



**PROMOTING CHARACTER BUILDING ASSETS in our Youth**  
**Ideas for SCHOOLS/EDUCATORS**  
 (Months = Indicates when the schools emphasize assets in that category.)



**COMMITMENT TO LEARNING – Sept/May**

Commitment-to-learning 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:**

- Relate life content and curricula to real-life situations and issues. Use enrichment materials.
- Set up a homework hotline staffed by teachers, other adults, and other students. If your school is online, start a homework help chat room or bulletin board.
- Provide many opportunities for parents and other adults to volunteer at school.
- Pair younger students with older students who love to read.
- Help students to write their own books; start a classroom library of student-created books.
- Affirm and encourage achievement in diverse areas as students discover their own interests and capabilities.
- Make your classroom a warm and welcoming place to be.
- Make homework relevant to other parts of students' lives-family, work, hobbies, and community.
- Produce school T-shirts, sweatshirts, caps, jackets, buttons, and other items so students can wear visible signs of their school affiliation.
- Provide quiet time during the school day for students to read-and a cozy corner of the classroom where they can go.

**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:**

- Incorporate information about religious holidays and traditions into class discussions. Check school policy first.
- Limit the number of nights per week that students can be involved in school activities. Train adult leaders to help kids to set priorities.
- Communicate with local religious organizations. Share holiday and activity schedules.
- Have a school talent show.
- Provide free access to instruments, art materials, and lessons for students who can't afford them.
- Offer extracurricular activities that appeal to a wide variety of needs and interests.
- Encourage coaches, club sponsors, and others not to over-schedule students.
- Encourage students to get involved in activities outside of school.
- Combine or coordinate with school and community organizations and clubs.
- Honor school staff who volunteer with youth programs.

**SUPPORT – Oct**

Support assets refer to the ways in which children are loved, respected, 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:**

- During school conferences and parent meetings, focus on the positive.
- Interact with students so they learn to interact with others.
- Occasionally eat lunch with the students in the cafeteria.
- Invite students to identify ways they can promote caring in their neighborhoods.
- Start a lunchtime, study hall, or after-school discussion group for students who want to "just talk"

**POSITIVE IDENTITY - Jan**

This category focuses on young people's views of themselves—their own sense of 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:**

- Whenever possible give students choices about which assignment to do, which project to work on, whether to write an essay or a poem.
- Teach students to accept criticism and respond in constructive ways.
- Give students opportunities to reflect on and shape their own future.
- Encourage and support students in pursuing their dreams.
- Create a climate of optimism. Expect students to succeed.
- Draw connections between classroom learning and significant opportunities, needs, and issues in the world.

**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:**

- Let students plan class projects, assignments, even school-wide activities.
- Create assignment sheets for students.
- Use teaching styles that promote interaction and friendship-building.
- Provide activities that increase students' awareness and acceptance of differences.
- Encourage students to express their feelings, beliefs, values, and opinions without fear of being put down.
- Make conflict resolution training available to students, faculty and staff.
- Form a Peace Club at your school.

**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:**

- Encourage students to get involved in community service.
- Cultivate leadership skills in many students, not just a select few.
- Include service learning as part of the regular school curriculum.
- Train teenagers how to help, tutor, and befriend younger children.
- Teach children how to tell adults about bad things that happen to them.
- Establish a peer mediation program so students can help each other resolve conflicts peacefully
- Actively work to create an environment that accepts, welcomes, and celebrates diversity. Don't tolerate bullying or disrespect of any kind.

**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:**

- Honor and affirm students who help others. Give special awards and recognition for service.
- Offer a unit of study on people who have made a difference in the world through activism and service.
- Encourage and expect all faculty and staff to model integrity.
- Make it easier for students to be honest than to be dishonest.
- Encourage and expect all faculty and staff to model honesty.
- Create a classroom display about honesty.

**BOUNDARIES AND EXPECTATIONS - Jun**

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

**How To Promote Assets in this category:**

- Respect and reinforce family values and rules as much as possible.
- Include parents in meetings with students regarding problem behaviors and broken rules.
- If you publish a student handbook, send copies home to parents.
- Notice and celebrate times when students follow school policies and respect school boundaries.
- Survey the school neighborhood to learn if neighbors have any concerns or complaints about student behavior.