

Helping Kids Succeed – Alaskan Style!

Practical Suggestions for Building Assets in Your Child

Asset # 4- Caring Neighborhood/Community

To Build Asset #4 Parents and Extended Family Can . . .

Encourage young people to always help Elders and others who need it. Do this with them.

Selawik

As a family, join efforts like "Green Up, Clean Up" and other projects in the community.

Bethel

Get to know your neighbors. Visit with them when you take walks. Invite them for a Sunday dinner once in a while.

Ketchikan

Encourage children to share with others, for instance sleds, ice skates, books, or toys.

Akiachak

If something concerns you about your neighborhood, talk to people about it. Don't just let it go or get worse.

Klawock

Traditional Ways to Promote Asset #4

Help organize community dances. Include Native dances.

Toksook Bag

The entire community spends many hours hauling the whale up onto the ice, cutting up the meat and maktak, and distributing them. Everybody has a share, and everybody is fed. The people are happy. The happiness extends all the way from the deep inside.

Point Hope

At spring camp, after people gathered from the sea and land, everyone brought what they had prepared and ate and shared as a group. I think that was our way of showing love to each other.

Togiak

Give the best of the catch to the Elders.

Shishmaref

Always listen, be caring, loving, and very very patient. Also try to be as gentle as possible.

Port Lions

Get Elders and children together to play games like marbles or do activities like sliding.

Chuathbaluk

Asset #4 — Caring neighborhood/community

Youth experiences caring neighborhood and community

40% 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

A community can lift us up and empower us to achieve our true potential. It can also oppress us. It depends on the spirit of the community. Can you think of the strengths in your community? Can you think of the weaknesses? What can you do to strengthen these weaknesses? Do you support youth in your neighborhood and community? It's as easy as getting to know youth in your neighborhood. When you see them on the street, in a store, or somewhere in the community identify them by name. You can support neighborhood children/youth when they sell raffle tickets, cookies, popcorn, etc. Support them by going to a car-wash that they put on. You can also attend sporting events or school activities and congratulate them on their hard work afterwards. Is this complicated? At first it may be difficult to intentionally notice youth in your community and neighborhood, but after awhile it should become second nature. Just as you enjoy being known by name in your neighborhood and community, so do children and youth. Have you thought of ideas of what you can do? How can you make sure that youth experience caring neighborhood and community where you live?

Research

When youth feel support from other adults, neighbors, and citizens in the community they often have lower substance abuse, less exposure to violence, and it will strengthen their connection to school, neighbors and the community.

Research also shows:

Higher grades, more liking of school, higher IQ score, higher school completion rates, and higher math test scores

(Cochran & Bo, 1989; Coon, Carey & Fulker, 1992; Dunca, 1994; Entwisle, Alexander, & Olson, 1994; Wenz-Gross et al., 1997; Werner, 1993)

More prosocial behavior and fewer behavior problems

(Cochran, & Bo, 1989; Svedhem, 1994)

Reduced experience of violence

(Levine & Rosich, 1996; Melon, 1992; Sampson, Raudenbush, & Earls, 1997)

Less substance use

(Hawkins, Catalano & Miller, 1992; Werner, 1993)

Fewer feelings of loneliness, anxiety, or depression

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

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

(Talmi & Harter 1998)

Quote

"Without a sense of caring, there can be no sense of community."

- Anthony J. D'Angelo

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