

# Helping Kids Succeed – Alaskan Style!

## Practical Suggestions for Building Assets in Your Child

### Asset # 3 – Other Adult Relationships

#### To Build Asset #3 Parents and Extended Family Can . . .

1. Involve your kids in youth programs that include lots of time for talking about what's going on in their lives- the highs and the lows. Get to know the youth program leaders. Support them as needed. - Anchorage
2. Use letters, telephone and e-mail to keep relationships strong with special friends who are far away. - Wrangell
3. Give your kids time with other adults on their own. Make sure that it is someone you trust and your child genuinely likes. - Gakona
4. Encourage your children to join adult sponsored groups, troops and teams.
5. Do things with other families so that your children can be with other parents and adults. Include other families and adults in your activities. - Juneau
6. Get to know your friend's children. Build a good relationship with them. - Anchorage
7. Support activities that involve youth-adult partnerships. - Sitka
8. Sponsor career days so young people can spend time with adults in professions that interest them.
9. Plan inter- generational programs and events so that children and adults can get to know each other.

#### Traditional Ways to Promote Asset #3

Encourage daughters to have a special auntie or older woman to talk to. Growing up our aunts were like our moms and just as respected. - Elim

Just be a part of what kids are doing. Play with them. Hunt with them. Gather eggs with them. Include them in everything that you do. - Tatitlek

Dads can spend time with their nieces and nephews and other kids who don't have a father. Be an "uncle." - Savoonga

#### Simple Ways to Help Kids

*Three things that adults and extended family can do:*

1. Greet all children, by name if you can.
2. Encourage your children to engage in outdoor activities with you, maybe hunting or camping.
3. Be consistent with them.

*Youth will care how much their teachers know, only after they know how much their teachers care.*

### Asset #3 — Other Adult Relationships

Youth receives support from three or more non-parent adults

41% of youth surveyed by Search Institute have this asset in their lives.\*

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

#### What are Assets?

Assets are 40 key building blocks to help kids succeed. Like a dream catcher, assets are the supporting threads in a young person's life that can keep away harm and invite goodness.

**Words of Encouragement**

Too often, when a problem arises with a youth's behavior, we are quick to blame the parent and/or the school. We may do this to rid ourselves of the responsibility we feel for the behavior of the youth. We may even do this to free ourselves from the guilt we feel for our own behavior. I heard one of my neighbors say, "It's ok for me to swear, lie, use drugs, and drive drunk, but those youth never should." We know the kids are watching us. We cannot expect anymore from them, than we expect from ourselves. It is too simple to only blame others, when the research clearly shows that we all have a role to play in helping kids succeed. It has probably been this way since humans began forming communities. It will probably be this way until humans stop living in communities and neighborhoods. What have you done for someone else's kid in the last week? What can you do for someone else's kid today?

**Quotes:**

"It may not take a whole village to raise a child, but it does take at least 5 caring adults and, ideally, many more."

Derek Peterson,  
AASB's Director of Child/Youth Advocacy

"Saintliness is out of reach for most adults, even for bishops, so I do not think we should expect youngsters to be saints — capable of living up to their ideals merely through the strength of their conscience. They need our support."

Kurt Hahn

"The strength of a community comes from the character of its citizens. This character is not simply absorbed by the children. It is intentionally passed down. If a community wishes to maintain or improve its level of health and civility, it is the adults within that community who must first behave in healthy and civil manner. Only after that change occurs can they instill those values in their children and youth."

An Alaskan Grandma

**Research**

Even though there is much less research on neighborhood and/or community support for youth, than on support by families and schools, the research has found that support from adults in the neighborhood can;

**Increase a youth's grades, make them appreciate their school, increase the likelihood that a youth will earn a high school diploma, and attain higher math scores.**

(Cochran & Bo, 1989; coon, Carey, & Fulker, 1992; Duncan, 1994; entwisle, Alexander, & Olson, 1994; Wenz-Gross et al., 1997; and others)

**Increase positive social behaviors in youth and decrease behavior problems among youth**

(Cochran & Bo, 1989; Sampson, Raudenbush, & Earls, 1997)

**Less substance abuse**

(Levine & Rosich, 1996; Melton, 1992; Sampson, Raudenbush, & Earls, 1997; Werner, 1993)

**Fewer feelings of loneliness, anxiety, and/or depression**

(Pretty et al., 1994; Rhodes, Ebert & Fischer, 1992)

**Greater self-esteem, higher hopes for the future, and cheerfulness**

(Talmi & Harter, 1998)

This newsletter and other asset resources are produced by the  
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