

Helping Kids Succeed – Alaskan Style!

Practical Suggestions for Building Assets in Your Child

Asset # 8- Youth as Resources

To Build Asset #8 Parents and Extended Family Can . . .

Parents and extended family can . . . Have chores at home. Talk about this, so kids see the difference between being "made to do stuff" and contributing to the family needs. Involve them in deciding what tasks they will have.
— *McGrath*

Help children identify social causes that are important to them. Discuss ways they can make a difference.
— *Anchorage*

Ask your children about what they believe and think about things. Let children know you value their input.
— *St. Paul*

Let your child be responsible for certain family needs, such as checking out summer camps, leading a family meeting, or planting a garden.
— *Fairbanks*

Talk about the importance of being a good student, friend, and citizen. Help your child understand these are important roles for young people, and should be done well.
— *Whittier*

School staff can . . . Help keep programs like peer helpers, peer tutors, and activities where teens can help others.
— *Anchorage*

Have at least one student on the Advisory School Board. Make sure the Student Council is working and listened to.
— *Juneau*

Encourage all students to lead a community project or school activity. Encourage staff to use service projects as a way to teach some of the curriculum material.
— *Nome*

Traditional Ways to Promote Asset #8

Traditional ways . . . Tell your children their family stories. It's up to them to preserve the stories and pass them on to their children. — *Toksook Bay*

Teach your children what it means to be a woman or a man. The qasgiq is the place for teaching young men the way of life. — *Toksook Bay*

During the whale hunt, all the members of the community have important tasks, including the kids.

Everyone is involved. — *Point Hope*

Help your children learn their Native language. This way they can talk with the Elders, in their Native language, and this helps to keep hope alive throughout the community. — *Hoonah*

Give everyone an important role with the fishing, from setting and pulling in the net, to cutting and putting up the fish. — *Kasigluk*

Encourage young children to do small chores — like picking up after themselves. — *Little Diomed*

Go gather food together. Teach kids the importance of hard work. — *Elim*

During a Potlatch ceremony, give everyone a role in the planning and preparation. The Potlatch will not be a success unless they are given a chore. — *Gakona*

Asset #8 — Youth as Resources

24% 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 and Adult partnerships do make a huge and positive impact on youth and their behaviors.

Here are some tips for youth, when they are working with adults.

- ? Communicate your ideas and feelings openly.
 - ? Adults may not be aware of how capable you are < enlighten them.
 - ? Adults will feel responsible for the success or failure of the project. Be willing to share in both successes and failures.
 - ? Adults may be just as uncertain as young people; they have just learned to disguise it more.
 - ? Criticism doesn't necessarily equate to condescension - just because they don't agree with you, doesn't mean that they are dismissing you.
- Here are some tips for adults, when they are working with youth.**
- ? Communicate your ideas and feelings openly.
 - ? Don't expect more from the young person than you would from another adult.
 - ? Make sure that you don't hold the young person to a stricter standard than the adults.
 - ? Conversely, don't excuse all indiscretions just because you are dealing with a youth.

Quote:

Youth are...
 Amazing, Acknowledge Them.
 Believable, Trust Them.
 Childlike, Allow Them.
 Divine, Honor Them.
 Energetic, Nourish Them.
 Fallible, Embrace Them.
 Gifts, Treasure Them.
 Here now, Be with them.
 Innocent, Delight with Them.
 Joyful, Appreciate Them.
 Kindhearted, Learn from them.
 Lovable, Cherish Them.

Magical, Fly with Them.
 Noble, Esteem Them.
 Open minded, Respect Them.
 Precious, Value Them.
 Questioners, Encourage Them.
 Resourceful, Support Them.
 Spontaneous, Enjoy Them.
 Talented, Believe in Them.
 Unique, Affirm Them.
 Vulnerable, Protect Them.
 Whole, Recognize Them.
 Xtraspecial, Celebrate Them.
 Yearning, Notice Them.
 Zany, Laugh with Them.

Written by Mieji Stewart

Research

In 1993, youth development researchers concluded that the marginality of adolescents is embedded in their lack of a social role. The popular media presents an image of the youth that is unattached, useless, and irresponsible. Research shows that these so called "free" youth are less likely to thrive than youth who are attached, feel useful, and are responsible for something and/or someone.

In 1985, a study done in Cook County Illinois found that youth with lower than average grade point averages wanted to volunteer in the community as much as the youth with above average grades. However, they found that the community rarely asked the youth with less than average GPAs to contribute.

A much larger study found that efforts that help youth feel attached to a group or project resulted in higher self-esteem, more community cohesion, and significantly less drug and alcohol use.

What are you doing to give the youth in your life useful and meaningful roles?

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Association of Alaska School Boards'
Alaska Initiative for Community Engagement
 316 West 11th Street
 Juneau, Alaska 99801

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