Search INSTITUTE

Cultivating Developmental Relationships to Promote Youth Thriving

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Search INSTITUTE

Through applied research and collaboration with youth-serving organizations, our team creates practical solutions, tools, and resources that are respected and implemented throughout the world.

6M+

YOUTH SURVEYED
Measurement tools providing insights into what young people think and feel.

10,000+

ORGANIZATIONS SERVED
Schools, youth programs, family programs, and coalitions.

65,000+

PROFESSIONALS TRAINED
Open enrollment and direct service professional learning opportunities.

Our Theoretical Journey

40 Developmental Assets

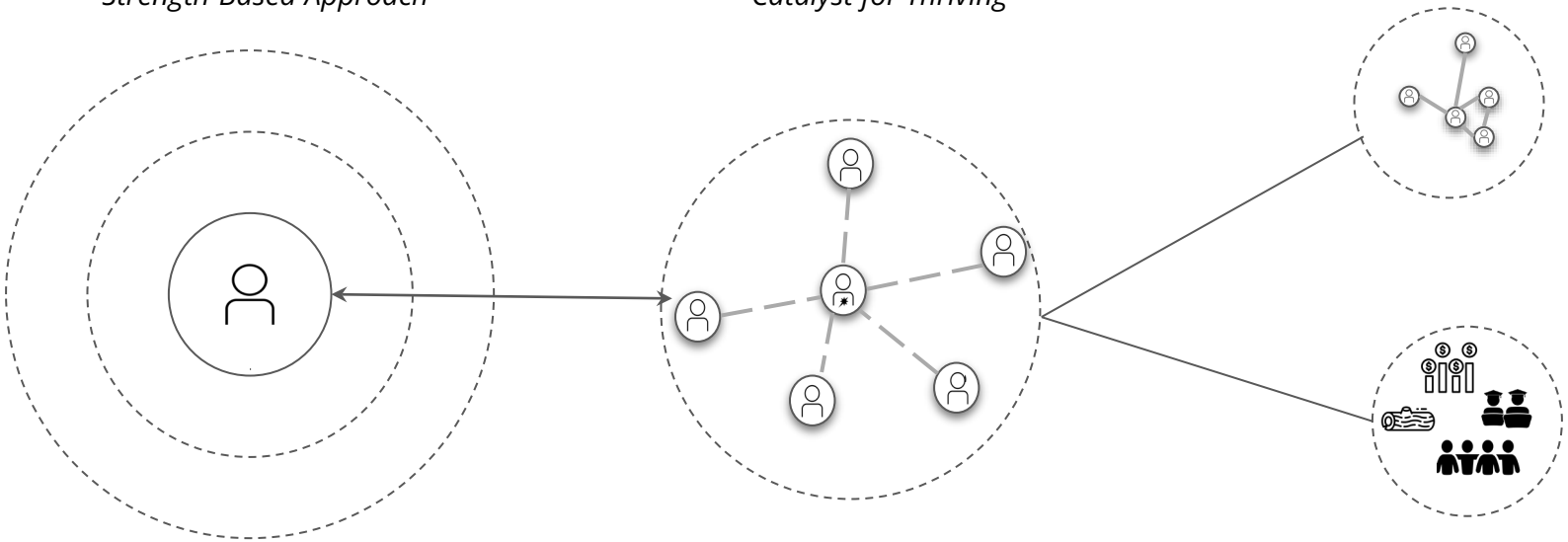
Strength-Based Approach

Developmental Relationships

Catalyst for Thriving

Social Capital

Access to Opportunity



Recognize, leverage & build developmental assets

Cultivate relationships that address the developmental needs of identity, agency & contribution

Connect to people, places & resources that are aligned with spark

All children and youth are **entitled to**:

- being seen, heard and valued
- feeling safe and protected
- having their basic needs met

2 OUT OF 10

YOUTH **STRONGLY AGREE**

THEY FEEL REALLY KNOWN AND VALUED

SOURCE: SEARCH INSTITUTE

A Strength-Based Approach:

Developmental Assets

Developmental Assets

The supports, opportunities and relationships young people need across all aspects of their lives.

External

- Support
- Empowerment
- Boundaries & Expectations
- Constructive Use of Time

Internal

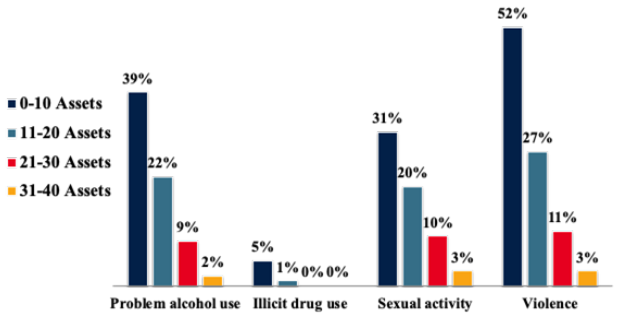
- Commitment to Learning
- Positive Values
- Social Competencies
- Positive Identity

The Power of Assets

PROTECT RISK NEGATIVE BEHAVIORS

ASSETS

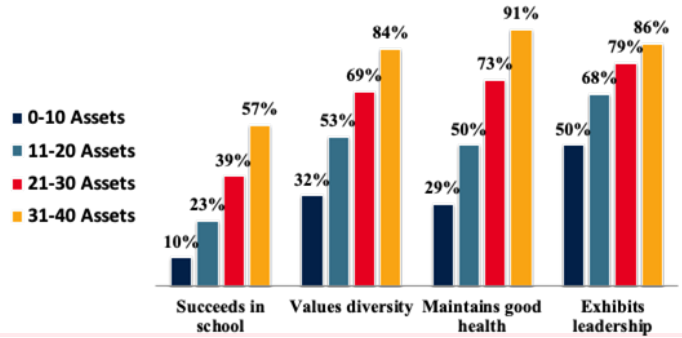
- Alcohol Use
- Illicit Drug Use
- Sexual Activity
- Violence



PROMOTE POSITIVE BEHAVIORS AND CHOICES

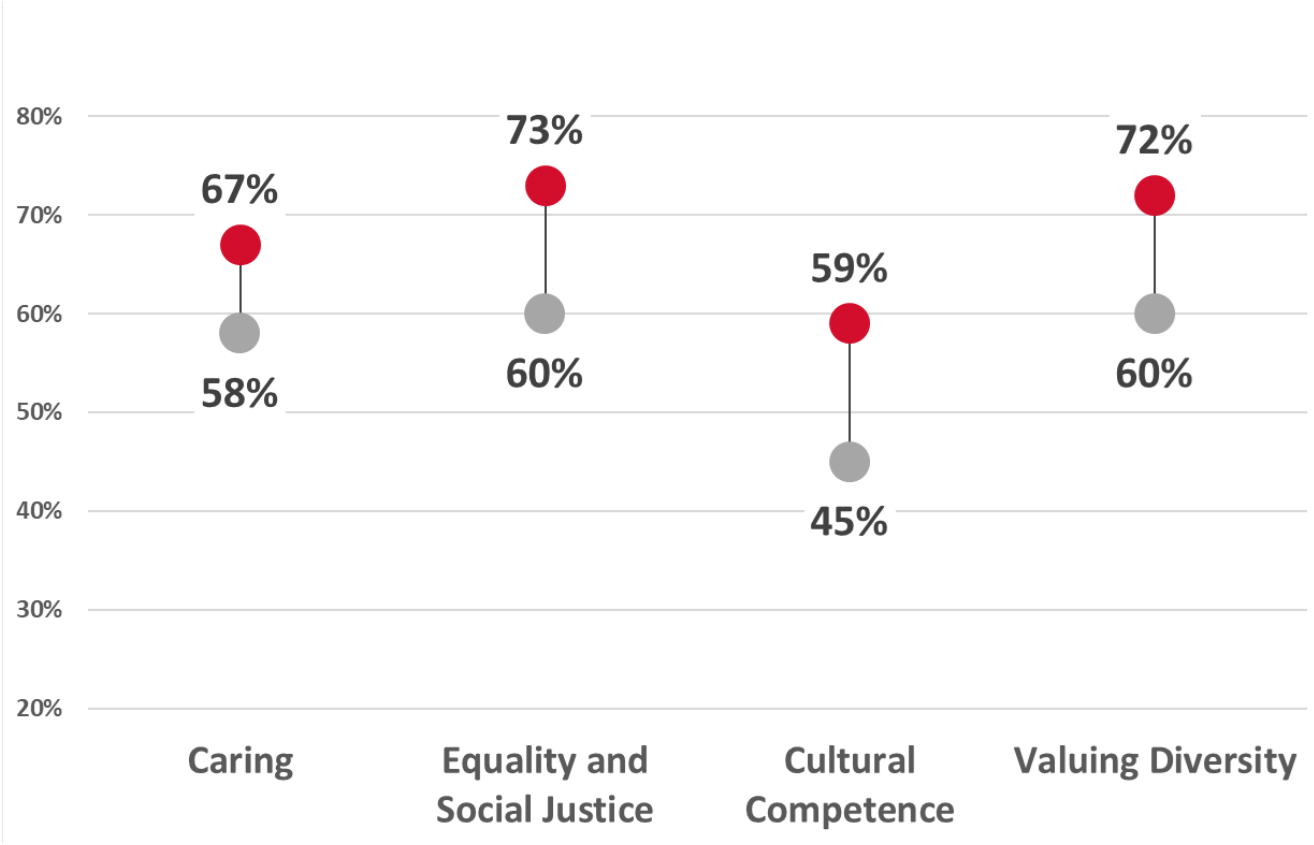
ASSETS

- Succeeds in School
- Values Diversity
- Maintains Good Health
- Exhibits Leadership



Internal Assets

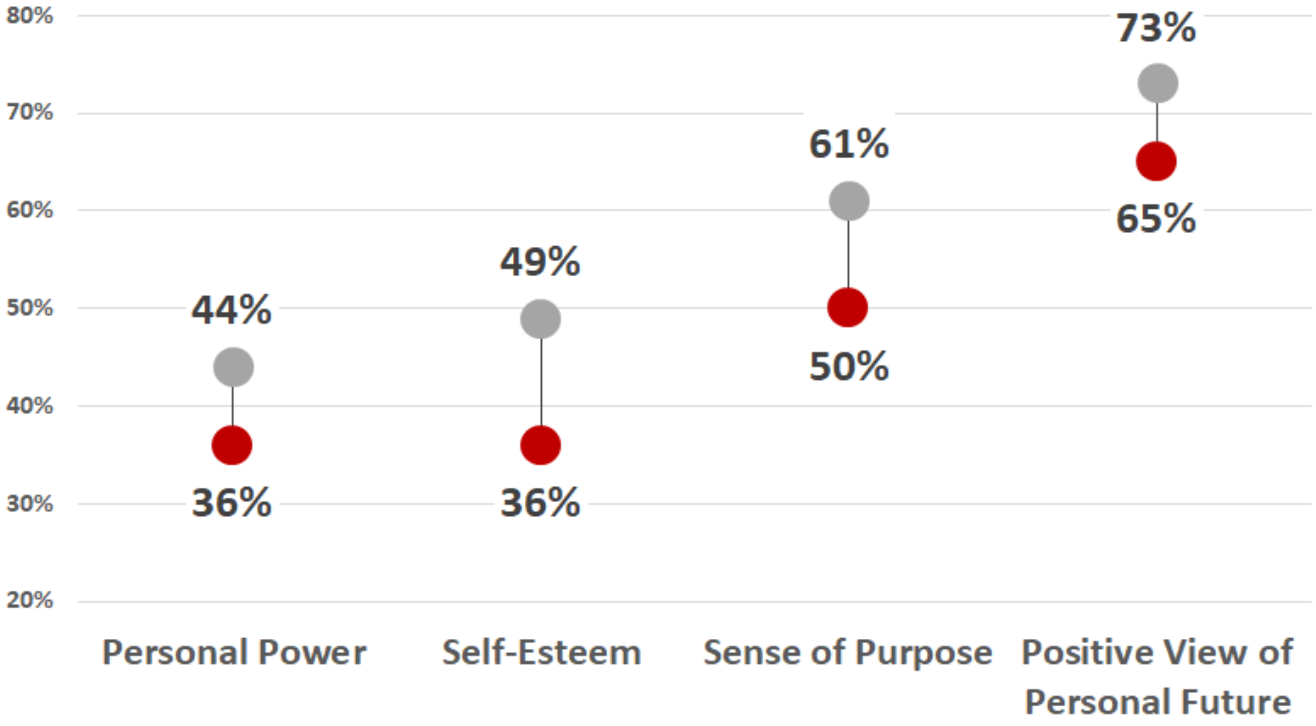
Internal Assets were much more volatile than External Assets,



Equity-related assets had some of the largest increases from **2016** to **2022**.

Assets & Developmental Needs

Percentages of young people who reported having these



Positive Identity Assets experienced some of the largest decreases from **2016** to **2022**

“After decades of forming hypotheses, conducting surveys, crafting and rewriting definitions, analyzing data, and writing journal articles, Search Institute researchers and practitioners have arrived at a surprisingly simple conclusion: nothing—nothing—has more impact in the life of a child than positive relationships.”

Peter Benson

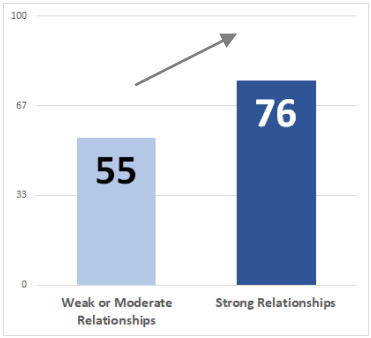
Developmental Relationships

A vehicle for change.

Close connections through which young people discover who they are, gain abilities to shape their own lives, and learn how to interact with and contribute to the world around them.

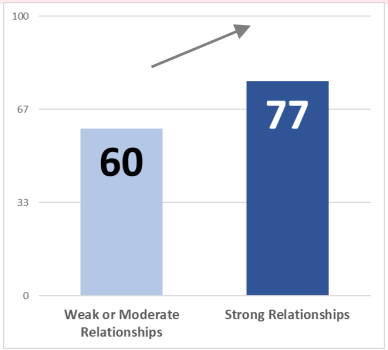
Young people experienced **higher outcomes** when they experience **stronger Developmental Relationships**

CHARACTER STRENGTHS



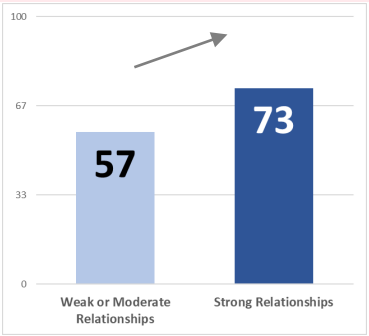
- Responsibility
- Future Mindedness
- Perseverance
- Teamwork
- Leadership

SOCIAL EMOTIONAL COMPETENCIES



- Relationship Skills
- Social Awareness
- Responsible Decision-Making
- Self-Management
- Self-Awareness

INTERNAL DEVELOPMENTAL ASSETS



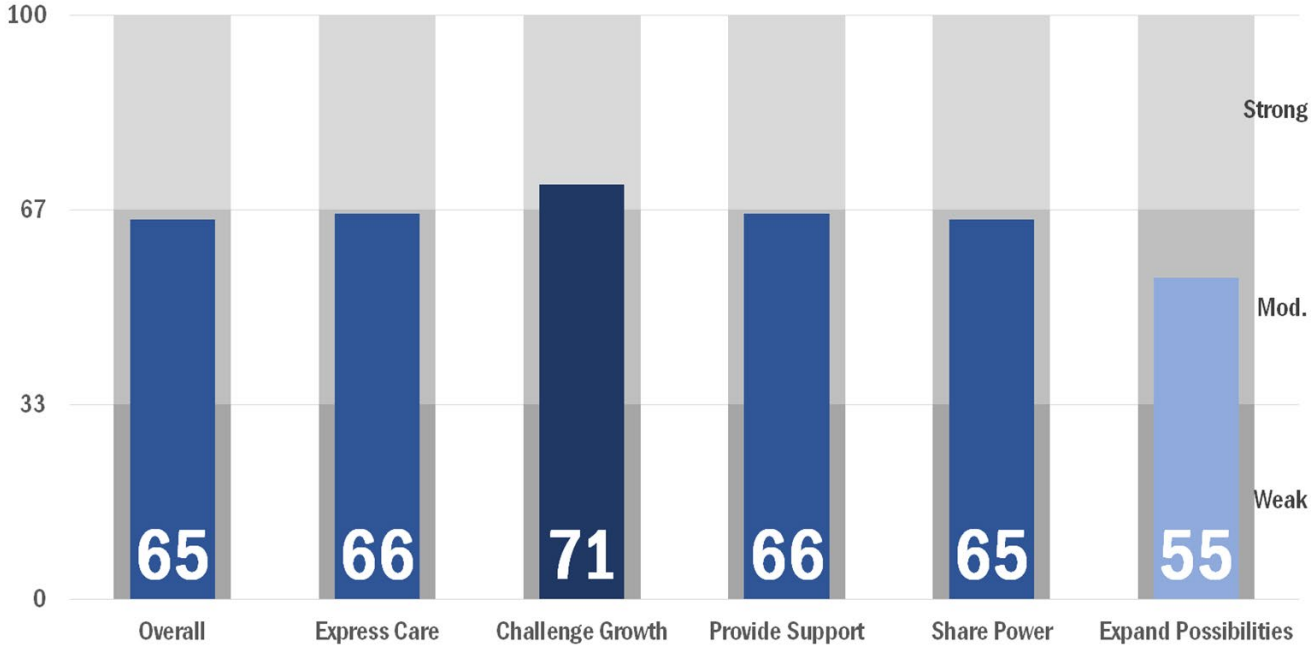
- Commitment to Learning
- Positive Values
- Social Competencies
- Positive Identity

Note. Scores are placed on a 0-100 continuum with 100 being the strongest.

Developmental Relationships Framework

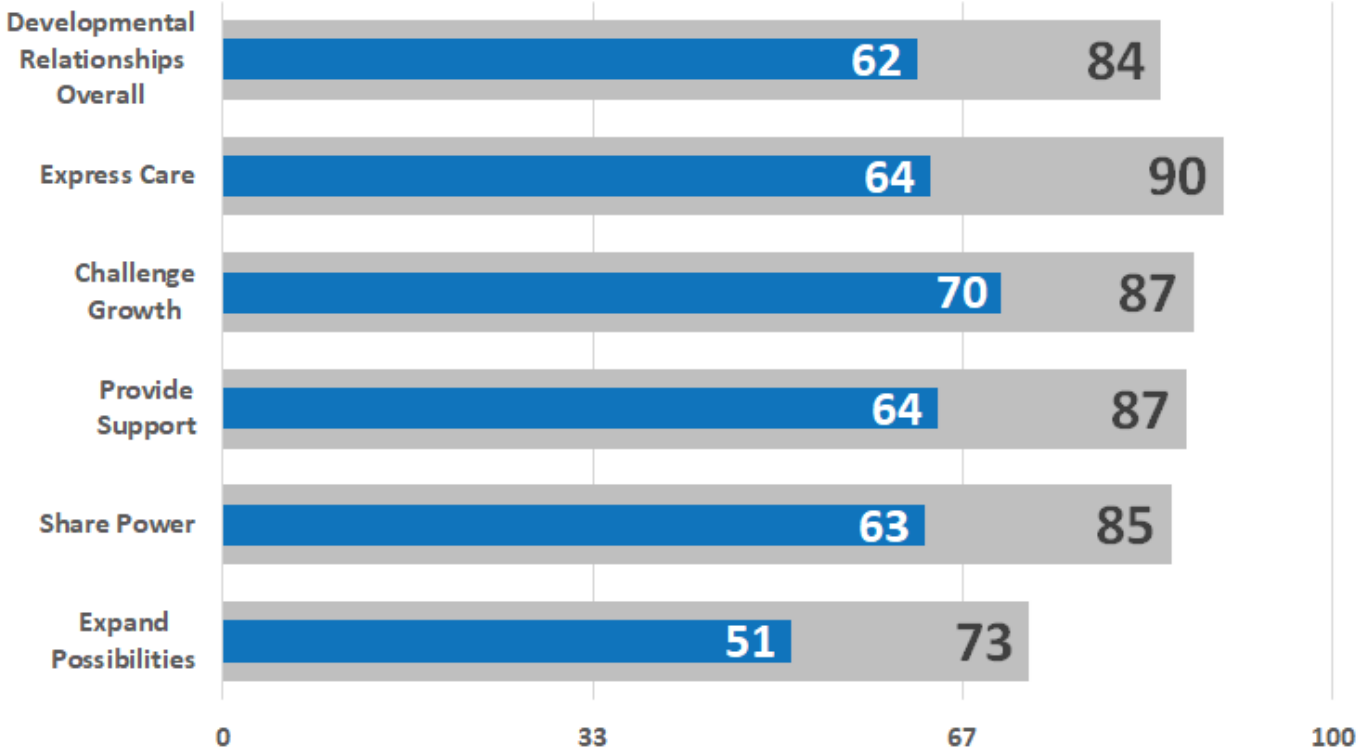
It is at the intersection of youth voice, practitioner wisdom, and research insights that our Developmental Relationships Framework was created.

State of The Elements of Developmental Relationships



Young people expressed that **Challenge Growth** was the strongest developmental relationship element and **Expand Possibilities** was the weakest.

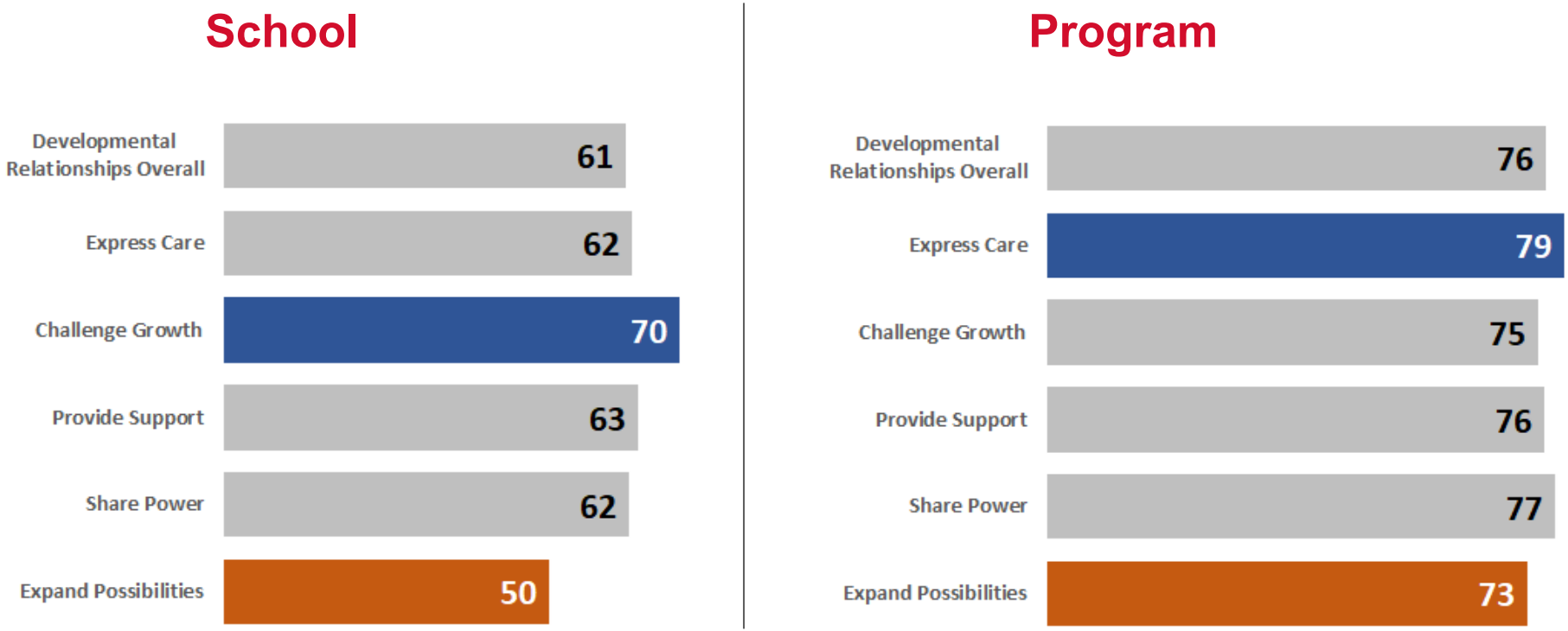
A relational perception gap exists



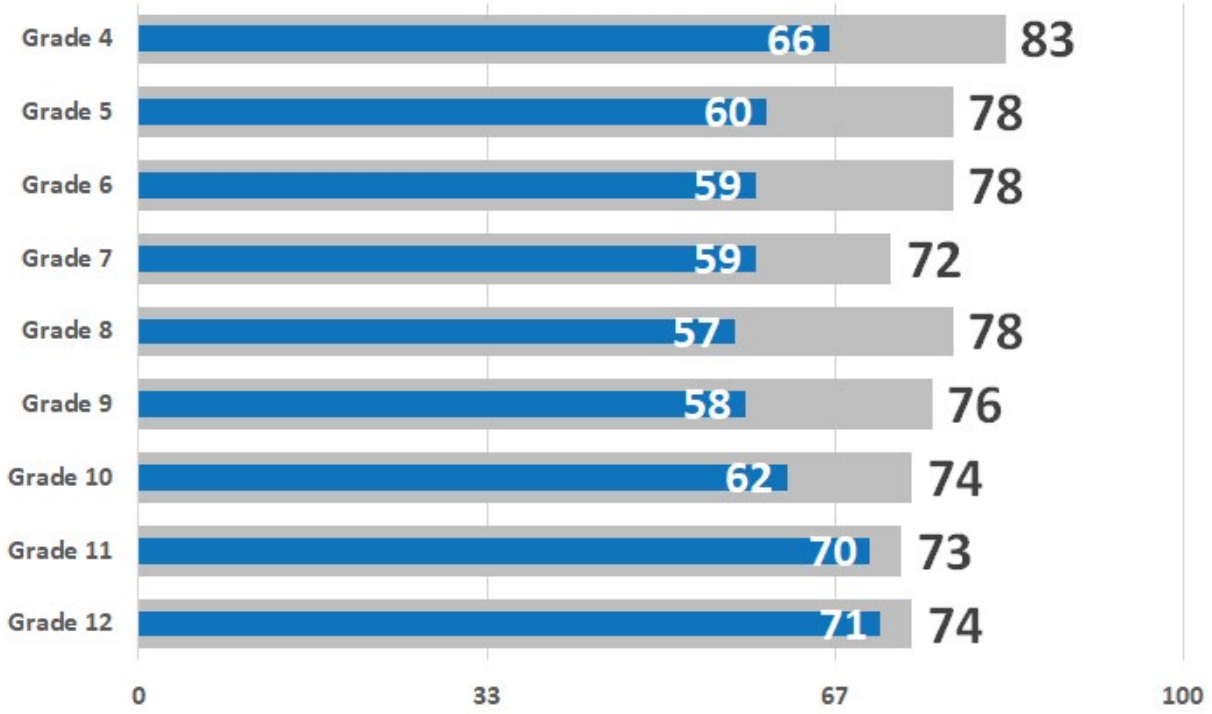
*This chart only includes data from organizations that included **both** young people and adults. As a result, some scores are slightly different than our general aggregate.

A perception gap existed between **Young People** and **Adults** across all relational elements, but was most pronounced in Express Care.

Young people experienced different relational strengths across contexts.



Experiences of Developmental Relationships by Grade:



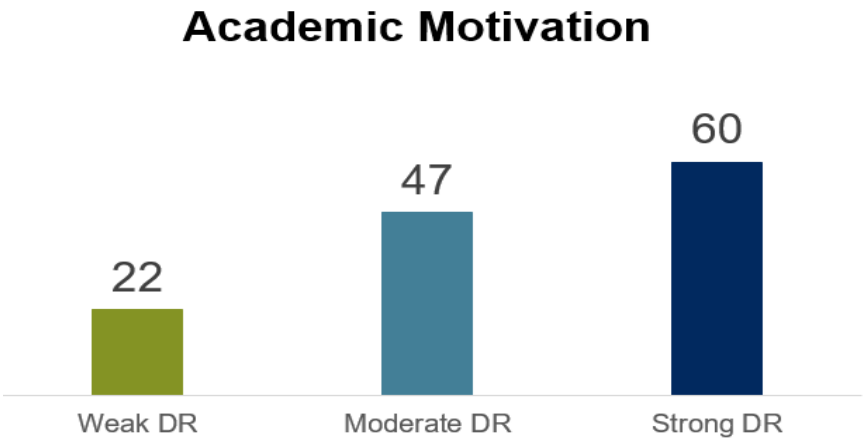
Developmental relationships not only differed by grade level, but also across the contexts of **schools** and **programs**.

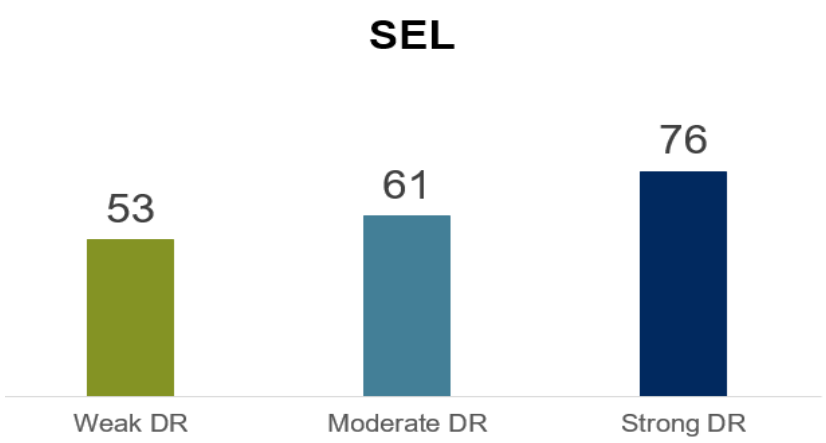
Students Receiving Special Education Services

Less than half of students with learning differences experience strong relationships with teachers

Students Receiving Special Education Services (2)

Students receiving special education services who experience strong DRs with teachers are more likely to report higher levels of Academic Motivation and SEL

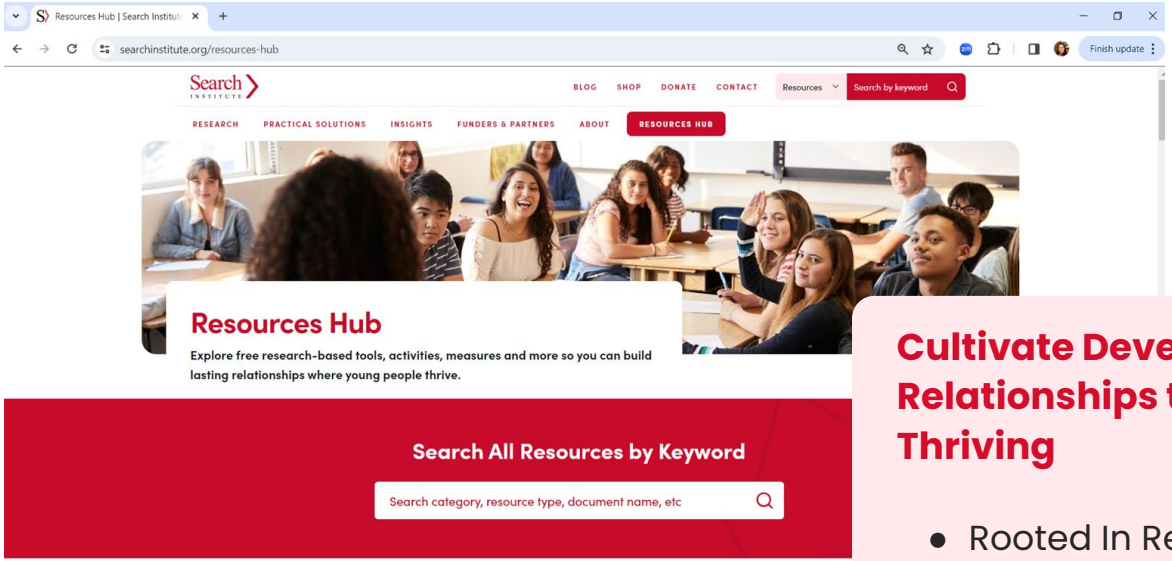




We believe that **actionable knowledge** arises at the intersection of rigorous research, practitioner and community insights, and the voices of youth.

Developmental Relationships for Students with Learning Differences

Take a picture of the QR Code to Learn More!



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Cultivate Developmental Relationships to Promote Youth Thriving

- Rooted In Relationship Model
- Relationship-Rich Spaces for All Youth
- Developmental Relationships Framework
- Developmental Assets Framework
- Understanding the Connection between Developmental Assets and Developmental Relationships

THANK YOU!

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