



ideas for parents

Easy Ways to Build Assets for and with Your Child

FAST FACTS

ASSET #3: Other Adult Relationships

Youth are more likely to grow up healthy when they receive support from three or more nonparent adults.

45% of youth surveyed by Search Institute have this asset in their lives.*

What Are Assets?

Assets are 40 values, experiences, and qualities that help kids succeed. "Other adult relationships" is one of six support assets.

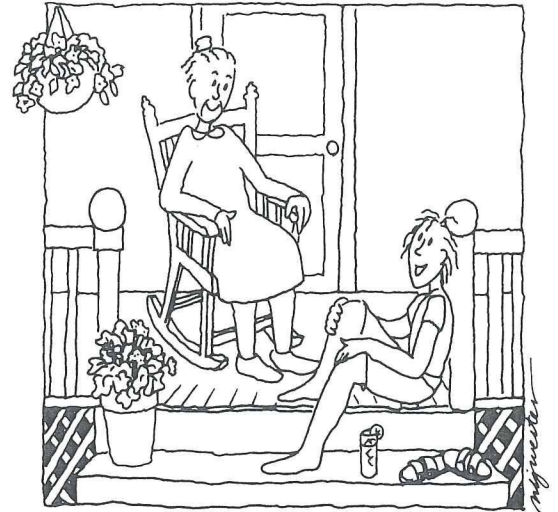
* Based on Search Institute surveys of 217,277 6th- to 12th-grade youth throughout the United States during the 1999-2000 school year.

The Support of Others

Think back to your childhood. Was there one adult you really enjoyed talking with? Maybe it was a grandparent, a club leader, an aunt, a coach, a neighbor, an older cousin, someone in your congregation, or your piano teacher. This person helped you sort through growing-up issues. Even if you can't recall any specific conversations, you will remember the warm feelings brought by talking with that person.

Young people need parents to talk to, but they also need other adults to bounce ideas off, to ask questions of, to laugh with, to help sort through sticky situations. Researchers have discovered that young people who have other caring adults to talk with are:

- Less likely to do risky things, such as use alcohol or other drugs or be sexually active.
- More likely to grow up successfully. Even children in abusive, financially stressed, chaotic, or otherwise difficult situations



- have better futures if they find at least one caring adult outside the home.
- Likely to think they can make a difference and that they matter.
- Better able to succeed in school.

Tell Them THANKS!

With your child, identify all the adults who regularly interact with her or him. Include teachers, grandparents, club leaders, coaches, cooks, bus drivers, aunts, uncles, employers, school administrators, paraprofessionals, custodians, neighbors, other extended family, and the parents of friends. Jot a short note to each one, telling them how much you appreciate their care, their dedication, and their interest in your child.



time together

Three ways to encourage your child to build relationships with other caring adults:

- 1 Help your child find an adult you both trust who shares a similar hobby or interest with your child.
 - Play games with other families where teams consist of adults of one family paired with children from another family.
- 2 Use letters, phone calls, and email to keep relationships strong with caring adults who are far away.

Support through the Years

Age Ways to Love and Support Your Child

- 0-1
 - Hold your baby and look at her or him during feedings.
 - Respond to your baby's needs.
 - Rock your baby often.
- 2-3
 - Cheer your child on as he or she masters new skills.
 - Touch your child often. Hug. Cuddle.
 - Stay positive when setting limits for your child.
- 4-5
 - When you interact with your child, get down to her or his eye level.
 - Share your child's excitement about her or his interests.
 - Find other caring adults to participate regularly in your child's life.
- 6-10
 - Answer your child's questions. If you don't know an answer, say so and work together to find it.
 - When you and your child disagree, point out you still love her or him.
 - Be silly with your child.
- 11-15
 - Accept the identity your child is forming.
 - Affirm independence and interdependence.
 - At least sometimes, be available to listen.
- 16-18
 - Continue to show affection for your teenager.
 - Let your teen overhear you complimenting her or him to someone else.
 - Seek your teen's opinion or advice on a big decision.

Quick Tip:
A good way to
love your child is
to be accessible.

More Help for Parents

What Kids Need to Succeed: Proven, Practical Ways to Raise Good Kids. This book gives practical tips for building assets for and with young people. (Available from Search Institute, www.search-institute.org; 800-888-7828.)

FINAL WORD

"It isn't walls and furniture that make a home. It's the family."

—Natalie Savage Carlson

Support for Parents

Parents need support, too.

Research shows that parents need the help of immediate and extended family, friends, and communities.

So asking for help or advice is not a sign of weakness. Instead, it provides good ideas, encouragement, and reinforcement—all of which are needed to face the challenges of parenting that will come along the way.

This newsletter and other asset resources are produced by Search Institute, www.search-institute.org; 800-888-7828.

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