

ideas for parents

Easy Ways to Build Assets for and with Your Child

FAST FACTS

**ASSET
CATEGORY**

Support

The more love, support, caring, and adult contacts a child has, the more likely he or she is to grow up healthy.

Building Support

*African American Parents Say:**

- "Praying together, eating, going out."
- "Eating meals (with teens), it's a way to get out from teens what they might not tell you."

*The Minnesota Family Strength Project Research Report 1997 and 1999.

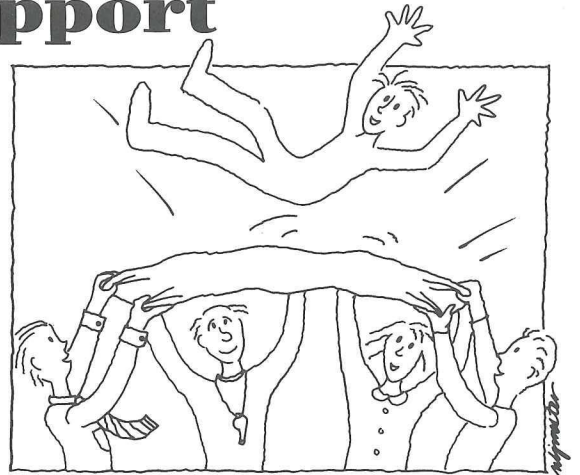
Everyone Provides the Strength of Support

Who are the people that really support you in your life?

These people are important champions. They cheer us on when things go well. They stick with us when life throws us a curve ball. They listen. They ask questions. They smile. They hug. They're people we like to be around.

What kind of a champion are you for your child? Are you a fair-weather supporter? A rain-or-shine supporter? What's your unique way of supporting and loving your child?

Your love and support for your child are critical. But you can't go it alone. You need others. Your child needs others. How supported and cared for does your child feel by teachers, neighbors, coaches, grandparents, aunts, uncles, parents of their friends, youth workers, and mentors? These other key adults



are important players in helping your child jump over the hurdles in life. In fact, the more supportive adults your child has, the better. And by nurturing and loving all the children in our communities, we help them grow to be loving, caring people themselves.

Look to future newsletters for details on all six support assets!

6 Key Areas of Support

Search Institute researchers have identified six specific assets in the support category that are crucial for helping young people grow up healthy. Check the areas of strength in your child's life:

- Family support—Family life provides high levels of love and support.
- Positive family communication—You and your child communicate positively, and your child is willing to seek you out for advice and counsel.
- Other adult relationships—Your child receives support from three or more non-parent adults.

- Caring neighborhood—Your child experiences caring neighbors.
- Caring school climate—School provides a caring, encouraging environment for your child.
- Parent involvement in schooling—You are actively involved in helping your child succeed in school.

Name Three

Have each family member name three ways the family supports her or him.

1
2
3

In Search of Other Adults

Children can link up with other adults through programs and opportunities such as these:

- Neighborhood get-togethers
- Religious programs
- Music lessons
- Sports leagues
- Community recreation
- Internships
- Family reunions and gatherings
- Parents' friends
- Tutoring
- Theater projects
- Youth groups and programs
- Cultural activity groups
- Community bands, orchestras, and choirs
- Camps
- Mentoring
- Service-learning programs in schools

Quick Tip:
Help your child connect with three caring adults.



Swap Experiences

Ask your child which adult he or she most enjoys being with and why. Then tell about a significant adult from your childhood. Explain what you gained from that relationship.

More Help for Parents

Tag, You're It! by Kathleen Kimball-Baker. This book provides 50 commonsense ideas for any adult to connect and build developmental assets with young people. (Published by Search Institute, www.search-institute.org; 800-888-7828.)

talk together

Questions to discuss with your child:

- Which adult outside of our family would you like to get to know better? Why?
- If you had a tough question that you didn't want to discuss with me (us), who would you go to?
- How can we show our appreciation to the significant adults in your life?

Final Word

"I have always believed that I could help change the world because I have been lucky to have adults around me who did—in small and large ways."

—Marian Wright Edelman, author and president of the Children's Defense Fund

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