



PROMOTING CHARACTER BUILDING ASSETS in our YOUTH
Ideas for COMMUNITIES & BUSINESSES
 (Months = Indicates when the schools emphasize assets in that category.)



COMMITMENT TO LEARNING – Sept/May

These assets reflect how connected young people are to their schools, how motivated they are to achieve, and whether they express their curiosity and work ethic in homework and reading for fun.

How To Promote Assets in this category:

- Sponsor trips to museums, exhibits, films, lectures etc. To make sure programming for youth is enjoyable, meaningful, and intellectually challenging.
- Volunteer in a school as a tutor, club leader, reader to young students, or other helping roles.
- Attend school performances, plays, and concerts.
- Encourage bookstores to feature great books for kids.
- Have a community-wide drive to gather used books, then donate them to needy families
- Offer community education classes for the whole family.
- Counter messages in the media that describe school as meaningless or boring.
- Recognize entire schools or classrooms. Reward students for good attendance.
- Have students share their school experiences with community leaders and groups.

CONSTRUCTIVE USE OF TIME – Dec/Jul/Aug

Whether through schools, community organizations, congregations, or for-profit centers, planned activities encourage positive growth and contribute to the development of the other assets.

How To Promote Assets in this category:

- Sponsor free community events that expose young people (and their families) to a wide variety of arts performances.
- Honor community members who volunteer with youth programs. Feature stories about them in the local newspaper.
- Include religious youth workers on community-wide youth councils and task forces.
- Sponsor workshops for parents on communicating with kids. Offer suggestions for activities and projects families can do together.
- Sponsor youth bands, orchestras, drama clubs, dance troops, and singing groups. Provide places to practice.
- Use discounts, special promotional offers, and giveaways to attract young people to youth programs.
- Partner with local congregations in sponsoring community-wide youth events.
- Create community calendars that include all different kinds of youth activities-in schools, congregation, community organizations (distribute through a community paper, cable access etc.)

SUPPORT – Oct

Support assets refer to the ways in which children are loved, affirmed, and accepted. Ideally, children experience an abundance of support not only in their families but also from many people in a variety of settings, such as in schools or religious congregations, among extended family, within the family's social network, and in other areas in which socialization occurs.

How To Promote Assets in this category:

- Provide and publicize family crisis hotlines.
- When children call their parents at the office, community center, club, or wherever make it a priority that parents receive the call.
- Sponsor discussion nights for parents and teens. Publicize the topics in advance.
- Create opportunities for youth and adults to work and play together.
- Pair kids with adult volunteers for community service projects.
- Allow and encourage employees to volunteer time at schools

POSITIVE IDENTITY – Jan

This category focuses on young people's views of themselves—their own sense of agency, purpose, worth, and promise. Without a positive sense of who they are, youth may feel powerless, without a sense of initiative and direction.

How To Promote Assets in this category:

- Include problem-solving skills in job training for teen workers.
- Invite experts to speak to parents about building self-esteem in children.
- Provide meaningful opportunities for youth to contribute to community life.
- Help young people to set personal goals that inspire hope.
- Affirm and publicize the good things about your community. Be optimistic about its future.
- Highlight community members who have contributed to community life in significant ways.

SOCIAL COMPETENCIES – Mar

These assets are important personal and interpersonal skills youth need to negotiate the maze of choices, options, and relationships they face. These skills also lay the foundation for independence and competence as adults.

How To Promote Assets in this category:

- Reserve room on a local cable channel for a calendar of youth activities and events.
- Provide programs that bring children, teens, adults, and seniors together for fun and possible friendship.
- Celebrate the community's diversity with a heritage festival.
- Offer assertiveness training workshops and seminars for children, youth, and adults.
- Develop a shared community commitment to peaceful conflict resolution.
- Offer mediation services to neighborhoods, families, and youth in need.

EMPOWERMENT – Nov/Apr

The empowerment assets focus on community perceptions of youth & the opportunities they have to contribute to society in meaningful ways; the need to feel safe & valued.

How To Promote Assets in this category:

- Give positive feedback to youth you encounter in stores (as clerks, sales help, and wait staff) when you notice them doing a good job.
- Get youth involved in your organization or business.
- Ask kids how they would like to serve. Match opportunities to their interests and abilities.
- Promote and support neighborhood watch programs, block clubs, DARE and other crime prevention, community-building efforts.
- Provide young people with safe, supervised times and places where they can hang out with their friends.
- Publicize and celebrate the ways young people contribute to the community.

POSITIVE VALUES – Feb

Positive values are important “internal compasses” that guide young people's priorities and choices. Although there are many values that American society cherishes and seeks to nurture in youth, the asset framework focuses on several widely shared values that affect youth behavior.

How To Promote Assets in this category:

- Participate in neighborhood rehabilitation projects. Encourage community members and their kids to help.
- Model integrity in your daily life, at home, in the workplace, in public, and wherever you go. Support and affirm youth when they act with integrity.
- Make honesty a community value. Hold public officials and local celebrities to high standards of honesty. Remind them they are role models.
- Be clear and explicit about job responsibilities for teen workers and teach them how to meet those responsibilities.
- Invite community health professionals to speak to parents and kids about sex, drugs & alcohol.

BOUNDARIES AND EXPECTATIONS – Jun

Youth need to hear clear and consistent messages that set boundaries. Ideally, young people experience boundary assets in the family, at school, in after-school programs, and in the neighborhood. They provide a set of consistent messages about appropriate behavior and expectations across socializing contexts.

How To Promote Assets in this category:

- Offer support groups so parents can learn from each other about establishing and enforcing appropriate family boundaries.
- Support school leaders in developing, communicating, and enforcing school boundaries.
- Identify where kids get into trouble and start a series of community meetings to brainstorm and implement solutions.
- Expect young people to behave responsibly.