

Basic Asset Building

Asset Building Attitudes:

- Focus on young people's strengths, not their problems.
- Recognize that young people are resources, not simply absorbers of resources.
- All people are capable of building assets.
- Building assets is a way to interact with young people; it is not a program.
- Relationships with young people are key to asset building.
- Build relationships with ALL young people you come in contact with.
- Hold other adults accountable for their actions toward young people.
- All young people need more assets in their lives.
- Be intentional in looking for opportunities to build assets.
- Start working together with other parents, neighbors, and other community members to improve the future of our young people and our community, and stop blaming others for young people's poor behavior.
- Asset building requires consistent, positive messages to young people.
- Duplication and repetition are good and important.

Little ways to get started:

(pick one or two to work on every week)

- Smile and greet by name every young person you run into.
- Kneel, squat, or sit so you're at their eye level.
- Answer their questions.
- Tell them how terrific they are.
- Create a tradition with them and keep it.
- Suggest better behaviors when they act out.
- Delight in their discoveries and share their excitement.
- Ask them about themselves.
- Look in their eyes when you talk to them.
- Listen to them and to their stories.
- Play with them.
Read aloud together.
- Tell them their feelings are okay.
- Set boundaries that keep them safe.
- Be honest and be yourself.
- Hug them and thank them.
- Forget your worries sometimes and concentrate only on them.
- Notice when they're acting differently.
- Keep a family calendar in a visible spot that holds dates for all family members.
- Present options when they seek your counsel.
- Play outside together.
- Find a common interest.
- Hold hands during a walk.
- Apologize when you've done something wrong.
- Listen to their favorite music with them.
- Keep the promises you make.
- Wave and smile when you part.
- Display their artwork in your home.
- Point out what you like about them.
- Ask them to help you.
- Support them and believe in them.
- Applaud their successes.
- Deal with problems and conflicts while they're still small.
- Chaperone a dance.
- Nurture them with good food.
- Be flexible.
- Notice when they grow.
- Give them lots of compliments.
- Catch them doing something right.
- Encourage win-win solutions.
- Give them your undivided attention.

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Bigger Steps in Asset Building:

(Only when your family is comfortable with at least 20 of the “Little Ways” above)

- Start a family project with all members contributing to planning and each with a real role to play in the project.
- Set aside one evening each week as “family night” without TV, computers, or other electronics. Tell stories, read books, play board game, talk about the future.
- Eat together as a family at least 3 times each week. Listen as everyone tells about successes, difficulties, school, work, etc. Keep everything positive without rushing through the meal.
- With all family members participating, select an organization to volunteer at for a few hours each month.
- With all family members, organize a neighborhood event: yard sale, pot luck, mini-concert, helping a sick or elderly neighbor.

Contact Got40? for more asset building tips.