

The Support Category of Developmental Assets

Supportive, healthy relationships make a big difference

Many studies over the years confirm that caring, supportive relationships with adults are critical for raising young people who are healthy and resilient. Support means freely giving young people love, affirmation, and acceptance; surrounding young people with caring families, guardians, friends, teachers, neighbors, and other adults; and helping young people know they belong, are not alone, and are both loved and lovable. **Support** is one of eight asset categories that make up Search Institute's 40 Developmental Assets, the qualities, experiences, and relationships that help young people grow up healthy, caring, and responsible.

Here are the facts

Research shows that the more loving, supportive, and caring adults a young person knows, the more likely he or she is to grow up healthy. Search Institute has identified six assets in the Support category crucial for helping young people grow up healthy: Family Support, Positive Family Communication, Other Adult Relationships, Caring Neighborhood, Caring School Climate, and Parent Involvement in Schooling.

Tips for building these assets

Developing bonds with young people takes listening and giving of yourself as needed. Be patient. Different kids and situations call for different kinds of support. Comfort, encourage, and help young people. Or simply be there for them. Remember that support doesn't have to be big or loud to be meaningful.

Also try this

In your home and family: Have each family member name three ways the family supports her or him. Discuss these, as well as the areas (and ways) in which each family member would like to receive more support.

In your neighborhood and community: Model support for young people by being supportive toward others in your neighborhood, both youth and adults—praise them, take time for them, show an interest in them, and work to understand them.

In your school or youth program: Encourage access to at least one caring adult for each young person in the school or youth program.

Want to know more about Search Institute's other seven asset categories or the 40 Developmental Assets and ideas for helping young people build them? Visit www.search-institute.org/assets.

Developmental Assets® are positive factors within young people, families, communities, schools, and other settings that research has found to be important in promoting the healthy development of young people. From *Instant Assets: 52 Short and Simple E-Mails for Sharing the Asset Message*. Copyright © 2007 by Search Institute®, 877-240-7251; www.search-institute.org. This message may be reproduced for educational, noncommercial uses only (with this copyright line). All rights reserved.