

Helping Kids Succeed – Alaskan Style!

Practical Suggestions for Building Assets in Your Child

Asset # 17- Creative and Cultural Activities

To Build Asset # 17 Parents and Extended Family Can . . .

Do an activity with your child. Learn a musical instrument, karate, model building, dance, woodworking, or ceramics together!

— **Seward**

Attend your child's performances or exhibits.

— **Port Graham**

Support your children's choices for creative activities, even if they are not your choice. Let them discover their own gifts.

— **Seldovia**

Limit TV watching. Help your child get involved with making, creating, or building things.

— **Wrangell**

For birthdays and other gift-giving occasions, choose gifts that stimulate creativity (games, tools, craft kits) rather than passive entertainment (videos, electronic games).

— **Wasilla**

Be tolerant of the learning process, not critical if it's not perfect.

— **Anchorage**

Teach children the traditional dances and songs of your culture. Help them to practice, especially with Elders or other teachers. Include the dances and music as part of celebrations.

— **Anchorage**

Traditional Ways to Promote Asset # 17

Teach your kids Native arts and crafts, dances, and music.

— **Russian Mission**

Teach kids about how to play story knife (yaagui). We used to spend hours telling stories to whoever would listen. It was a happy time.

— **Togiak**

Open up a sewing and carving center. Let the Elders or expert sewers and carvers come in and teach the young adults and kids. Later, let them develop their own style of Native art.

— **Tatitlek**

Invite performers from other villages and areas to perform in your community. Keep people interested in keeping the skills and sharing it with others.

— **Chevak**

Asset # 17 — Creative Activities

Kids spend three or more hours each week in lessons or practice in music, theater, or other arts.

19% 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 Wisdom

Creative activities is an asset that is based within the category called Constructive-Use-of-Time. Who would argue that the young people who have "nothing to do" too often find themselves doing things that they would rather not be doing?

Back in 1992, the Carnegie Council on Adolescent Development issued a report titled A Matter of Time. This report showed that "kids with something to do and someone to do something with" were far less likely to participate in risk behaviors (drugs, alcohol, violence, sexual intercourse, etc.) than kids who had "nothing to do."

The Carnegie Council found that young adolescent (ages 9 - 14) used their waking hours in the following ways.

- 31.7% In School
- 20.7% Watching Television
- 9.7% Eating
- 8.7% In Play, Hobbies, and/or Art Activities
- 6.6% Personal Care (bathing, brushing, combing)
- 6.6% Sports and outdoor activities
- 4.5% Household work, Chores, and/or Errands
- 3.5% Studying
- 2.5% Church
- 2.2% Visiting
- 1.8% Jobs
- 1.3% Reading

How do the kids in your life spend their time? What could you do to help them "do something" that will build assets in them? Remember, it is not what we do to kids, or for kids. It is what we do WITH kids that makes the biggest difference.

News You Can Use

Unlike most of the other assets, currently there is not a great deal of research concerning this asset. This asset is based upon the educational premise that when youth participate in activities that use other parts of their brains and talents, that require practice to improve, and where a youth is able to judge their own improvement, that this builds:

- Higher Self Esteem (Reynolds, 1995);
- Increase creativity, intrinsic motivation, and long-term retention (Conti, Amable, & Pollak, 1995); and
- Higher Achievement (Baum, Renzulli, & Hebert, 1995).

It must be noted that creative activities have positive impacts upon youth who are underachievers. It is interesting that creative activities in kids' lives can also improve school achievement, which, in turn, improves Kids' participation in creative activities, which in turn, again improves school achievement. This upward spiral was noted by Bergin in 1992.

Quote

When I hear a teen say, "There is nothing to do." I hear it as, "There is no one to do 'nothing' with." When is the last time you did 'nothing' with a teenager in your life?

This newsletter and other asset resources are produced by the
Association of Alaska School Boards'
Alaska Initiative for Community Engagement (Alaska ICE)
 316 West 11th Street
 Juneau, Alaska 99801

Tel: (907) 586-1486
 Fax: (907) 586-1450
 Email: alaskaice@asab.org