually active) participates in these activities. Ask them what they think about it. Discuss a pamphlet you have brought or facts you know without judging what they have revealed.

Social Competencies

32. Planning and Decision Making 29%

33. Interpersonal Competence 43%

34. Cultural Competence 35%

35. Resistance Skills 37%

36. Peaceful Conflict Resolution 44%

Example:

32. Talk about the decisions the child can make. One is picking his/her clothes; another is getting up pleasant and ready to face the day.

35. It might be suggested that they have a special chore like putting their dirty clothes in an assigned spot of their choose (within reason).

Positive Identity

37. Personal Power 45%

38. Self-Esteem 47%

39. Sense of Purpose 55%

40. Positive View of Personal Future 70%

Like positive values, all of these have higher percentages, in fact, 40 has the highest of all the Building Blocks.

Summary activity.

Flip back to slide 3.

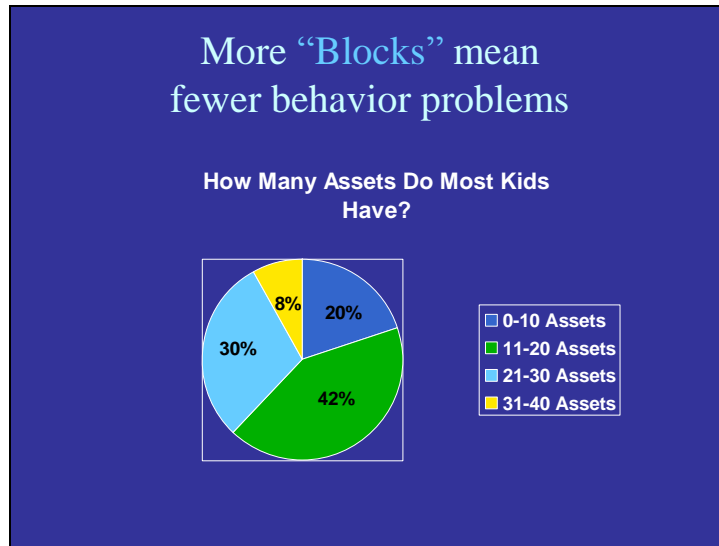
Now we are going to build blocks in the child you have identified. (As you begin this activity, write on the flip chart the number 18). The child has 18 blocks when you begin working with him/her. Say to the participants, “Someone give me one of the blocks and something you can do as a caseworker to build an additional block.” After each block you say, now 19, now 20 until they have given you enough blocks to make 30. Explain that this is the number of assets children need to have the most resilient factors. The goal is to get the worker to see that, with little effort; they can begin building assets for a child and propel them toward the recommended level of assets of 30. This is done quickly with some excitement. Wow we have given this child the opportunity to grow up healthy and ready to meet the challenges of the world.

The Asset Building Difference

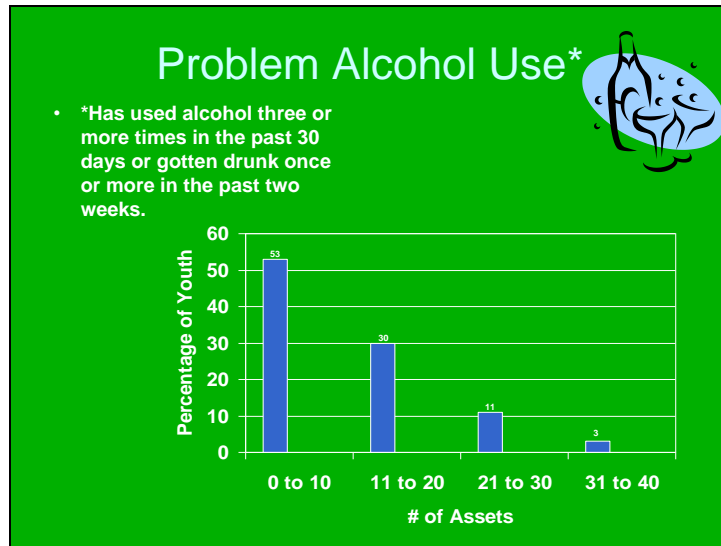
From...	To...
▪ Problem focus	▪ Positive focus
▪ Youth as problems	▪ Youth as resources
▪ Reactive	▪ Proactive behavior
▪ Blaming	▪ Claiming responsibility
▪ Professionals	▪ Everyone
▪ Crisis management	▪ Vision building
▪ Competition	▪ Cooperation
▪ Despair	▪ Hope

Take a look at this slide. How have Building Blocks changed our focus? (Read slide The Asset Difference). We need to spread the word. This is not something we need to do alone. We'll talk about other key players in a few minutes.

Slide 6

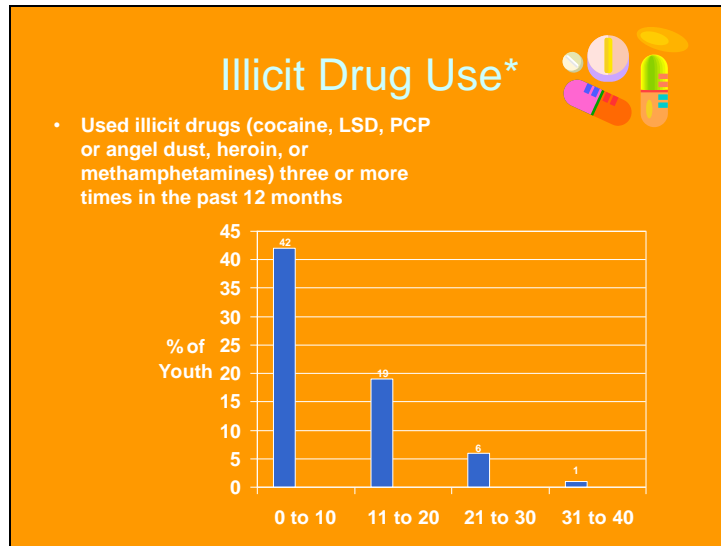


Only 8% have 31 to 40 blocks – 62% have fewer than 20 blocks

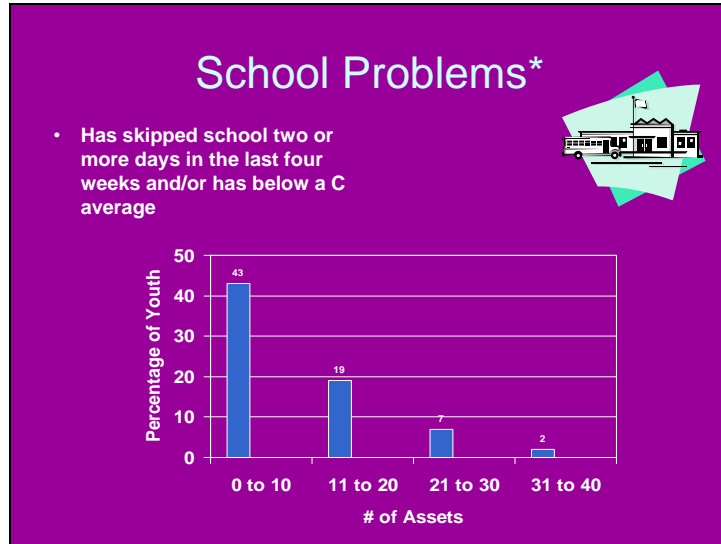


This slide and the next three slides show the power of Building Blocks. Look how few youth who have 31 or more blocks are involved with alcohol.

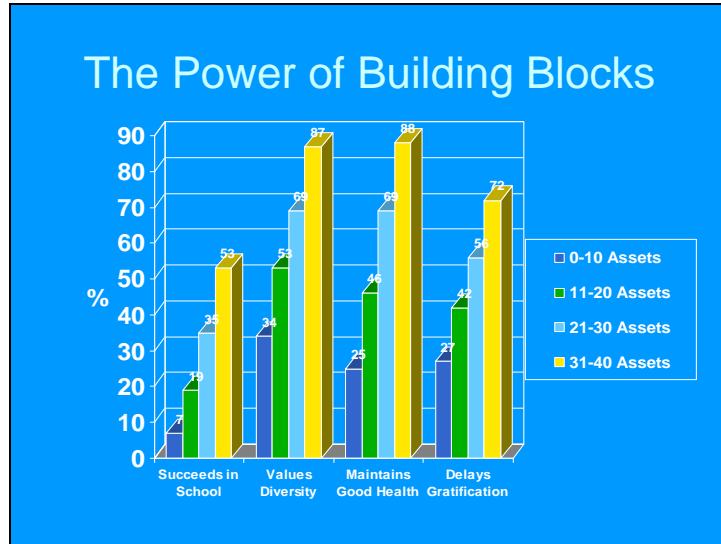
Slide 8



There is a tremendous difference between the use of illegal drugs with those who have fewer than 20 blocks and those that have 31 to 40.



Slide 10



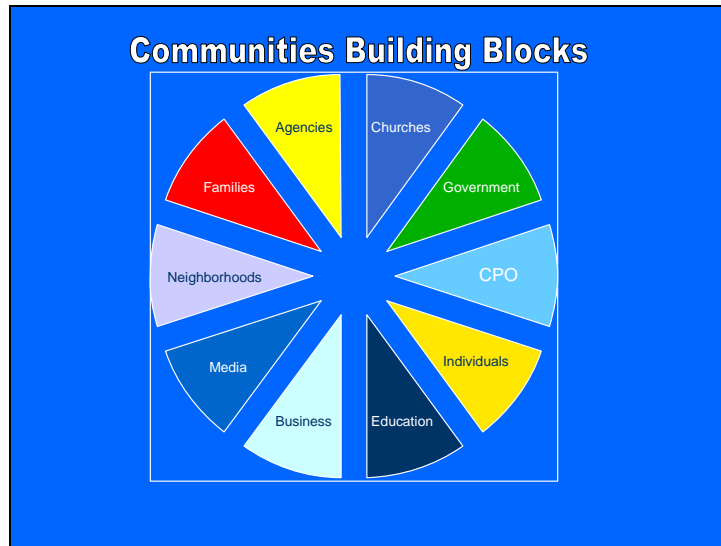
Alcohol Use, Illicit Drug Use, School Problems, Success in School, Values Diversity, Maintains Good Health and Delays Gratification all can be measured by the number of blocks a youth self-identifies.

Principles of Asset Building

1. All children and youth need assets.
2. Relationship are key.
3. Everyone can build assets.
4. Asset building is an ongoing process.
5. Delivering consistent message is crucial.
6. Duplication and repetition are necessary.

Read this slide.

Slide 12



Here are the individuals and groups that should be involved in Building Blocks. We are spreading the word that Building Blocks are fun and easy to work with. Everyone can help.

Where Do We Start?

- Identify a block or blocks to work on to assist in building assets within each child
- Educate others who influence children about Building Blocks
- Assist in integrating the Building Blocks into every sector of the community wheel

You have already gotten a start. You have identified a block that you can help a youth develop.

Families

- #1 Family provides love and support
- #2 Frequently talks with parents and seeks parent's advice
- #5 Parents are involved in school
- #10 Feels safe at home, school and in the neighborhood
- #11 Parents discipline and monitor whereabouts
- #14 Parents and other adults are good role models
- #16 Parents & teachers encourage youth to do well
- #20 Regularly spends time at home with family

As your work through the next several slides, it is important for the participant to identify the building blocks that other community resources can address. Have the participant notice that the following slides have categories like families, social service agencies, etc., and the blocks each community resource can begin working on. Build the point that it takes all of us working together. There is no expectation that you will be the only one working on Building Blocks.

Social Service Agencies

- #1 Family provides love and support
- #2 Frequently talks with parents and seeks parent's advice
- #11 Parents discipline and monitor whereabouts
- #16 Parents and teachers encourage youth to do well
- #37 Feels "in control" of their lives
- #40 Is optimistic about his/her personal future

Businesses

- # 3 Has three or more non-parent adults for support
- #7 Youth feels that adults in the community value him/her
- #14 Parents and other adults are good role models

Media

- #10 Feels safe at home, school or in the neighborhood
- #14 Adult role models
- #31 Feels it is important not to be sexually active or use alcohol or other drugs
- #32 Can plan ahead and make good decisions and good choices
- #35 Can resist negative peer pressure
- #36 seeks to resolve conflict nonviolently

Faith-Based Organizations

- #3 Has three or more non-parent adults for support
- #9 Serves others and the community
- #14 Parents and other adults are good role models
- #16 Parents and teachers encourage youth to do well
- #19 Regularly attends religious services or activities

Schools

- #5 Positive and encouraging school climate
- #6 Parents are involved in schools
- #10 Feels safe at home, school and in the neighborhood
- #12 School provides clear rules and consequences
- #14 Parents and other adults are good role models
- #16 Parents and teachers encourage youth to do well
- #18 Involved in youth/school clubs or sports 3 hours a week

Schools cont'd

- #21 Motivated to achieve in school
- #23 Regularly spends time doing homework
- #24 Cares about their school
- #34 Comfortable with people of all cultures, races, ethnic backgrounds
- #40 Is optimistic about his/her personal future

CLOSURE

Would you close your eyes for a moment? Think about that child again. Is there one block that you can work on today? I hope so. The power of the blocks is simplicity and I hope you have found one to start with.

* The data on the percentages of youth who have these blocks is Copyright by Search Institute (1997). This information is not intended to be nor is it appropriate as a scientific measure of the developmental assets of individuals. Although the findings are not based on a national normative sample, they do provide important insight into the health and well-being of our youth.

Permission to reproduce this material is granted for educational, noncommercial purposes. Copyright 1997 by Search Institute, 700 South Third Street, Minneapolis, MN 55415, 800-888-7828. www.search-institute.org

Building Assets Together: 135 Group Activities for Helping Youth succeed by Jolene L. Roehlkepartain, Copyright 1997 by Search Institute. Revised Edition.