

Chapter 13. Indicators of Positive Youth Development

Positive youth assets are those factors that help protect a teen from engaging in risky behaviors and are linked to positive outcomes. There are forty identified developmental assets.¹ Some assets identified through research are non-parental adult role models, peer role-models, family communication, time use, community involvement, future aspirations, responsible choices and good health practices.² The more assets youth possess the less likely one is to use drugs or engage in other risky behaviors.³ Recent research shows that the average youth experiences only 18.6 of the 40 developmental assets. Older youth have lower asset levels as well as males report lower asset levels than females. Because youth assets play a major role in positive adolescent years, “assets are a powerful approach to parenting.”⁴

There is a variety of extracurricular, community and self-directed activities that youth can be part of with great opportunities that address one’s interest. Programs that promote pro-social values, build leadership, decision making and problem-solving skill and involve hands-on education and cooperative learning have shown successful youth outcomes.

This chapter highlights an overview of southwest Wisconsin teens in terms of positive youth development. While the survey did not specifically measure assets in the same way as the Search Institute did, it did measure 40 Indicators of Positive Youth Development, which approximate the assets identified by Search. Specifically, this chapter attempts to address the following questions

- How emotionally healthy are the teens of southwest Wisconsin?
- What indicators of positive youth development do southwest Wisconsin teens display?
- How are positive youth development indicators distributed by gender?
- How do these positive youth development indicators relate to other issues identified in this report?

¹ Strengthening Developmental Assets (2005) *Whose Kids?.....Our Kids! Parent Newsletter* www.uwex.edu/ces/cty/portage/flp.

² Orman R, Vessely S, Aspy CB (2005). Positive Peer and Family Relationships linked with Lower Substance Abuse in Teens. *Brown University Child & Adolescent Behavior Letter* 25, 4-5.

³ Orman Roy R. et al. (2004) The potential Effect of Youth Assets on Adolescent Alcohol and Drug Use. *American Journal of Public Health*, 94, 1425-1430.

⁴ Levels of Assets among Young People (2003) <http://www.search-institute.org/research>

⁵ Morrissey, Kathleen M. & Werner-Wilson, Ronald Jay (2005) The Relationship between Out-of-School Activities and Positive Youth Development: An Investigation of the Influences of Community and Family. *Adolescence*, 40, 67-85.

INDIVIDUAL EXTERNAL INDICATORS OF POSITIVE YOUTH DEVELOPMENT

Percent of Southwest Wisconsin youth reporting the presence of each positive youth development indicator:

External Indicator - SUPPORT	Male	Female	Total
Family life provides high levels of love and support	90	89	89
Parents are actively involved in helping youth succeed in school	84	84	84
School environment is caring and encouraging	72	77	75
Youth experiences caring neighbors	73	75	74
Youth receives support from three non-parent adults	71	72	71
Youth and parents communicate positively, youth willing to seek parental advice	41	55	48

External Indicator - EMPOWERMENT	Male	Female	Total
Youth perceives home, school and neighborhood to be safe	87	88	88
Youth perceives that community adults value young people	73	73	73
Youth are given useful community roles	64	65	64
Youth serves the community at least one hour a week	19	26	23

External Indicator – BOUNDARIES/EXPECTATIONS	Male	Female	Total
Neighbors monitor youth behavior	83	85	84
Parents and teachers encourage youth to do well	81	85	83
Parents/adults positive role models	73	76	75
School provides clear rules and consequences	72	72	72
Strong parental monitoring and clear family rules and consequences	59	66	63
Peers model responsible behavior	51	57	54

External Indicator – CONSTRUCTIVE TIME USE	Male	Female	Total
Youth is out with friends with nothing to do two or fewer nights per week	80	81	81
Youth spends 3+ hours in extra curricular/community activities	65	68	66
Youth spends 1+ hours in religious institution activities	27	31	30
Youth spends 3+ hours in lessons/practice of creative arts	20	32	26

Key Findings:

Of all the External Indicators of Positive Youth Development, Southwest Wisconsin teens are most likely to report high levels of family love and support.

Of all the External Indicators of Positive Youth Development, only 26% of Southwest Wisconsin teens report spending three or more hours per week in engaged in creative arts after school or on the weekends.

Of all the External Indicators of Positive Youth Development, only 23% of Southwest Wisconsin teens report spending three or more hours per week serving the community.

Other Notable Finding:

Just one in three (34%) of 7th grade males report having positive family communication (ie. reporting frequent conversations about a variety of topics with at least one parent).

INDIVIDUAL INTERNAL INDICATORS OF POSITIVE YOUTH DEVELOPMENT

Percent of Southwest Wisconsin youth reporting the presence of each positive youth development indicator:

Internal Indicator – COMMITMENT TO LEARNING	Male	Female	Total
Youth is motivated to do well in school	77	85	81
Youth is actively engaged in learning	64	83	79
Youth cares about his/her school	75	81	78
Youth does 1+ hour of homework per school day	58	70	64
Youth reads 3+ hours a week for pleasure	26	41	34

Internal Indicator – POSITIVE VALUES	Male	Female	Total
Youth places high value on promoting equality	92	97	95
Youth places high value on caring for others	91	96	93
Youth accepts personal responsibility	87	91	89
Youth tells the truth even when it is not easy	82	88	85
Youth stands up for beliefs	84	87	85
Youth believes in abstinence and not using alcohol or other drugs	47	54	51

Internal Indicator – SOCIAL COMPETENCE	Male	Female	Total
Youth has empathy, sensitivity and friendship skills	91	96	93
Youth resists negative peer pressure and dangerous situations	84	87	86
Youth knows how to plan ahead and make good choices	85	85	85
Youth is comfortable with people of different race and culture	44	70	58
Youth seeks non-violent resolution to conflicts	32	51	42

Internal Indicator – POSITIVE IDENTITY	Male	Female	Total
Youth is optimistic about their future	90	90	90
Youth feels he or she has control over things that happen to them	76	75	75
Youth has high self-esteem	78	71	74
Youth feels their life has a purpose	75	65	70

Key Findings:

Nineteen of twenty (95%) of teens possess the Internal Indicator of Positive Youth Development, placing a high value on promoting equality.

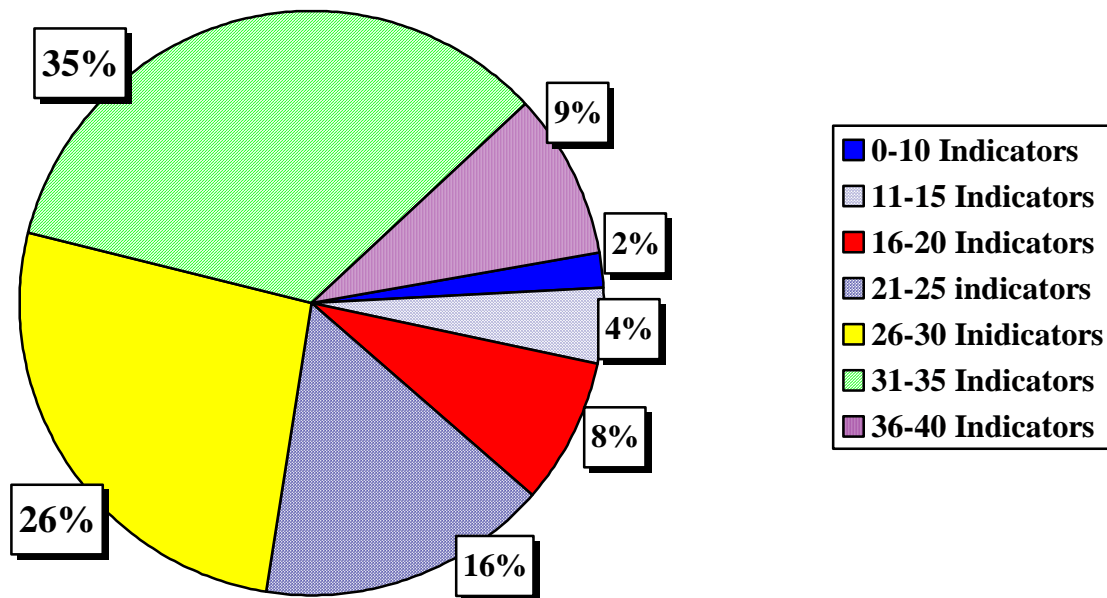
Of all the Internal Indicators of Positive Youth Development, only 34% of Southwest Wisconsin teens report spending three or more hours per week in engaged in reading for pleasure.

Other Notable Finding:

While 38% of 7th grade males and 64% of 7th grade females would seek peaceful resolutions to a conflict, only 31% of 12th grade males and 45% of 12th grade females would follow this course.

OVERALL DEVELOPMENTAL STATUS OF SOUTHWEST WISCONSIN YOUTH

Percent of youth reporting positive youth development indicators*:



* To determine the number of youth development indicators students possess, student responses to questions related to the 40 positive youth development indicators were analyzed and evaluated for responses that indicated the presence or absence of each indicator. Following individual student positive youth development indicators evaluations, students were grouped according to the number of indicators present.

Key Findings:

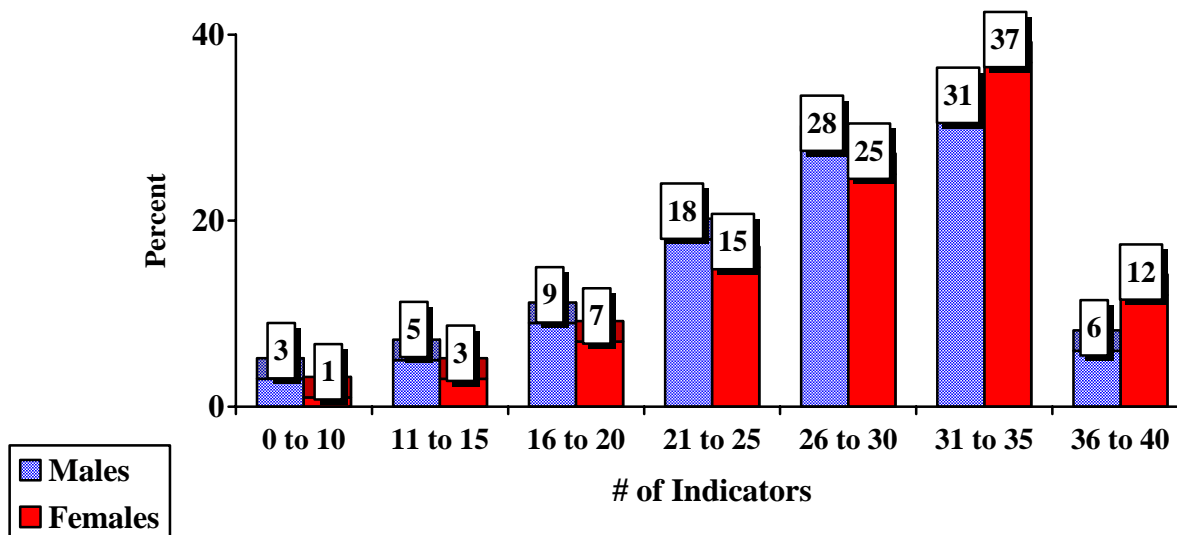
Nearly one in ten (9%) teens in southwest Wisconsin have at least 36 Positive Youth Development Indicators.

Fifty-nine percent (59%) of teens in southwest Wisconsin possess at least 26 Positive Youth Development Indicators.

Sixteen percent (16%) of teens in southwest Wisconsin possess 20 or fewer Positive Youth Development Indicators.

OVERALL DEVELOPMENTAL STATUS OF SOUTHWEST WISCONSIN TEENS

Youth reporting positive youth development indicators by gender:



Key Findings:

Nearly half (49%) of the females have more than 30 positive youth development indicators. This compares to 37% of males that possess 31 or more Positive Youth Development Indicators.

Twice as many males as females (8% vs. 4%) have between 0 and 15 Positive Youth Development Indicators.

Other Notable Findings:

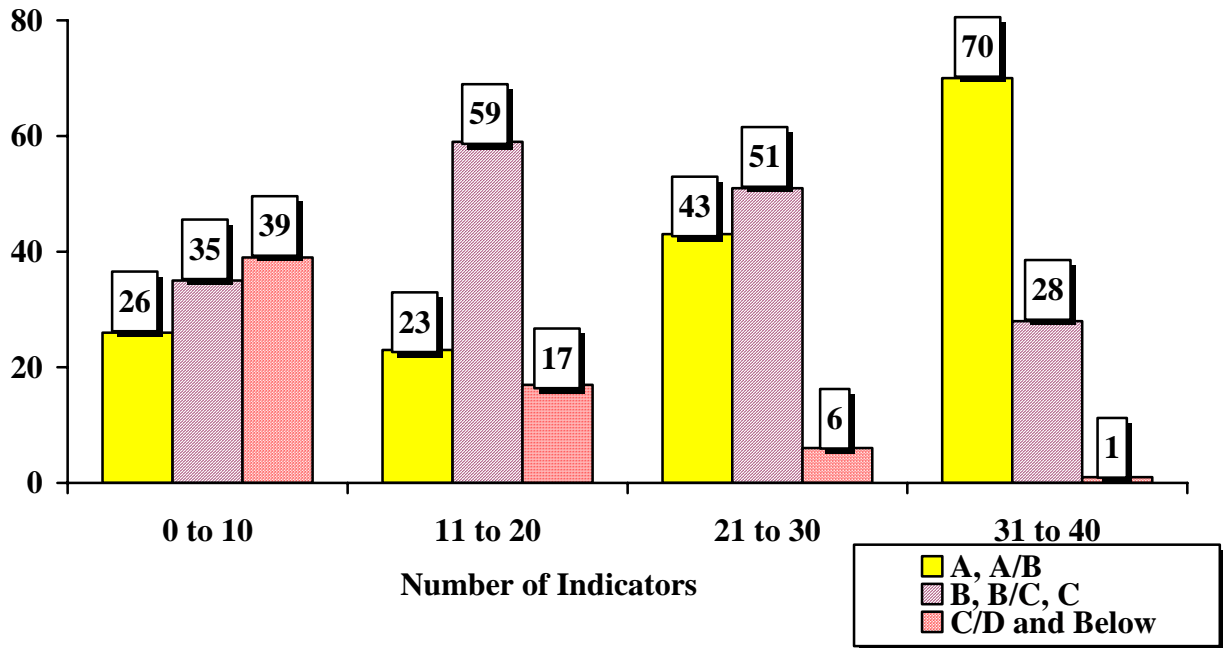
Nearly one in four (23%) of 7th grade females possess between 36 and 40 Positive Youth Development Indicators. Only 6% of 12th grade females have this many Positive Youth Development Indicators.

One in ten (11%) of 8th grade males possess between 36 and 40 positive youth development indicators, while just 3% of 12th grade males have this many Positive Youth Development Indicators.

Fourteen percent (14%) of 7th grade males possess 20 or fewer positive youth development indicators while 21% of 12th grade males possess 20 or fewer Positive Youth Development Indicators.

POSITIVE YOUTH DEVELOPMENT INDICATORS COMPARED TO AVERAGE GRADES

Number of positive youth development indicators and average grades in course work at school:



Key Findings:

Seven in ten (70%) teens with 31-40 Positive Youth Development Indicators report averaging A's or A/B's in their courses at school. One percent (1%) of the teens with 31-40 Positive Youth Development Indicators report average grades of C/D's or below in the courses at school.

Thirty-nine percent (39%) of teens with 0 to 10 Positive Youth Development Indicators report average grades of C/D's or below in the courses at school.

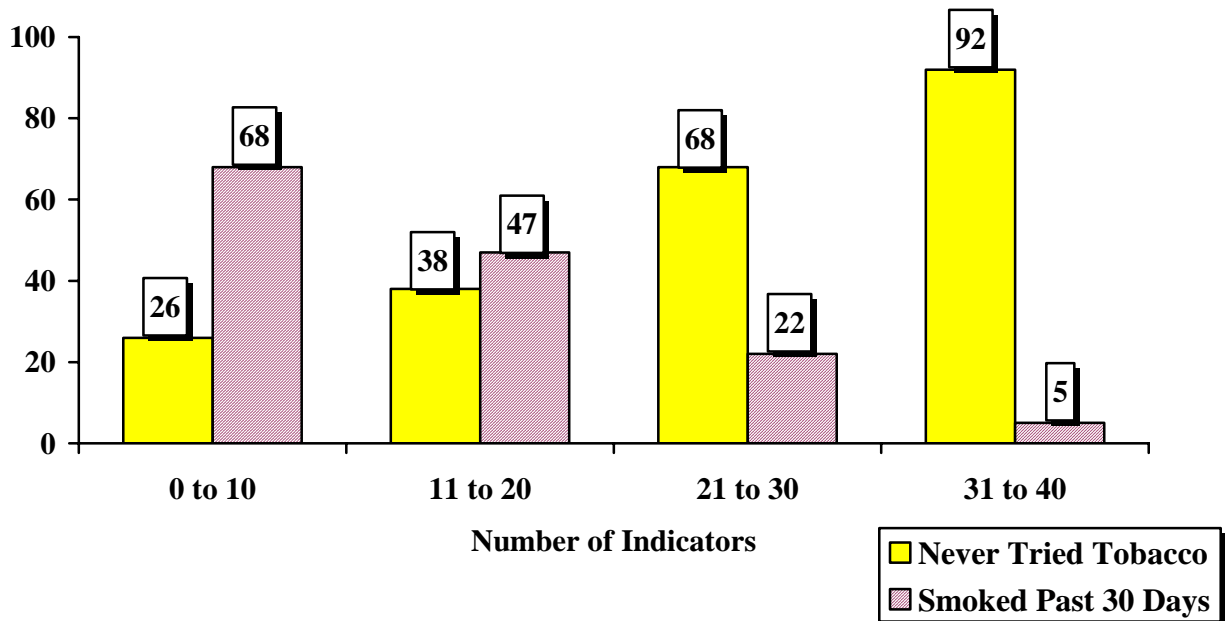
The majority of students with 11-20 or 21-30 Positive Youth Development Indicators report average grades of B', B/C's or C's in the courses at school.

Other Notable Finding:

Eighty-eight percent (88%) of teens with 36-40 Positive Youth Development Indicators report average grades of A's or A/B's in the courses at school.

POSITIVE YOUTH DEVELOPMENT INDICATORS COMPARED TO TOBACCO USE

Number of positive youth development indicators compared with tobacco experimentation and 30-day tobacco use:



Key Findings:

Ninety-two percent (92%) of teens with 31-40 Positive Youth Development Indicators report having never tried smoking cigarettes. Five percent (5%) of teens with 31-40 Positive Youth Development Indicators report smoking a cigarette in the past 30 days.

One in four (26%) teens with 0 to 10 Positive Youth Development Indicators report having never tried smoking cigarettes. Sixty-eight percent (68%) of teens with 0-10 Positive Youth Development Indicators report smoking a cigarette in the past 30 days.

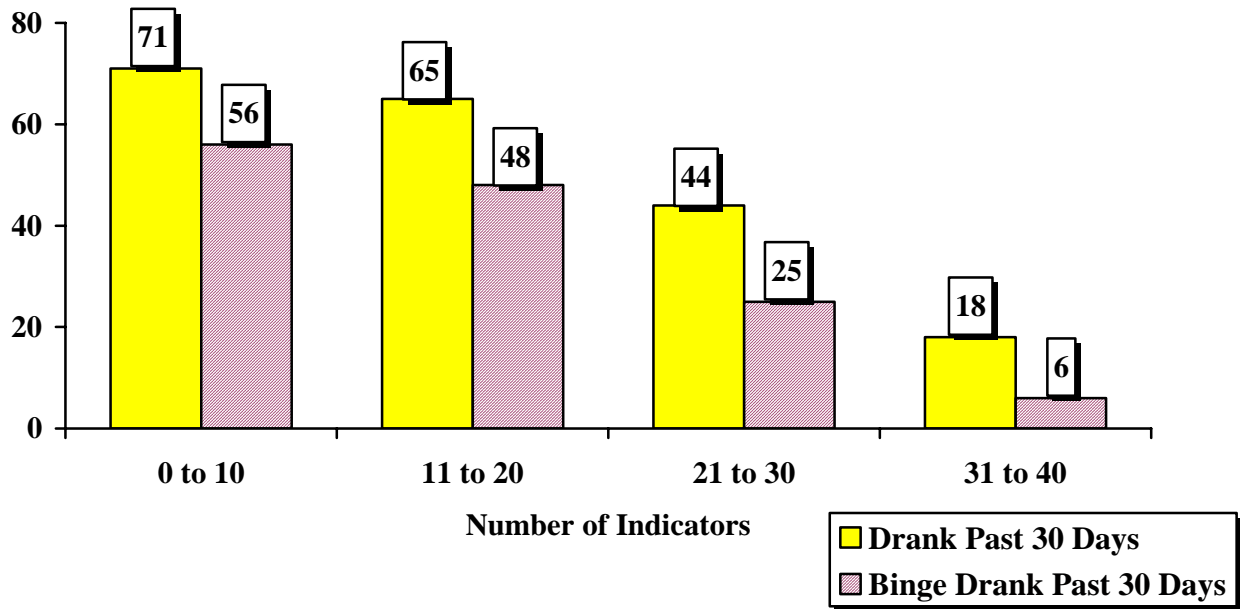
Teens with more Positive Youth Development Indicators are less likely to have tried smoking cigarettes or smoking in the past 30 days.

Other Notable Finding:

Only 1% of teens with 36-40 Positive Youth Development Indicators report having ever tried smoking cigarettes.

POSITIVE YOUTH DEVELOPMENT INDICATORS COMPARED TO ALCOHOL USE

Number of positive youth development indicators compared with 30-day alcohol use and binge drinking:



Key Findings:

Only 18% of teens with 31-40 Positive Youth Development Indicators report drinking alcohol in the past 30 days. Six percent (6%) of teens with 31-40 Positive Youth Development Indicators report binge drinking (drinking 5 or more drinks in a row within a couple hours time) in the past 30 days.

Seventy-one percent (71%) of teens with 0 to 10 Positive Youth Development Indicators report drinking alcohol in the past 30 days. Fifty-six percent (56%) of teens with 0-10 Positive Youth Development Indicators report binge drinking in the past 30 days.

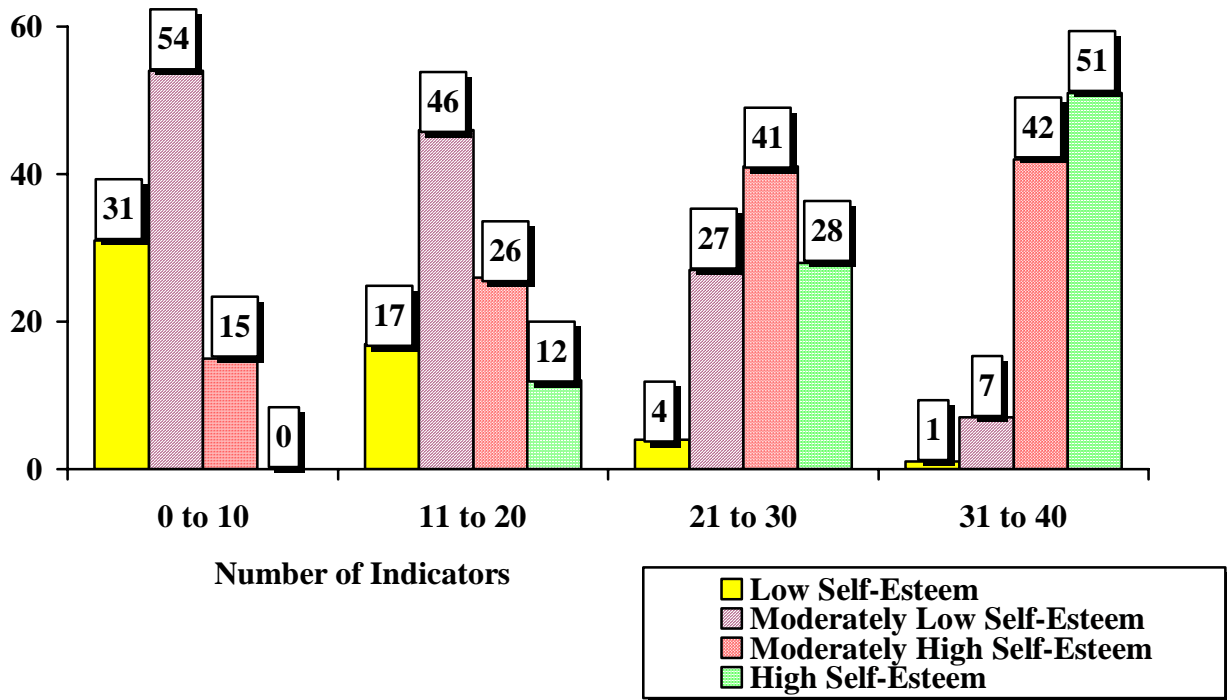
Other Notable Findings:

Forty-one percent (41%) of teens with 0 to 10 Positive Youth Development Indicators report drinking alcohol at least 10 times in the past 30 days.

Only 7% of teens with 36-40 Positive Youth Development Indicators report drinking alcohol in the past 30 days.

POSITIVE YOUTH DEVELOPMENT INDICATORS COMPARED TO SELF-ESTEEM

Number of positive youth development indicators compared with self-esteem scale*:



*The self-esteem scale combines four questions related to self-esteem. Higher scores correspond to more positive reports of self-worth and positive attitudes about themselves.

Key Findings:

More than half (51%) of teens with 31-40 Positive Youth Development Indicators report high levels of self-esteem. Another 42% of teens with 31-40 Positive Youth Development Indicators report moderately high levels of self-esteem.

No teens with 0 to 10 Positive Youth Development Indicators report high levels of self-esteem.

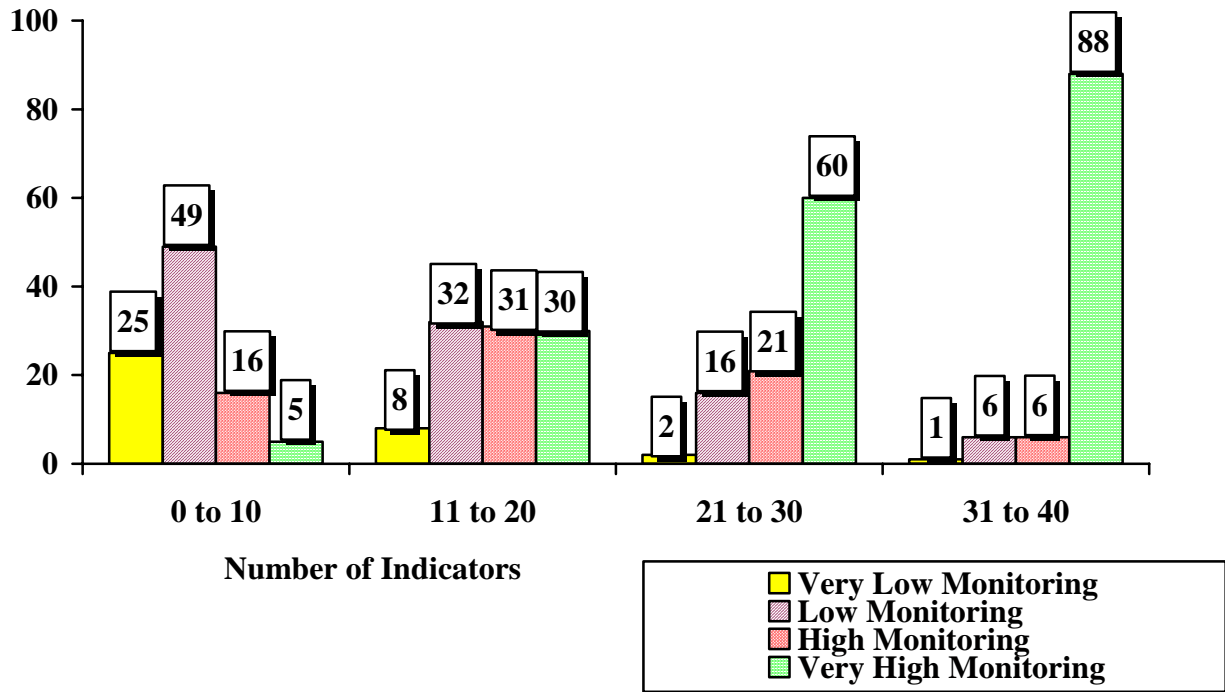
The majority of teens with 0-10 or 11-20 Positive Youth Development Indicators report low or moderately low levels of self-esteem.

Other Notable Findings:

Seventy-four percent (74%) of teens with 0 to 10 Positive Youth Development Indicators report feeling sad or depressed in the past 30 days while 48% of teens with 36-40 Positive Youth Development Indicators report feeling sad or depressed in the past 30 days.

POSITIVE YOUTH DEVELOPMENT INDICATORS COMPARED TO PARENTAL MONITORING

Number of positive youth development indicators compared with parental monitoring scale*:



*The parental monitoring scale summed the responses from the questions related to parental awareness of teen behaviors. Higher scores correspond to greater parental awareness.

Key Findings:

Eighty-eight percent (88%) of teens with 31-40 Positive Youth Development Indicators report that their parents practice very high levels of parental monitoring. One percent (1%) of the teens with 31-40 Positive Youth Development Indicator report their parents practice very low levels of parental monitoring.

Forty-nine percent (49%) of teens with 0 to 10 Positive Youth Development Indicators report that their parents practice very low levels of parental monitoring.

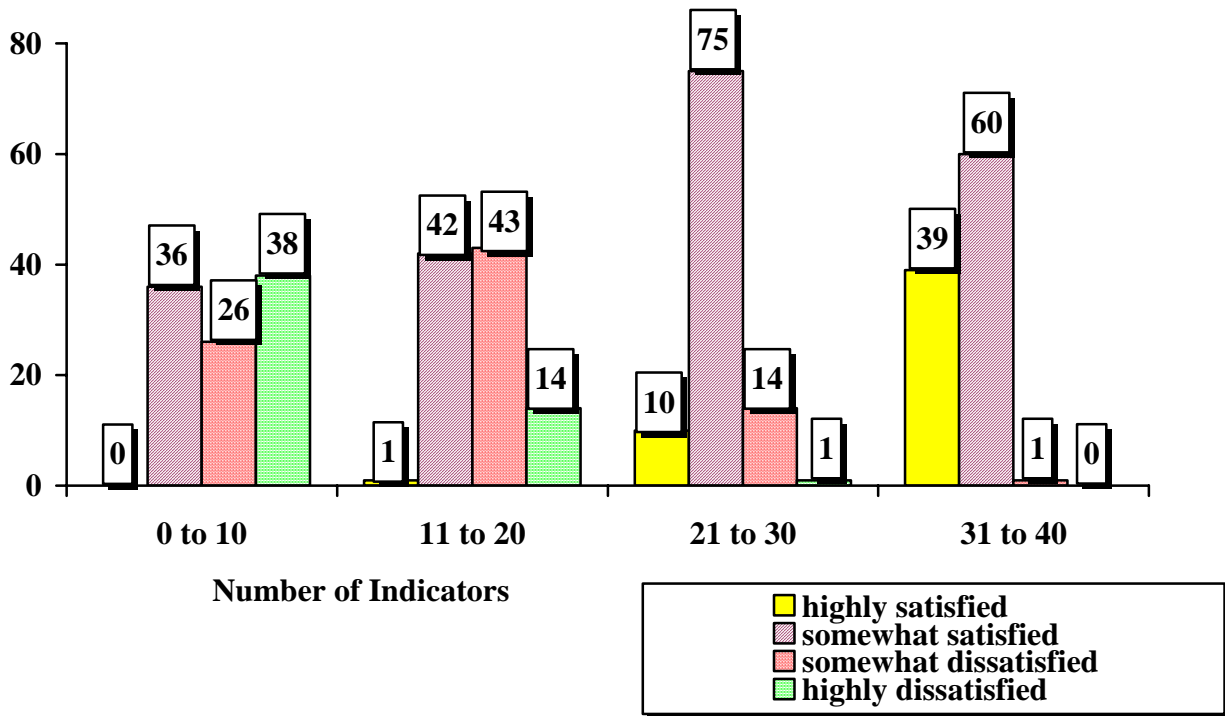
Other Notable Findings:

Four in five (80%) of teens with 0 to 10 Positive Youth Development Indicators report that their parents practice inconsistent or very inconsistent communication and enforcement of consequences for violating family rules.

Sixty-six percent (66%) of teens with 36-40 Positive Youth Development Indicators report that their parents practice consistent or very consistent communication and enforcement of consequences for violating family rules.

POSITIVE YOUTH DEVELOPMENT INDICATORS COMPARED TO SCHOOL SATISFACTION

Number of positive youth development indicators compared with school satisfaction scale*:



*The school satisfaction scale summed the responses from seven questions related to teen's satisfaction with school. Higher scores correspond to greater teen school satisfaction.

Key Findings:

Sixty-four percent (64%) of teens with 0 to 10 Positive Youth Development Indicators report being somewhat or highly dissatisfied with school.

Eighty-five percent (85%) of teens with 21-30 Positive Youth Development Indicators report being somewhat or highly satisfied with school.

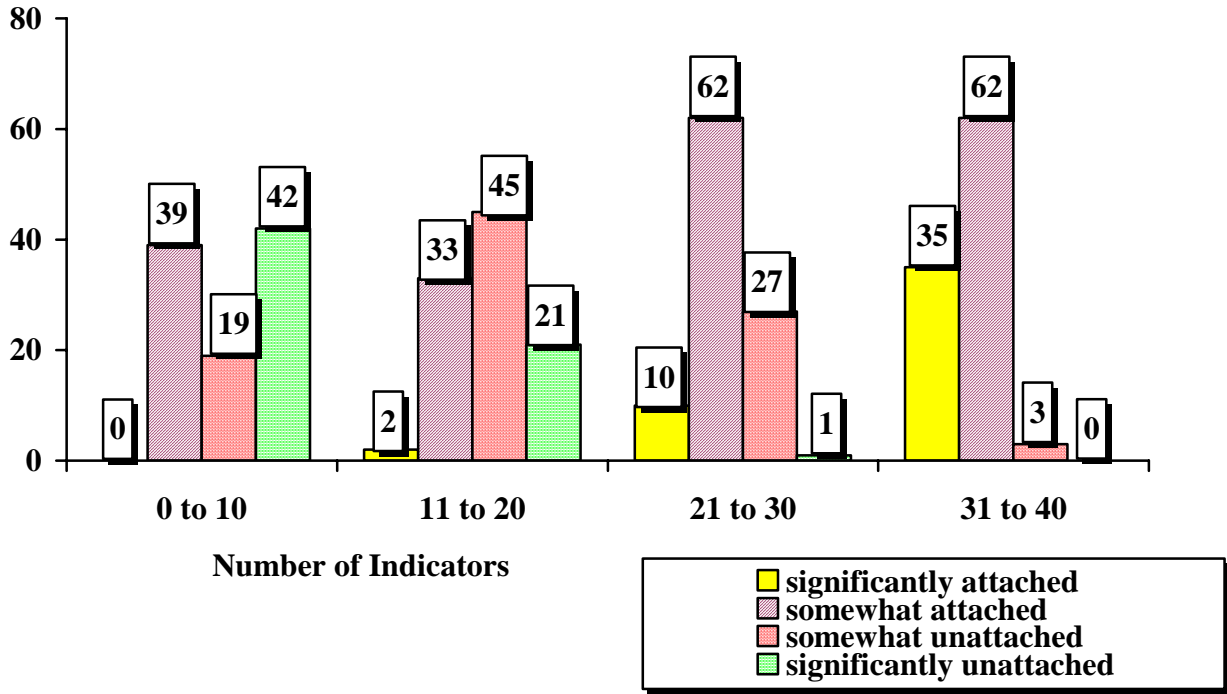
Ninety-nine percent (99%) of teens with 31-40 Positive Youth Development Indicators report being somewhat or highly satisfied with school.

Other Notable Findings:

Fifty-five percent (85%) of teens with 0 to 10 Positive Youth Development Indicators report vandalizing property within the past year while only 2% of teens with 36-40 Positive Youth Development Indicators report vandalizing property within the past year.

POSITIVE YOUTH DEVELOPMENT INDICATORS COMPARED TO COMMUNITY ATTACHMENT

Number of positive youth development indicators compared with a community attachment scale*:



*The community attachment scale summed the responses from nine questions related to teen’s perceptions of their community, including how they are treated by adults and opportunities they are given within the community. Higher scores correspond to greater community attachment.

Key Findings:

Sixty-one percent (61%) of teens with 0 to 10 Positive Youth Development Indicators report feeling somewhat or significantly unattached to their community.

Ninety-seven percent (97%) of teens with 31 to 40 Positive Youth Development Indicators report feeling somewhat or significantly attached to their community.