



Build a Support Network

Work together to make a difference for young people

Adults expect a lot of young people: to learn to treat people fairly and with kindness, act responsibly, get good grades, and become successful. Of course, young people can't learn everything they need to reach their goals without help from parents and other caring adults. Adults also expect a lot of themselves. Consistently modeling appropriate behavior, teaching values, and at the same time, striving for your own goals, can be challenging. That's why it's important to work together. If you know a parent with a troubled teenager or a teacher with a failing student, ask them how you can help.

If you are having difficulty connecting with a young person, be sure to ask for the help you need. Sometimes there are concrete things people can do to help; other times listening is all that's needed. Search Institute's framework of 40 Developmental Assets is meant to help guide young people—as well as adults—to a healthy, happy, thriving life.

Ask others to help

You are not alone. Raising young people takes a group effort and everyone—parents, grandparents, aunts, uncles, teachers, friends, clergy, coaches—play an important role. There are people, places, and resources everyone can turn to when help is needed to support young people.

Offer help to others

Families, communities, and schools need support. Even if you're not a parent, you can support young people and their families. Lending an ear at the end of a long day can make a big difference in the life of a frazzled parent. Offer to baby-sit or take a young person on an outing so parents can rest and rejuvenate. Not only will you be helping parents do their jobs better, you'll also be helping their children grow and develop in new ways.

Also try this

In your home and family: Be easy on yourself—and others! Tell yourself and your spouse, significant other, peers, colleagues, and staff what you (and they) are doing right helping young people. Avoid dwelling on mistakes; celebrate your successes and give yourself a pat on the back!

In your neighborhood and community: Help build your neighbors' confidence as parents and caring adults. Leave a note or voice mail telling a certain neighbor how much you appreciate him or her.

In your school or youth program: Send a letter to parents about building Developmental Assets, and then discuss them in conferences or parent meetings.

Want to know more about 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.

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