



# Key Developmental Assets for Children and Young People in Foster Care

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## Abstract

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Every child or young person placed in out-of-home care presents a unique set of opportunities and challenges for those seeking to make a difference in their lives. Targeting key developmental assets helps to nurture and reinforce the achievement of specific outcomes that equip looked after children and young people to become healthier, more emotionally and physically resilient young adults. This paper provides a conceptual rationale for targeting twenty developmental assets and adapting these for use with European and Commonwealth populations. A Key Developmental Assets (KDA) recording tool assists Foster Carers and Supervising Social Workers to monitor, record and report on developmental outcomes achieved by each child or young person in their looked after care. Twelve key external assets wrapped around children and young people are monitored by Foster Carers from the first hour of placement. Eight key internal assets are nurtured and promoted by Foster Carers through a daily life approach to caring, with weekly recording of achievements.

Key Words: assets, development, foster care

## Introduction

Since the end of the 20th Century, outcomes measurement has become a requirement for non-profit, government and private sector child, youth and family service providers in North America (Stuart, 2008) as well as in the United Kingdom and Ireland where policy initiatives such as *Every Child Matters*<sup>1</sup> (2003) in England, *Getting It Right For Every Child in Scotland*<sup>2</sup> (2005) and Ireland's *Agenda for Children's Services*<sup>3</sup> (2008) all reinforce outcome strategies. Such initiatives have shifted the focus of child and youth services away from targeting children and families with particular problems to locating provisions within a more universal framework of support for families and carers, acknowledging that some children and families may require additional support at different points along the way. Further policy directives were highlighted in the Report *Looked After Children and Young People: We Can and Must Do Better* (2007) published by the Scottish Government where structural disadvantages associated with becoming a "looked after kid" (Hewitt, 2002) were clearly acknowledged.

An important 21st Century policy theme that has driven looked-after care in the UK and out-of-home care in Ireland has been an expectation that service providers will **demonstrate accountability and achieve outcomes** associated with specific funding and policy targets. Such

accountability has required that a new set of attitudes and skill-sets will be demonstrated by all engaged in corporate parenting functions at *direct service* levels. Cost-effectiveness, care planning and evaluations are now commonplace, with multiple efforts geared towards improving looked after care, education and treatment outcomes. Goal-oriented activity that helps looked after children and young people meet specific objectives are required in the form of Care Plans. These are reviewed by UK statutes through legislated administrative processes known as LAC (Looked After Child) Reviews. LAC Reviews are monitored by corporate parents assigned a legal mandate to provide looked after care in the UK (*They Are All Our Bairns*, 2008), or out-of-home developmental care administered by the Health Services Executive in Ireland.

An *Outcomes Agenda* now requires that human services achieve targeted outcomes with clients, customers or end-users, regardless of how the recipients of services are identified. Care outputs are frequently confused with care outcomes and both are important. In their survey of Welfare and Family Service Agencies across Canada, Ferris-Manning and Zandstra (2003) found that

“only 50% have systematic processes for integrating results of their own outcomes evaluation and needs assessments into practice, and only 30% have processes for integrating the results of external research into practice... 39% do not have any process” (Stevenson & Balla, 2003, p. 9).

*Care outputs* are produced by service organisations operated by or through purchase of service contract for corporate parents – the actual people in government agencies who are assigned mandated authority by the judiciary for all children and young people in out-of-home care. The corporate parent rarely has direct contact with looked after children and young people, although some attempts are made through youth in care forums. *Care outcomes*, on the other hand, involve developmental achievements that are shaped through relationships with children and young people in out-of-home care during important periods in their lives. This distinction between care outputs and care outcomes is commonly seen with pre-school children in day nurseries. A care output may require that all pre-school aged children in the centre receive meals in a timely, nutritional and age-appropriate manner. A care outcome might focus in the same setting on whether this child can feed him or herself using a spoon.

*Policy outcomes* are commonly pursued by politicians and civil servants who represent or report to government bodies (for example, the Care Commission in Scotland, Ofsted in England or the HSE – Health Services Executive – in Ireland) seeking annual assurances that public funding is achieving targeted goals and policy objectives. *Service outcomes* are targeted by health, education and welfare agencies and professionals – social workers, psychologists, teachers, doctors, nurses and their managers – seeking to show whether particular services are achieving targeted objectives. Fewer attempts are made to record, monitor and report systematically on *developmental care outcomes* achieved by UK children and young people in looked after care, or by those receiving out-of-home developmental care as highlighted in Irish legislation.

## Looked After Children and Young People<sup>4</sup>

There were 60,900 children and young people in looked after care in England on 31 March 2009, a figure that has remained relatively unchanged since 2005 (DCFS, 2009). On the same date, there were 15,288 children and young people looked after by Scotland’s local authorities, an increase of 3 per cent over 2008, with the trend profile showing an increase every year since 2001, its highest since 1983 (Scottish Government, 2009). During the same period in Wales, there were 4,941 children and young people in looked after care on 31 March 2009, a demo-

graphic increasing 3% on 2008 but a significant 50% increase since 1997 (Dolman, 2009). The latest information identified for Northern Ireland shows that on 31 March 2008 there were 2,433 children and young people in looked after care, 57% (1,376) of these were living with foster carers; 26% (622) were living with their family; 13% (319) were living in residential care; and 5% (116) were living in other types of placements

Overall, boys outnumber girls in the UK's looked after care system by a ratio of roughly 3:2 (BAAF, 2009). The children and young people in looked after care in Scotland (87%) and Wales (92%) are mostly of White European heritage whilst for England, that proportion dropped to 76%, with 7% Black, 5% Asian, and 8% dual parentage highlighted (DCSF, 2009). There were 3,700 unaccompanied asylum seeking children in the 2009 English census of children and young people in looked after care in England, roughly 6% of the total (DCSF, 2009). Roughly 2 out of 5 of looked after children and young people in Scotland (5932 or 38.8%) were living under supervision at home with parents, whilst 1 in 5 were looked after by friends or relatives (kinship care) (3037 or 19.8%). Nearly a quarter (4,739 or 23%) of children were looked after by foster carers provided by the local authority, with a further 6% (917) looked after by foster carers purchased by the local authority. The numbers of children looked after by foster carers or prospective adopters have increased every year in Scotland since 1993. 1 out of 10 children and young people in looked after care (1580 or 10.3%) were living in residential placements, and 2% were placed for adoption (Scottish Government, 2009). Almost as many of Scotland's looked after children and young people were living under home supervision with family members as were looked after in foster care.

That compares with three quarters of the total looked after population of 44,200 children and young people in England living in some form of foster care on 31 March 2009. In England, the total number of foster care placements has risen steadily each year since 1995 when 65% of looked after children and young people were living in foster care, increasing to 75% of placements in 2009. This compared with 73.5% of foster care placements in Wales and (or half the looked after population being in fostering (30%) or kinship care (20%) in Scotland. Placements of looked after children and young people in English and Scottish residential care have remained roughly 10% of placements over the past decade. That compares with only 4% of looked after children and young people in Wales placed in children's homes, but 13% of placements in Northern Ireland at 31 March 2008.

## Targeting Key Developmental Outcomes

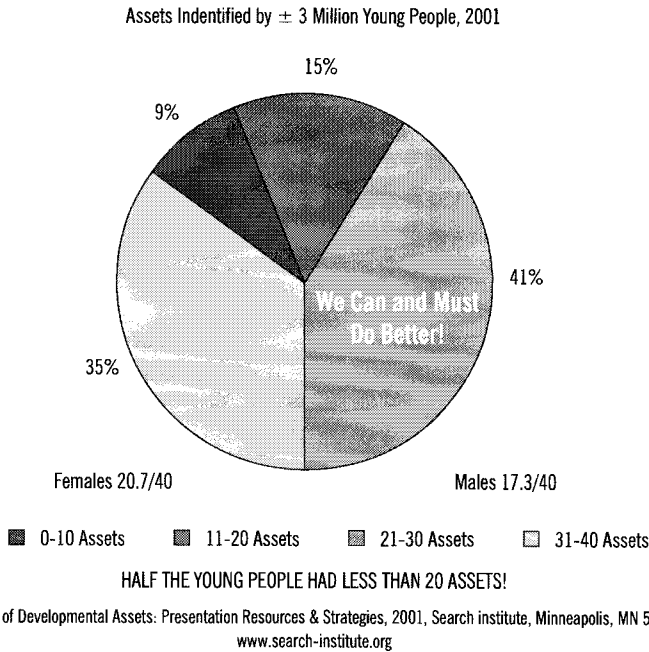
The basic premise for this outcomes initiative builds from the practice imperative – *We Can and Must Do Better* – with services which nurture and reinforce achievements that matter in the lives and futures of looked after children and young people. Based on empirical research with more than three million North American children and young people, the Search Institute delineated forty Developmental Assets which they described as “concrete, common sense, positive experiences and qualities essential to raising successful young people” (<http://www.search-institute.org/assets/forty.htm>). Twenty external relationships and opportunities, along with twenty internal values, skills and self perceptions were shown to influence young people's future life chances as they transition through childhood and adolescence towards young adulthood. This *strengths-based approach* directs attention towards personal strengths and resilience (Daniel, Wassell & Gilligan, 1999; Gilligan, 2009), reinforcing competencies, bolstering personal capacities, supporting motivations and accomplishments, whilst reinforcing goals, hopes and aspirations. Benson, *et al.* (2006) referred to this as *positive youth development*. Strengths-based approaches identify and make use of resources (natural supports) and promote active participation

in decision-making with young people, family members and others (Burford & Hudson, 2000) through processes that Abraham (2009) described as *team parenting*.

Twenty *External Assets* were highlighted around four developmental themes: *Support; Empowerment; Boundaries & Expectations; and Constructive Use of Time*. These wrap around children, young people and families in culturally defined ways (Fulcher, 2003) and involve family members, other adults, opportunities to participate in community life with family and extended family members, at school, where there are neighbourhood and peer group boundaries, as well as purposeful use of time at school, at home and in the community.

Twenty personal or *Internal Assets* that help shape daily living activities and social relations address four other distinctive themes: *Commitment to Learning; Positive Values; Social Competencies; and Positive Identity*. These internal assets highlight achievements, engaging in learning activities at school and at home, and a nurturing of values<sup>5</sup> such as caring about others, equality and social justice, integrity, honesty, responsibility and restraint. Competencies associated with planning and decision-making, interpersonal and cultural skills, resistance skills and peaceful conflict resolution are also highlighted, along with personal power, self-esteem, developing a sense of purpose and instilling hope for the future.

Search Institute research (2001) found that roughly 1 in 7 young people in their study reported 10 or fewer developmental assets while roughly 2 in 5 reported 11-20 assets. Other Search Institute research showed how young people reporting 10 or fewer of the 40 developmental assets face particular challenges that impact on those with whom and around whom they live. Search Institute research (2001) found that roughly 1 in 7 young people in their study reported 10 or fewer developmental assets while 2 in 5 reported 11-20 assets.



**Figure**  
Key Development Assets for Children and Young People in Foster Care

Other Search Institute research showed how young people reporting 10 or fewer of the 40 developmental assets face particular challenges that impact on those with whom and around whom they live. Starkman (2002) found that of young people reporting 10 or fewer assets, 92% of the research population were not achieving in school; 39% were experimenting with drugs; and 61% had been involved in 3 or more acts of fighting, hitting, injuring a person, carrying a weapon, or threatening physical harm in the previous 12 months. Statistics such as these frequently profile the plight of children and young people in looked after care in the UK, as well as children and young people in out-of-home care in Ireland, Australia, Canada and New Zealand.

Following attempts to engage Foster Carers around weekly recordings using all forty developmental assets – including formats differentiated for young children, older children and young people – it became apparent that Foster Carers could not sustain focus at such intensive detail from week to week, no matter how important. To simplify weekly recordings, twenty developmental assets were targeted as Key Developmental Assets for Children and Young People in Foster Care. Our selection of twenty developmental assets and naming these key assets for children and young people in foster care takes account of how more than half of the large normative population of young people surveyed by Search Institute reported 20 or fewer assets (Scales & Leffert, 2004). This posed a practice dilemma: *Which developmental assets really matter for children and young people in foster care?*

A rationale is provided in what follows, for targeting twelve key external assets and eight key internal assets for use with children and young people in foster care, suitably amended for European and Commonwealth applications. The Search Institute argues that all forty developmental assets are important as a strengths-based curriculum for children and young people. The authors share some of these sentiments. However, the twenty key developmental assets identified here are considered strategically important in care and protection work with children and families, as well as for the supervision of duty of care obligations with children and young people in foster care (Fulcher, 2002). Quality care in a family setting involves Foster Carers promoting personalised care and education that is tailored to the capabilities and interests of each child or young person in placement. Children and young people are actively encouraged to engage with and thrive in foster care environments that are wrapped around them in a supportive and purposeful manner (Fulcher & Garfat, 2008). 'Looked after' care nurtures personal as well as social competencies and skills. It takes into account each child's personal disposition as well as their particular social and cultural values. Such an approach to 'looked after' or developmental care targets specific, evidence-based developmental outcomes that are building blocks towards the health and social wellbeing of children and young people, in their present and futures.

The very fact of obtaining 'looked after' status or becoming the subject of a care or supervision order means that important external assets have become compromised for most children and young people in out-of-home care. It is also likely that personal nurturing and supervision has been intermittent at best. Early developmental experiences such as these offer good explanation for why so many looked after children are now over-represented as adults in UK prisons and mental health populations (Scottish Executive, 2007; Department for Children, Schools and Families, 2005). A pilot study targeting 20 developmental assets for children and young people in foster care was conducted with Search Institute permission."

Child welfare legislation and care standards operating for the care and protection of children, and for the supervision of youthful offenders in the UK, Ireland, Australia, Canada and New Zealand further informed our selection of Key Developmental Assets with Children and Young People in Foster Care, as with the risk assessment question *Is this child safe now?* Child Care legislation in all parts of the UK and Ireland identifies care standards that are monitored and evaluated at regular intervals by quasi-government bodies. The 20 Key Developmental Assets for Children and Young People in Foster Care required that all grounds for looked after status be

addressed with immediacy and consistency. This accounts, in part, for the ratio of 12 External Assets and 8 Internal Assets in our final selection of 20.

Twelve key external assets were identified for use by Foster Carers, Social Workers or Child and Youth Care Workers to fulfil duty of care obligations to monitor, record and report on – *be accountable* – for ensuring that children and young people in their care are making developmental achievements that matter for their futures. A listing of key external assets for children and young people in foster care is provided below, with two external assets identified under the theme *Empowerment*; one under the theme *Constructive Use of Time*; five under the theme *Support*, and four under the theme *Boundaries and Expectations*.

#### EXTERNAL ASSETS TARGETED AS KEY DEVELOPMENTAL ASSETS

##### Developmental Theme: Empowerment

**Safety:** The child/young person feels safe at home, school and in the community. They sense danger, seek help from trusted adults, and resist pressure from peers to participate in unacceptable or risky behaviour. Carers, teachers, neighbours, and the community take action to ensure child/young person's health & safety (Half of the SI sample viewed safety as a priority. It is also a requirement for all individuals and services providing care to children and young people).

**Service to Others:** Child/young person takes up opportunities to perform simple but meaningful, helpful and caring actions for others. For example, helping tidy up after play (Half the SI sample reported such opportunities – many children who become looked after have had few opportunities for learning or guidance developing empathy and citizenship).

##### Developmental Theme: Constructive Use of Time

**Play/Social Activity:** The child/young person participates in opportunities for organised social activity or play that allows self-expression, physical activity, and interaction with others (Over half the SI sample reported participation in structured activity programmes promotes physical & emotional wellbeing, developing social skills & positive experiences).

##### Developmental Theme: Support

**Carer Family Support:** Carers provide the child/young person with high levels of consistent and predictable emotional & physical care, and promote positive attention in ways that are responsive to their individuality (Two-thirds of the SI sample reported having this; vital for children living in foster care as mandated by legislation).<sup>7</sup>

**Positive Carer/Child Communication:** Carers express themselves positively and respectfully, engaging the child/young person in conversations – as appropriate for that child – that invite their input. Child feels comfortable seeking advice and support from their carer. (A quarter of the SI sample reported having this. Through positive communication Foster Carers assist the child or young person in their care feel safe enough to express their feelings, make sense of their past and strive to achieve a more emotionally stable and secure future).

**Family and Other Adult Relationships:** Child/young person receives and accepts support from other adults, for example her/his birth family or other significant adults, and demonstrates a sense of belonging (43% of SI respondents had such relationships – so important to sustain and foster with children living away from birth families).

**Child Care/School or College Environment:** Child care workers, teachers or youth workers create a consistent and supportive approach to encouraging the child/young person's learning and development appropriate to their level of ability and language (Less than a third of the SI sample reported having such an environment – children & young people in looked after care can face stigma, need more support and/or struggle with inconsistency in these environments).

**Carer Involvement in Child Care or Education:** Carers support child/young person to succeed in learning environments, for example working with teachers/play group leaders to create a consistent and supportive approach that encourages the child's learning & development (Less than 1/3 of the SI sample reported this, but UK National Minimum Standards for Foster Carers (2002) require this based on poor educational outcomes found for looked after children).

##### Developmental Theme: Boundaries and Expectations

**Carer Family Boundaries:** Carers provide consistent supervision for the child/young person and maintain reasonable guidelines for behaviour that they can understand and achieve. Family has clear rules and consequences and monitors the child/young person's whereabouts (About half the SI sample reported having these, for children and young people who assigned looked after status, boundaries were lacking so appropriate boundaries help children feel safe).

## EXTERNAL ASSETS TARGETED AS KEY DEVELOPMENTAL ASSETS

**Child Care, School or Work Experience Boundaries:** Child care workers/teachers/supervisors provide clear, consistent rules & consequences and use a positive approach to discipline (Half the SI sample reported these. Consistent boundaries at home, school & in the community help young people in looked after care feel secure & engage in learning).

**Adult Role Models:** Carers/other adults in the child/young person's life model positive, responsible behaviour and encourage them to follow these examples (Only a quarter of the SI sample reported this, an asset particularly important for children and young people who have experienced negative role models but also a requirement under UK legislation).

**High Expectations:** Carers, teachers and other influential adults encourage the child/young person to do their best in all tasks and celebrate their successes (Half of the SI sample reported having these. Many children in looked after care have experienced low expectations, blame and shame. High expectations can positively influence achievement outcomes).

Eight *Internal Assets* were identified as key developmental assets for this initiative with children and young people in foster care. Three assets were targeted around the theme *Commitment to Learning*, one with *Positive Values*, two around the theme *Social Competencies*, and two around the theme of *Positive Identity*.

## 8 INTERNAL ASSETS TARGETED AS KEY DEVELOPMENTAL ASSETS

### Developmental Theme: Commitment to Learning

**Motivation to Achieve:** The child/young person responds to new experiences with curiosity and energy, and shows pleasure in learning and mastering new skills (Two thirds of sample & many children and young people in looked after care may score low on this asset as a result of the trauma or abuse they have suffered making this an important asset to monitor).

**Engaging in Learning Activities—at Home/School or in the Community:** The child/young person participates fully in a variety of activities and opportunities offering personal learning (Over half the SI sample agreed the importance of assessing whether each child or young person has opportunities for learning but opportunities to engage in these; children in looked after care often experience difficulty in this area due to low self esteem, poor concentration or anxiety).

**Learning Opportunities and Homework:** Child/young person seeks support, and is encouraged, in their learning. For example, pre-school aged child asks adult to read to them, or young person seeks support in completing/submitting homework and learning projects on time (Nearly half the SI sample reported this. It is important to assess and monitor the extent to which children and young people in looked after care make use of learning opportunities, given their statistically weaker educational outcomes).

### Developmental Theme: Positive Values

**Responsibility:** Child/young person begins to/can follow through on simple tasks to take care of him or herself, begins to/can accept personal responsibility for their actions (appropriate to age & ability) (63% of the SI sample agreed that being 'response able' is important. It is a learned asset that commonly requires nurturing in children and young people in out-of-home care, i.e. learning to and developing social skills needed to respond in an appropriate manner regarding themselves and others).

### Developmental Theme: Social Competencies

**Planning and Decision-Making:** The child/young person begins to plan for the (immediate) future, choosing from options and trying to solve problems (Almost 1/3 of the SI sample reported this. Care Leavers make it clear that many young people didn't have opportunities for developing these skills in preparing for and living independently; key UK policy agenda).

**Peaceful Conflict Resolution:** The child/young person begins to compromise and resolve conflicts without using physical aggression or hurtful language (2/5 of the SI sample had this asset which may require targeted development for children and young people in looked after care who've learned to resolve disputes using negative or abusive strategies).

### Developmental Theme: Positive Identity

**Personal Power:** The child/young person can or begins to show empathy, understanding, and awareness of her or his own and others' feelings. They can make choices that give a sense of having some influence over things that happen in their life (2/5 of the SI sample reported this. Children and young people in looked after care commonly experience low self worth and require opportunities for experiencing personal power that contribute to developing positive self esteem).

## 8 INTERNAL ASSETS TARGETED AS KEY DEVELOPMENTAL ASSETS

**Positive View of Personal Future<sup>5</sup>:** The child/young person views themselves, others or their future in positive terms, taking account of their own cultural identity, a growing awareness of difference and the diverse world around them. (Almost three-quarters of the SI sample had such a view. Looked after populations often have good reasons for having negative views about their futures, thus it's important to monitor this amended asset).

## Monitoring and Reporting Developmental Achievements

In constructing a simple recording tool for use with children and young people in foster care, an important challenge involved compiling something that can be readily understood and used by Foster Carers, Child and Youth Care Workers and Social Workers (Phelan, 2001). The recording tool had to be simple enough to complete on a weekly basis without requiring excessive time or training to complete. Following trials in Scotland, Ireland, New Zealand and Australia, a 5-option Likert Scale was adopted (as illustrated below), offering weekly interval level options (days per week) that help Carers record in a reliable fashion.

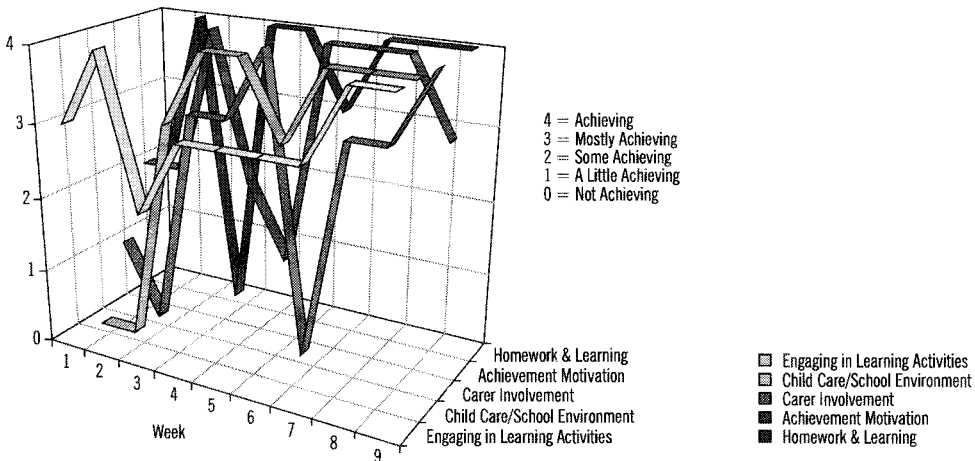
**Positive Carer/Child Communication:** Carers express themselves positively and respectfully, engaging the child/young person in conversations - as appropriate for that child - inviting their input. Child feels comfortable seeking advice and support from their carer.

<input type="checkbox"/> Not Assessed (Give reason)	<input type="checkbox"/> Not Achieving (less than 1 day per week)	<input type="checkbox"/> A Little Achieving (1-2 days per week)
<input type="checkbox"/> Some Achieving (3-4 days per week)	<input type="checkbox"/> Mostly Achieving (5-6 days per week)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Achieving (7 days per week)

*Very early in the morning after the visit with his family, he woke me up to say "my sisters didn't really talk to me". From his tone of voice it seemed as if I knew why they hadn't really talked much. I said that maybe he could bring up some topics - such as a new movie or what's happening for them at school - to help them join in conversation.*

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A Foster Carer provided narrative above, supporting her assessment that the 12 year-old young man in her care was Achieving around one specific Developmental Asset. *Not Assessed* is identified when an assessment could not be made at the end of any given week, with a reason, such as not attending school, absconding or school holidays. *Not Achieving* (0) is when Carers report that an outcome is being achieved less than 1 day per week.



**Figure**  
Enjoy and Achieve



**Achievement Profile of Developmental Outcomes associated with Enjoy & Achieve:** 4 out of 9 weeks Mostly Achieving and 2 weeks Achieving around *Carer Involvement*; 4 weeks out of 9 evidencing *Achievement Motivation*; after school holidays, 5 out of 9 weeks Achieving within his *School Environment*; Mostly Achieving 4 out of 9 weeks and 3 weeks Achieving around *Engaging in Learning Activities*; and 6 out of 9 weeks Achieving with *Homework & Learning*.

*A Little Achieving* (1) is when the child or young person has been achieving an outcome 1-2 days per week. *Some Achieving* (2) is recorded when the child or young person demonstrates achievement 3-4 days in a given week. *Mostly Achieving* (3) is recorded when they have demonstrated achieving an developmental outcome 5-6 days per week. *Achieving* (4) is recorded when a child demonstrated achieving every day of the week. A short narrative is provided to evidence achievements with each developmental asset. The Likert Scale reporting format supports the plotting of trend analyses and **Achievement Profiles** which illustrate weekly achievements around each developmental outcome being monitored throughout the placement. Achievement Profiles are shown for the same 12 year-old noted in the illustration above, highlighting issues around 5 important assets at the start of placement.

The five Achievement Profiles shown in this example are reported using the second objective from the *Every Child Matters* (2005) policy agenda – **Enjoy & Achieve**. Aggregate measures of achievement can be reported using this recording tool for groups of children or young people placed by the same local authority, referring Court or Children’s Hearing; by age or gender cohorts; by external and internal outcomes; by service locations, or even by designated caseloads for supervising social workers. The Achievement Profiles also highlight achievements with External and Internal Assets as well as the clustering of particular assets of interest to service providers, commissioning agents and even families.

## Conclusion

Personal and social circumstances that result in *looked after* status being assigned mean that children and young people placed in out-of-home care are still highly over-represented in virtually all categories in which negative statistics are reported (Scottish Executive, 2007), or as Jackson and Martin found, leaving care “to face unemployment or to form part of the prison or homeless population in later life” (1998). If *We Can and Must Do Better* then out-of-home care must target those children and young people most at-risk – those with the fewest developmental assets – and assist them more to achieve targeted developmental outcomes more systematically whilst in receipt of state-sponsored care (Search Institute, 2001). By targeting *Key Developmental Assets* (KDAs), care providers, social workers, child and youth care professionals and service managers – as well as children, young people and their families – can identify developmental needs, highlight achievements, reinforce competencies, strengthen resiliency and pinpoint where particular service responses may be required. All are reminded that children and young people are particularly vulnerable as they transition into and from primary school, between schools because of changes of address, and from primary school into and through secondary school.

## Notes

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1. Stay Safe; Enjoy & Achieve; Be Healthy; Make A Positive Contribution; Achieve Economic Wellbeing.
2. Safe; Nurtured; Healthy; Achieving; Active; Respected & Responsible; and Included.

3. Healthy, both Physically and Mentally; Supported in Active Learning; Safe from Accidental and Intentional Harm; Economically Secure; Secure in the Immediate and Wider Physical Environment; Part of Positive Networks of Family, Friends, Neighbours and the Community; Included and Participating in Society.
4. Instead of terms like 'in care' or 'out-of-home care', the term 'looked after care' was introduced in the United Kingdom via the Children Act in 1989 and refers to children subject to care and supervision orders.
5. Kholberg (1991) expanded on Piaget's cognitive theory of child and adolescent development to explain this as the development of moral reasoning.
6. Developmental assets, copyright © 1997, 2009 Search Institute® were adapted with permission.
7. Ratios of young people who reported experiencing each asset gathered from the administration of the *Search Institute Profiles of Student Life: Attitudes and Behaviors* survey to nearly 150,000 children and young people in their final year of primary school through the end of secondary school (roughly ages 12-18) in 202 communities across the US in calendar year 2003 – <http://www.search-institute.org/research/assets/asset-levels>).
8. This descriptor was amended so as to monitor a more holistic orientation towards children and young people developing a positive view about their futures – physically, socially, culturally and within their own sense of gender, sexual identity, capabilities and ethnicity.
9. The Developmental Assets® used in the *Key Developmental Assets Recording Tool* were adapted with permission, copyright © 1997, 2009 Search Institute®. Adapted from *Every Child Matters* (2005), *Getting It Right For Every Child* (2007); *Ordinary People Doing Extraordinary Things: Training, Support and Development Standards for Foster Care* (2007); *Ireland's Agenda for Children's Services* (2008); Scales, P. C. & Leffert, N. (2004); Scales, P., Sesma, A. & Bolstrom, B. (2004); VanderVen, K. (2008) and Durie, M. (1998) highlighting 12 External Assets and 8 Internal Assets that can be monitored on a weekly basis prior to LAC (*Looked After Child*) Reviews, and at regular intervals thereafter. Carers provide behavioural evidence of progress towards developmental outcomes each young person is achieving whilst in foster care.

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