

Building the Empowerment Assets



Empowerment —Young people need to feel valued and valuable. This happens when youth feel safe and respected.

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 four *Empowerment Assets*: *community values*, *youth*, *youth as resources*, *service to others*, and *safety*.

Try it...

For all parents

- Create a loving, violence-free, safe home environment.
- Include your children in family decisions, such as what to serve for meals, who does which chores, family getaways, and family fun nights.
- Role model service to others. Get your family involved in family volunteering projects at your local YMCA, your child's school (or preschool), or your congregation.
- Show through your words and actions that you value *all* young people, not just your own kids.

For parents with children ages birth to 5

- Let little kids do the stuff they do: dump out containers or get undressed because they want to. Find safe ways for them to *be little kids*.
- Kids are proud of what they can do, but they don't always need to hear praise. When they say, "Watch me!" look and be happy with them. Avoid giving feedback or an "evaluation" of how well they've done every time they want you to watch.

For parents with children ages 6 - 9

- Set aside time during the day for children to choose their own activities.
- Let children have turns making decisions about how to help others, such as baking cookies for a sick friend or drawing pictures to send to a grandparent.

For parents with children ages 10 - 15

- Have regular family meetings to plan, solve problems, and encourage each other. Rotate who leads the meetings.
- Don't tolerate hurtful words or actions in your home.
- Empower your children to express themselves in ways that get them excited, such as drawing manga characters or telling funny stories about what happened at

school.

For parents with children ages 16 - 18

- Invite someone from a different background over for a snack (or a meal). Get to know them—and let them get to know you and your teenagers.
- Get involved in a parent-teacher organization at your teens' school.
- Help your teens get to know as many of the adults, other teens, and younger children in your neighborhood as possible. Ask them to look out for younger kids and neighbors who might be somewhat vulnerable (such as the elderly or someone in poor health).

Want more ideas on how to empower 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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