

Helping Kids Succeed – Alaskan Style!

Practical Suggestions for Building Assets in Your Child

Asset # 28- Integrity

To Build Asset # 28 Parents and Extended Family Can . . .

Model integrity. When you are doing something because it is the right thing to do, take the time to explain it to your child. They can't always see the obvious.

— *Hoonah*

Help kids to talk about times when their beliefs are questioned. Praise them for taking a stand.

— *Kipauk*

Help young people to define what they will use to guide their life's choices. What principles will they rely on?

— *Klawock*

Give your children the chance to discover their own ideas sometimes, rather than always tell them what they should believe. Use "teachable moments" with things that happen throughout the day. Ask young people, "What does this say about—?" or "Do you agree?" or "How would this make you feel?"

— *Sitka*

Learn to talk to your children about difficult issues like domestic violence, oppression, and prejudice. Help them understand how these relate to their integrity.

— *Kenai*

Traditional Ways to Promote Asset # 28

Definition: Youth stands firm and acts on his or her beliefs, as well as respects others' beliefs.

Tell stories of Elders whose word was strong, and tell stories of how these Elders were rewarded for sticking to their words.

— *Toksook Bay*

Teach youth that promises are sacred. That they should not make a promise that they will not keep. They should never be pressured into a promise, that promises come from inside.

— *Togiak*

Subsistence skills directly translate to life skills. When you teach your children to hunt, to prepare the catch, to treat the catch with respect, and to share the catch, you are teaching them how to live life. The hunt teaches us to delay gratification, to persevere, to prepare, and to walk with integrity.

— *Kluti-Kaah*

Asset # 28 — Integrity

Kids act on their convictions and stand up for their beliefs

63% 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

Youth acts on convictions and stands up for beliefs

Jennifer Loesch

Can you think of someone you know who models integrity? It wasn't until my early teens that I understood the word. I knew a man in his early 30's from my church. He'd married the pastor's daughter, was a Marine, very active in the church and was my Sunday school teacher. On several occasions he and his wife had taken care of my sister and I while our parents were away. To me, he was like a big brother or uncle. Eventually he and his wife adopted a beautiful baby girl. Late that year he died in a small airplane crash on his way to go hunting. I was, of course, stunned and saddened, but it was then I began to hear the word integrity like never before. Everyone was describing this man as a man of integrity.

So, even years later, when I hear the word integrity I think of this man who was a role model to me. I saw him in his home and at church. He didn't act one way in one situation and another way in a different situation. I always saw him stand up for what he believed in, he was honest and trustworthy. He was highly respected in the church and the community. He is someone I will never forget.

Can you think of someone who might remind you of this man? Someone who models integrity and acts on their convictions and stands up for their beliefs? Now look at yourself, do you model integrity? Perhaps you are a person that someone is looking up to? Do you have children in your home, church, school or community who look up to you? Do you act one way when they see you in the grocery store and another way when they see you in the classroom? It's important to be an example to them, when they see you modeling these Assets, they themselves are learning to model them.

There are numerous other things you can do to build this Asset in youth, not only by being an example, but by supporting youth and children when they are convicted and stand up for their beliefs. Encourage them to take that stand and celebrate their choice. It's important that they feel that they can come to you to discuss possible situations that may require them to do more than just stand idly by. Be a model of integrity yourself, and encourage youth to act upon their convictions and stand up for their beliefs!

Research

Youth who model integrity, stand up for what they believe, and act on their convictions are more likely to grow up healthy and successful. Here are some other findings:

Higher levels of prosocial behavior
(Eisenberg, Miller, Shell, McNalley, & Shea, 1991; Estrada, 1995; Ford, Wentzel, Wood, Stevens, & Siesfeld, 1989)
Higher grades and math and reading scores
(Hanson & Ginsburg, 1988; Rosenthal & Feldman, 1991; Wentzel, 1991)
Greater overall well-being
(Moore & Glei, 1995)
Greater belief in male responsibility to prevent pregnancy
(Pleck, Sonenstein, & Ku, 1993)
Less affiliation with deviant friends
(Whitbeck, Simons, Conger, and Lorenz, 1989)

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