

ideas for parents

Practical Suggestions for Building Assets in Your Child

FAST FACTS

ASSET TYPE #1: Support

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

41%
of youth surveyed by Search Institute experience at least three of the six support assets.*

What Are Assets?

Assets are 40 key building blocks to help kids succeed.

* Based on Search Institute surveys of almost 100,000 6th- to 12th-grade youth throughout the United States.

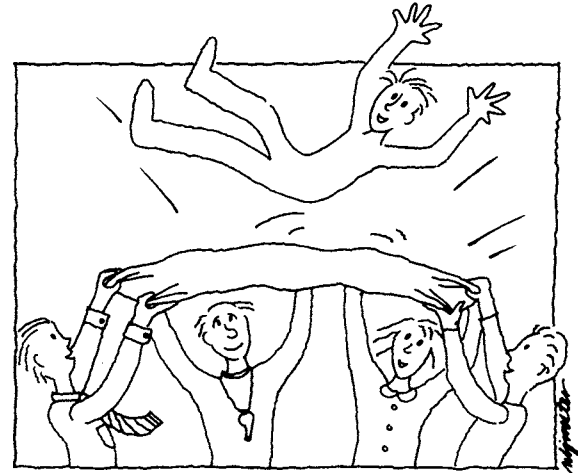
The Nurturing Nature of Support

Who are the champion supporters in your life?

These champions are important. 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 enjoy being 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 for future newsletters for details on all six support assets!

6 Key Areas of Support

Search Institute researchers have identified six support assets 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

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 child's needs.
 - Take delight in your child's development.
- 2-3
 - Cheer your child on as he or she masters new skills.
 - Touch your child often. Hug. Cuddle.
 - Say "yes" more than you say "no."
- 4-5
 - Encourage your child's thinking abilities by exposing her or him to new situations.
 - Play with your child, letting her or him choose the type of play.
 - Find other caring adults to participate regularly in your child's life.
- 6-10
 - Encourage your child as he or she learns new skills.
 - When you and your child disagree, point out you still love her or him.
 - Answer all your child's questions.
- 11-15
 - Accept the identity your child is forming.
 - Affirm independence and interdependence.
 - 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.
 - Ask for your teen's opinion or advice on something important.

Quick Tip:
The best way to
love your child is
to love yourself.

More Stuff You Can Use

What Kids Need to Succeed: Proven Practical Ways to Raise Good Kids. This book gives practical tips for building assets in young people. (Available from Search Institute, 700 South Third Street, Suite 210, Minneapolis, MN 55415; 1-800-888-7828.)

Final Word

"Children need to know that, whatever else may happen, their parents love them."

—Michael Popkin, Ph.D., director of the Active Parenting Program

Helpful Hints

Tips that make supporting your child easier:

- **Adjust the way you support your child as he or she grows.**
- **Identify your own sources of support and what you can learn from them.**
- **Ask your child what kind of support he or she likes best and why.**
- **Watch for non-verbal clues from your child saying he or she needs your support.**