

Helping Kids Succeed – Alaskan Style!

Practical Suggestions for Building Assets in Your Child

Asset # 22- School Engagement

To Build Asset # 22 Parents and Extended Family Can . . .

Guide your child with the basics for being engaged: getting to school on time, eating well, getting enough sleep, having a good place to study, etc.

— *Craig*

Attend your child's school performances — whether they be on the gym court, the stage, an awards assembly, or anything. If your child is out in front of people, be there.

— *Elim*

Have your kids read to you. Have your kids regularly teach what they have learned to you or other members of the family.

— *Fairbanks*

Ask questions about your child's school day every day. Show your genuine interest and enthusiasm.

— *Chugiak*

Restrict TV! Research shows TV makes kids become passive and lowers their ability to engage in mental or physical activities.

— *Tok*

Avoid comparing one child's achievement with another's. Make sure each of your children know you believe in them and expect them each to do their best.

— *Anchorage*

Tell your children they are both smart and hardworking. Don't expect perfection, but expect hard work and notice it when given.

— *Kodiak*

Traditional Ways to Promote Asset # 22

Recognize and honor cultural differences.

— *Shishmaref*

Invite Elders or local residents into school to teach the cultural history.

— *Copper Center*

Have Elders perform traditional ceremonies in the school.

— *Pilot Station*

"Families are the most important influence on children's learning and development and have the most enduring impact on their life course."

Carnegie Task Force on Learning School Engagement

Asset # 22 — School Engagement

Kids are actively engaged in learning

64% 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

School involvement is important to a student who is actively engaged in learning. How can community members support youth in their learning endeavors?

Here are just a few suggestions from Alaskans. Invite Elders or local residents into school to teach cultural history. By doing this students will be able to connect what they're learning to their own careers, relationships and the life skills they will eventually need.

Attend school performances and events.

There are usually concerts, plays, field days, sports and other events that you can attend. Students will feel recognized and supported when they see community members in the audience. After attending a performance say something to the student about their performance.

Give students praise. Let them know what they did right and tell them you are proud of them.

Compliment youth and encourage them in their learning.

Talk to young people daily about what interests them. Get to know them and learn about their goals and ideas.

Create a positive learning environment.

Support students in feeling safe and comfortable in the classroom or when doing homework elsewhere.

Restrict Television viewing time and encourage creative learning techniques.

Tell your children that they are smart and hard working. Encourage their efforts and work with them if they are having difficulty.

There are so many ways to encourage youth to be actively engaged in learning, these are only a few suggested by Alaskans throughout the state. Can you think of some other ways to engage students in learning?

Research

Research has shown that when a youth feels connected to school and is actively engaged in learning they show lower levels of risky behaviors, better mental health and positive school outcomes. School engagement has also been associated with:

Lessened drug use

[especially for middle-class youth]

(McGee, 1992)

Less nonmarital childbearing by age 19

(Plotnick & Butler, 1991)

Better attendance at school

(March, 1991)

Greater feelings of support, both at school and home

(Connell, Halpern Flesher, Clifford, Crichlow, & Usinger, 1995)

Higher academic self-concept, more time spent on homework, and increased college attendance

(March, 1991)

More positive perception of number of personal strengths

(Williams & McGee, 1991)

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