

Helping Kids Succeed – Alaskan Style!

Practical Suggestions for Building Assets in Your Child

Asset # 40- Positive View of Personal Future

To Build Asset # 40 Parents and Extended Family Can . . .

Talk to your children about what they want to be when they grow up. Encourage them to look forward to things that might be happening in the near future (vacation, school, etc.)
— *Anchorage*

Tell your children that you believe in them and their ability to do all in life that they choose. Help them set goals and work toward their dreams.
— *Lower Kalskag*

Discuss news programs and papers and current events at home, putting in perspective that all news is not bad—balancing the good that goes on and the positive possibilities in the future.
— *Valdez*

Be positive. If you are feeling good about your life and your future, even through hard times, then your children will adopt that same attitude.
— *Juneau*

Celebrate the little things in life, so your children get used to looking for and finding the little things to be grateful for.
— *Sitka*

Make plans with your children. Tell them what you will do together at summer camp. Talk about how you will cut fish together, swim, and take walks on the beach. Then make sure that you do those things when summer comes around.
— *Kodiak*

Traditional Ways to Promote Asset # 40

By drying fish, you are telling your family that we will have food for another whole year. That gives them hope for the whole year.
— *Chuathbaluk*

The traditional Potlatch allows a family to heal from losing a loved one. After the grieving songs, we sing happy songs. The celebration lasts all night long. After the community party, we then have our own party. After this process, we then get along with our own lives. We lost a loved one, but we understand that life is full of meaning. — *Copper Center*

Like my grandma used to say, "You will always be young of heart and never stop learning. While your body may grow old, your mind will stay young." By remembering these thoughts, we keep a positive view of the future.
— *Shishmaref*

Asset # 40 — Positive View of Personal Future

Kids are optimistic about their own future.

70% 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

Youth is optimistic about own personal future.

Jennifer Loesch

I remember when I was a senior in high school it seemed that people were always asking me, "What are your plans once you graduate?" And now that I'm a college sophomore I feel that people are always asking me, "What do you plan to do with your Communications major?" People are interested in my future. To be honest, I have no idea what my long-term future will hold. However, I do know that I have an optimistic view of my future. I know that my future holds exciting, undiscovered adventures and that I will make the world a better place in my own personal way.

Do youth in your community hold positive views of their future? Do adults in the community encourage the youth to dream? Do teenagers in your community have goals for their lives? Having a sense of purpose in life and having positive views of the future are very similar assets. They go hand-in-hand, just like most other assets are related and inter-woven. If a teenager has a sense-of-purpose, they most likely have a positive view of the future.

Some ways to be more positive are; choose to be optimistic. You can be confident and sure of yourself and the situations around you. You can choose to accept things as they are. This doesn't mean that you give up and back down when things don't go your way. It means that you get on with your life, accepting the situation. You can choose to be resilient. When you're resilient you can survive almost anything-being hurt, frustrated, or let down, losing friends, making mistakes and much more. You can also choose to be cheerful. If you wake up in the morning and smile, you're day will start out so much better. When you send out positive thoughts, words and feelings, positive people (and things) are attracted to you. There are many other ways to be positive; choose to be enthusiastic, choose to have a sense of humor, choose to be humble, choose to have faith, choose to have hope, and choose to be a good sport.

Now that you've read that short list of ways to be more positive, can you help a child or teenager view their personal future with optimism?

Research

Studies have shown that when people envision themselves reaching their goals, they're more likely to make it happen. That's why it's important for us to picture a positive future for ourselves. A positive view of personal future has shown to be associated with:

Improved parent-child relationships
(Grossman & Rowat, 1995; Saucier & Ambert, 1982)

Increased self-esteem
(Nurmi & Pulliainen, 1991)

Decreased emotional or behavioral problems such as depression and sexual risk taking
(DuRant, Getts, Cadenhead, Emans, & Woods, 1995)

Decreased emotional distress
(Blum & Rinehart, 1997; Resnick et al., 1997)

Reduced Violence
(DuRant et al., 1994)

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