

Building the Commitment-to-Learning Assets



Commitment to Learning — Young people need a commitment to the lasting importance of learning and a belief in their own abilities.

As an MVParent, you are already one of your child's key asset builders. Here are tips on how you can take your parenting to the next level by intentionally focusing on the five *Commitment-to-Learning Assets*: *achievement motivation, school engagement, homework, bonding to school, and reading for pleasure.*

Try it...

For all parents

- Your beliefs about your children's competence affect their confidence and ability to learn.
- If your kids see you reading for pleasure, they are more likely to do so themselves.
- Be an advocate for schools to do better. Thank teachers when they provide interesting and stimulating homework and projects. Ask teachers if there are alternatives if they assign a lot of homework that requires memorization.
- Don't expect all of your children's learning to happen in school. Keep stretching their minds with stories, games, and activities that deepen their thinking.

For parents with children ages birth to 5

- Be available when children have questions, but don't be an "answer person." Ask more questions to get children thinking.
- Use music, puzzles, books, blocks, dramatic play, and games to add variety and interest to your children's day.

For parents with children ages 6 - 9

- Engage children's imagination. For example, when they are trying to figure out a situation, have them pretend they are a character with whom they are familiar. For example, if your child feels left out of a play group, ask what Thomas the Tank Engine or Junie B. Jones would do. Or if they are trying to figure out the answer to a "mystery" ask what the children from the *A to Z Mystery* series would do.
- When you talk about school, stay positive. Let your children know that you think learning and school are fun and important.

For parents with children ages 10 - 15

- Help your children become more literate online with homework help. Help them find

these references online: dictionary, thesaurus, almanac, encyclopedia, and an atlas.

- Find out what gets your child excited and encourage your child to deepen that interest. If your child enjoys music, learn more about musical instruments, attend a concert together (that your child picks), or figure out a way to make practicing an instrument more fun (such as by wearing pajamas).
- Make it a point to attend school conferences and special events.

For parents with children ages 16 - 18

- Encourage your teens to explore all the options available at their school. They may not be aware of interesting opportunities such as yearbook, school newsletter, debate, math teams, student council, and other leadership and learning groups. Be aware (because of school budget cuts) that some activities now have to be taken as classes while others are available as before- and after-school activities.
- Play word games such as Scrabble™ or Boggle™ together. Both of these games are available online as well as in board formats and you and your teens can play as a team or against each other if you prefer Internet games.

Want more ideas on how to instill a commitment to learning in your child?

Read *What Kids Need to Succeed* by Peter Benson, Judy Galbraith, and Pamela Espeland and *What Young Children Need to Succeed* by Jolene Roehlkepartain and Nancy Leffert. Visit www.searchinstitute.org for more information.

About Developmental Assets®:

Developmental Assets are 40 relationships, opportunities, skills, and values that research shows *all* young people need in their lives in order to thrive and reach their potential. Download free Developmental Assets lists for different age groups and in different languages—from Spanish to Russian to Somali (and many more)—by visiting www.search-institute.org/assets/assetlists.html. Or, [download a one-page colorful chart](#) (PDF) from MVParents.com that you can post on your refrigerator as a reminder of the “good stuff” your child needs.

The assets are divided into eight categories:

External Assets (provided by family, friends, school, and community)

- Support
- Empowerment
- Boundaries and Expectations
- Constructive Use of Time

Internal Assets (young people gradually develop within themselves)

- Commitment to Learning
- Positive Values
- Social Competencies
- Positive Identity

[Tell a friend](#) about MVParents.com. Its positive approach to parenting is based on the 40 Developmental Assets that children and youth need to help them grow up healthy and avoid high-risk behaviors such as underage drinking. Learn more about the [assets](#), the research behind them, and how you can build them with your child or teenager.

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