

# Helping Kids Succeed – Alaskan Style!

## Practical Suggestions for Building Assets in Your Child

### Asset # 18- Youth Programs

#### To Build Asset # 18 Parents and Extended Family Can . . .

Notice things that your children are good at. Help them find groups or clubs that match their talents.

— **Bethel**

Arrange with parents of other children to share in the transportation or supervision needed by programs.

— **Anchorage**

Encourage your kids to be involved in youth programs, and help them stick with a program for at least several months. Help with things like transportation and buying equipment.

— **Craig**

Attend the games or events your child participates in.

— **Fairbanks**

#### Traditional Ways to Promote Asset # 18

When the Elders were young, they often had more responsibilities and chores to do like chopping wood, carrying water, gathering greens, drying meat, and picking berries. But they also made their own fun. They created games for themselves. We need to give our children more responsibility and more opportunity to invent things to do for themselves. — **Kasigluk**

Help your kids be involved in Native dance groups, sewing circles, Native Youth Olympics, and other activities which give them skills. — **Kwethluk**

#### Asset # 18 — Youth Programs

Kids spend three or more hours each week in sports, clubs, or organizations at school and /or in the community.

59% 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

An Alaskan grandparent once told me "If you want kids to avoid a negative something, you have to replace it with a positive something." This is where youth programs come in.

Kids who "hang out with nothing to do" are much more likely to get into trouble than kids who have a place to go and someone to do things with. Youth programs provide that purpose. Youth programs occupy idle time, but much more than that, they help young people discover and develop talents, practice interpersonal skills, take on new challenges, and receive recognition.

While youth programs are important for teen development, not all are equal. The one vital component of an effective youth program is the quality (competence, training, personality, and interpersonal skills) of the staff members.

Assets are not built through programs. They are built through relationships with people. Some of these relationships are nurtured through programs. If the program that your kids are participating in does not create stronger bonds to you, your family, and/or other positive adults, then it may not be building assets in kids.

How do you know if the adults in the programs are "high quality?" I'd recommend that you ask your kids.

### Quote:

"Programs are only as good as the connections they create and sustain between youth and positive, caring adult role models. Sure kids need something to do. But more importantly they need someone to do something with."  
*Derek Peterson*

## Research

Over the past 30 years, numerous research studies have shown that youth programs WORK. Youth programs have been positively associated with:

### Increased self-esteem

(Hudkins, 1995; Iso-Ahola & Hatfiend, 1986);

### Increased popularity

(Braddock, Royster, Winfield, & Hawkins, 1991);

### Increased sense of personal control

(Dike, Johnson, & Nowicki, 1977);

### Better development of life skills

(Dubas & Snider, 1993);

### Better-developed decision-making skills

(Orr & Gobeli, 1986);

### Greater Communciation in the family

(Abbott, Sutton, Jackson, & Logan, 1976);

### Increased involvement in constructive activities in young adulthood

(Lindsay, 1984);

### Decreased involvement in risky behaviors such as drug use

(Collingwood, Sunderlin, & Kohl, 1994);

### Increased academic achievement

(Hanks & Ecklund, 1976);

### Increased safety

(Halpern, 1992);

And a dozen other positive results.

The research has found that a long term commitment to an activity has been shown to be a better predictor of success and creativity in later life than either grade point averages or test scores.

How many of your kids are actively involved in youth programs?

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