

Helping Kids Succeed – Alaskan Style!

Practical Suggestions for Building Assets in Your Child

Asset # 10- Safety

To Build Asset # 10 Parents and Extended Family Can . . .

Be an "askable parent," so your children learn they can tell you about things that concern them, especially issues of personal safety. — *Kodiak*

Keep an atmosphere of respect, friendliness, encouragement, concern, and caring in the home. — *Ambler*

Have clear expectations for safe behavior (and consequences if they are not safe). Adjust expectations as children get older and show trustworthiness. Make sure your kids understand the connection between rules, their safety, and your love. — *Homer*

Practice with your children what needs to be done in an emergency. — *Wrangell*

Be home with your children as much as you can. When not with your children, have regular check-ins and curfew. Let your children know who they can go to in the neighborhood for help. — *Juneau*

Make sure children wear a seatbelt when in a car and a helmet when they are riding on a snowmachine, ATV or four-wheeler, and a life jacket when in a boat. — *Elim*

Speak to the administration when you notice safety problems at the school. — *Fairbanks*

If you own a gun, keep it under lock and store the ammunition in a separate place. — *Anchorage*

Traditional Ways to Promote Asset # 10

Traditional ways . . . Make your home a place where children and youth feel safe and protected from harm. — *Copper Center*

Have Elders and experts come into the school to teach survival skills for all seasons. — *Togiak*

Teach your children what safe activities are and why it is important to be safe and not to harm others. Teach your children what a safe community is, what it looks like and feels like. — *Noorvik*

Teach children how to safely handle a boat and gun. Teach them how to read the weather before going out, and let someone know where they are going. — *Hoonah*

Tell children where they are not permitted to go. For example, playing near cliffs or on the sea ice. — *Unalakleet*

Asset # 10 — Safety

Kids feel safe at home, at school, and in their neighborhood

55% of youth surveyed by Search Institute have this asset in their lives.*

*Based on Search Institute surveys of almost 100,000 6th to 12th grade youth throughout the United States

What are Assets?

Assets are 40 key building blocks to help kids succeed. Like a dream catcher, assets are the supporting threads in a young person's life that can keep away harm and invite goodness.

Words of Encouragement

When dealing with youth, their perceptions of safety count more than the reality.

The good news is that far fewer youth say they have been victimized at school than the number of those who say that they worry about the possibility. Nearly 20% of middle school youth and 10% of high school youth report that they have been personally victimized. However, over 25% of youth overall, and 35% of middle school youth report that they are worried about becoming a victim.

The effect of worry alone on attitudes toward school, friendship formation, and participation in extracurricular activities is negative.

What is the current data on violence in schools?

On April 12th, 2000 the Seattle Times reported that youth violence is declining. They reported that 7 out of 10 Americans think a school shooting could happen in their communities, even though a youth has a 1 in two million chance of being killed in a US school.

A CNN poll taken in April of 1999 reported that 30% of Americans said that a school shooting was very likely in their community. 38% reported that it was somewhat likely. 55% of parents said they feared for their children's safety at school. This number was up from 37% in 1998 and 24% in 1997.

Trying to inject some reality into the perception of violence in our schools is the report on the State of American Children in 1999. This report states that "the number of kids committing and falling victim to crime has been dropping since 1993. Youth violence has been dropping since it peaked in 1993."

The report concludes, "The public in general doesn't have a very accurate view of violent crime."

What is your perception of the dangers facing the children and youth in your community? How safe do children and youth feel in your home, school, and community? You may learn that it is the subtle forms of violence — the racism, sexism, sexual harassment, bullying — that erodes our feelings of security, rather than the notion of a gun in the school.

Quote:

"A violently active, dominating, intrepid, brutal youth - that is what I am after."

Adolph Hitler

Research

In 1995 the National Household Education Survey of more than 6,500 youth reported that half of the 6th -12th graders had personally witnessed bullying, robbery, or physical assaults at their schools. 7% of the youth admitted to having skipped a day of school because of fears for their safety.

In 1993 a national survey of 8th & 11th graders reported that more than 70% of females had received sexual comments or looks or had been touched or grabbed in a sexual way (about 50% of males reported similar experiences). The result of not feeling safe in this way was that about 33% of females did not want to go to school or even taking class (only about 10% of males felt that way).

The research reports that youth who feel victimized are more likely to be socially isolated. And, the catch 22 is that the more socially isolated a youth is, the more likely s/he is to be victimized. The downward spiral often leads to a strong dislike of and avoidance of school.

What percentage of the youth in your school and community feel safe?

This newsletter and other asset resources are produced by the
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