

Helping Kids Succeed – Alaskan Style!

Practical Suggestions for Building Assets in Your Child

Asset # 26- Caring

To Build Asset # 26 Parents and Extended Family Can . . .

At the end of each day, help your children recall ways in which they helped others and ways in which they were helped. Make this a daily ritual for closing the day.

— *Wasilla*

Show compassion and caring to all family members. Notice the caring ways of others, and point it out to your children. Also point out the non-caring things people do, and let them see the effect of both.

— *Valdez*

When your children do something that demonstrates caring, talk about the event so they can feel satisfaction from the experience. Don't assume this will happen automatically.

— *Anchorage*

Give your child ways to help others, like helping an Elder or disabled person. Take on family projects that help others, such as the winter weather protection program.

— *Wrangell*

Have your child share their books and toys with other children in the community. Teach them that it is good to share.

— *Shaktoolik*

Traditional Ways to Promote Asset # 26

Explain to children why it's important to share the best of the catch with the Elders. Have your child take the meat to the Elders.

— *Toksook Bay*

Have a sewing circle and make things for your child.

— *Shaktoolik*

Tell stories of how family members cared for one another in the old days.

— *Hoonah*

Caring is shown in our grieving ceremonies. The community mourns together. When we have Potlatch ceremonies or go visit the family's house, we feel sad for their loss, and we give food, cards, money, time to the family of the deceased. We tell stories of the shared value of that person.

— *Kluti-Kaah*

Asset # 26 — Caring

Kids place high value on helping other people

43% 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 youth take the initiative to intentionally help someone they are showing that they care. Youth can show they care by spending time with people needing help and by collecting food, money or other items to give to people who distribute the items to those in need. Caring about others includes caring for a lot of different people: those in your school, community, job, state, family, country, and world.

To help youth value caring, parents and extended family can show compassion and caring to all family members. When your child does something that demonstrates caring, talk about the event so they can feel satisfaction from that experience. Assist your child in helping others by giving suggestions like helping an elderly or disabled person. Take on family projects that help others. Establish the value of caring early on in a child's life by letting them know they themselves are cared about.

School staff can have students collect food items and put together meals for needy families. Use student's abilities and gifts to help other students. Students good at math can help those struggling with the subject. Help students reflect on their experiences. Recognize caring students in a special way.

Faith communities can encourage the study of references to caring within your faith tradition. Consider letting your youth group take on projects which will help others and show that they care. Provide opportunities for youth to provide service in meaningful ways. Help students identify areas of need and offer assistance.

Any community member can let youth around you help whenever they can. Thank them and tell them they were a great help to you. Don't just do organized efforts of helping, let youth see you doing "random acts of kindness." Get involved in community efforts to give young people opportunities to serve others.

Most of us help others and promote a caring environment without knowing it. Continue to model caring behavior and show others you care by truly caring about them.

Research

Youth who place high value on freely helping others are more likely to have more effective social skills, better mental health, lessened risk behaviors, and greater academic achievement than those students who don't. Integrity has also been associated with:

- Better reasoning skills (Darmondy, 1991)
- Higher conflict resolution skills (Solomon, Battistich, & Wilson, 1993)
- Greater overall well-being (Moore & Glei, 1995)
- Higher self-esteem (Johnson, 1993; Solomon et al., 1993)
- Less intention to have sexual intercourse, less actual sexual intercourse, and greater use of condoms and other contraception (Donahue, 1987; Ford & Norris, 1993; Gibson & Kempf, 1990; Kirby et al., 1994)
- Less affiliation with deviant friends (Whitbeck, Simons, Conger & Lorenz, 1989)
- Greater competence (Call, Mortimer, & Shanahan, 1995)
- Higher grades and math and reading scores (Hanson & Ginsburg, 1988; Rosenthal & Feldman, 1991; Wentzel, 1991)

Quote:

"Children are more likely to grow into caring people if they know they themselves are cared about." Alfie Kohn

Other stuff:

A smile is a quick and easy way to show someone you care.

According to the Search Institute researchers, girls are much more likely than boys to value caring. Of the girls surveyed, 82% said helping other people was important to them, and 73% said it was important to help make the world a better place. For boys, the percentages were 60% and 57% respectively.

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