

Sussex County Coalition for Healthy and Safe Families

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Franklin
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ARMING CHILDREN WITH ASSETS

Ideas and Updates
for Parents and Communities



Quick Tip:
Focus on the positive and
children will too.

Asset Building in Franklin~

On April 17, 2007 the Hardyston/Franklin Alliance, Franklin School and Franklin PTA sponsored an "Arm Your Child with Assets" workshop at Franklin Elementary School. Seventeen enthusiastic community members were in attendance to learn what assets are and how they can incorporate them into the youth they come into contact with. To end the event, participants came up with concrete ways to implement asset building in families, schools and communities. The ideas that they came up with are practical ways to build assets in our youth. Check out the back of this page to see what they came up with!

FAST FACTS **ASSET TYPE #1:**

Support

The more love, support, and adult contacts a child has, the more likely he or she is to grow up healthy.

ASSET TYPE #4:

Constructive Use of Time

The more time a child spends with caring adults who help her or him nurture skills and creativity, the more likely your child will grow up healthy.

Source: "Assets for Parents"

Time Together...

Three Ways to Help a Child Find a Sense of Purpose

- 1 Identify areas of interest, talent, and curiosity. Encourage the child to get involved in activities that will build on those interests and talents.
- 2 Network with other adults and young people who have similar interests. See if you can participate in some meaningful activities together.
- 3 Interview a neighbor or family member who seems to have a strong sense of purpose. How did that person find that purpose?

**Source: The Search Institute, "Assets for Parents"*

Building Assets: A Powerful Approach

Researchers at Search Institute have identified 40 assets that have a powerful, positive impact on young people. Children and teenagers who have a lot of assets get involved in very few at-risk behaviors and are much more likely to do the positive things we value.

Whether you're a parent, a teacher, a community or religious leader, or just an adult who wants to help kids, you can begin building assets today. This *positive* approach to youth development is not about crisis management, although young people who have these assets face fewer crises. It is not about stopping and preventing problems, although young people who have these assets face (and create) fewer problems. Instead, it's about investing wisely in our youth, increasing their exposure to positive, constructive activities, and instilling values and skills that will guide them from the inside.

Building assets is not a quick fix. It takes time and commitment from individuals and communities-caring adults. It's worth it *because it works*.

Here are 6 key points to keep in mind as you begin (and continue) to build assets.

1. **Everyone can build assets.** All adults, youth, and children can play a role. Building assets requires consistent messages across a community.
2. **All young people need assets.** While it's crucial to pay special attention to those youth who have the least (economically or emotionally), all young people can benefit from more assets than they have.
3. **Relationships are crucial.** Strong relationships between adults and young people, young people and their peers, and teenagers and children are central to asset building.
4. **Asset building is an ongoing process.** It starts when a child is born and continues through high school and beyond.
5. **Consistent messages are important.** Young people need to receive consistent messages from their families, schools, communities, the media, and other sources about what's important and what's expected.
6. **Intentional redundancy is important.** Assets must be continually reinforced across the years and in all areas of a young person's life.

**Source: free spirit publishing, "What Kids Need to Succeed"*

What is the Municipal Alliance Program?

Municipal Alliances are community-based committees, made up of volunteers, who develop and provide alcohol and substance abuse prevention programs. Municipal Alliances were established in 1990 in each municipality to address each community's unique substance abuse prevention needs for all ages. In Sussex County there are 12 Municipal Alliances representing all 24 towns.

Courtesy of the County of Sussex, Department of Health and Human Services, Division of Community Services

The Chairperson for the Hardyston/Franklin Municipal Alliance is Elaine Tizzano. She can be reached at:

973-827-9775

"Children need to know that, whatever else may happen, their parents love them." -Michael Popkin, Ph.D.



"I often dream about the day when every single youth in this world will be able to lift their heads way, way, way up high and say 'I believe in myself'"
(Laura Garcia, 17)



100% of attendees agreed that the "Asset Building" workshop was a positive experience!

Recap: Ideas On How To Build Assets In Our Community

These are some of the ideas that workshop participants at the Franklin Elementary School "Arm Your Child With Assets" workshop came up with for community members to build assets within youth. Keep us updated on how it is going, and how you have been able to use these ideas. Email us at becky@centerforprevention.org.

Category 2 Empowerment Empowering your child.

- Teacher for a Day
- Family—Each member picks a night to cook or select menu
- Help set up and run a block party

Category 8 Positive Identity Encouraging your child to form a positive identity.

- Positive reinforcement and written remarks from teachers
- Positive reinforcement and written remarks from parents
- Positive reinforcement and written remarks from other students
- Student Showcase
- Career Day

Category 4 Constructive Use of Time Helping your child use her or his time in meaningful, constructive ways.

- Parent liaison for each class to encourage more involvement
- Advertise school activities on the radio and in the newspaper
- Parent/guardian/child activities
- Career Day- parents come and share careers in class

FINAL WORD..."I have always believed that I could help change the world because I have been lucky to have adults around me who did- in small and large ways."

-Marian Wright Edelman, author and president of the Children's Defense Fund

More Asset Building Ideas

For Infants:

- Smile at every infant you see
- Interact with them when possible.
- Prop them up so they can see more.
- Distract them from behavior you don't like.
- Sing and read to them every day
- Encourage babies to experiment with sound; especially sounds from another language.
- Play with babies in ways that make them laugh and enjoy the time together.

For Toddlers:

- Say yes more than no.
- Cheer them on; comfort them when frustrated.
- Simple boundaries: "Sit down" or "Don't bite"
- Be consistent- with rules, meals, sleep time.
- Read to children every day.
- Teach children to care for others by giving or sharing hugs.
- Give them two equally appealing choices whenever possible.
- Encourage them to express their feelings appropriately.
- Focus on what they do right rather than what they do wrong.

For Older Youth:

- Learn the names of kids who live near you.
- Take time to talk to them.
- Support activities for youth.
- See children as resources rather than problems.
- Get involved in your community.
- Eat at least one meal together.
- Talk about your values.
- Take care of your needs too.
- Learn as much as you can about what your kid needs at their current age.

Some of the things attendees learned from the workshop:

- Always smile and say hello to all kids.
- How important it is to interact with children besides your own. Good role model!
- I'm happy that I like to talk to everyone. I also listen very well.
- Asset Building is always an on-going process.

One asset that they will focus on:

- More help in the school.
- Community values; be a better role model to others.
- Really listening to my children when they speak.
- More open with my children. Keeping communication lines open. Talk about anything.
- Talking to cashier at the store.
- Having dinner as a family more often.
- Better communication.
- Building self-esteem with my own children and their friends also within the school and community whenever possible.