

Building the Positive-Values Assets

Positive Values — Young people need to develop strong guiding values or principles to help them make healthy, faithful, and moral life choices.



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 six *Positive-Values Assets*: *caring, equality and social justice, integrity, honesty, responsibility, and restraint*.

Try it...

For all parents

- You are both teacher and role model of positive values. The ways in which you talk about values and live by them will strongly influence your children's development of them, especially when your children become teenagers.
- Volunteering as a family (and encouraging children's individual service when they're old enough) is one of the best ways to promote the values of caring, equality and social justice, and responsibility.
- Involve in your lives other adults and young people whose values and ability to live by them you respect and admire.
- Teaching kids how to be responsible isn't just about the "big" volunteering jobs at school and in the community but also the little things, such as picking up your room, washing dishes, and taking out the garbage.

For parents with children ages birth to 5

- When you know your young child has lied (and they all do at times), point it out. Explain why it's wrong to lie. Talk about how important it is to be honest. Don't ask children if they've told the truth; this can corner them into telling another lie. Instead, say something like, "It can be hard to tell the truth sometimes. It's okay for you to make a mistake, but it isn't okay for you to lie about what happened."
- Teach children about integrity in simple ways. For example, explain, "When someone thanks you for doing something you didn't do, it's important to say so. You can say, 'Thanks for thanking me, but my brother did it.'"

For parents with children ages 6 - 9

- Ask children what they stand for and against. Perhaps help them make a list of things. You might say, "Why are the things on your list important to you? What are some things you can do to show how you feel?" Later, if they are struggling with how to deal with something, they can pull out their lists to help them decide how to act.
- When children don't meet their responsibilities, use logical consequences. For example, if a child gets an allowance for cleaning her bedroom, make sure the room

is clean before she gets any money.

For parents with children ages 10 - 15

- Don't overreact when your child lies to you. Young people will lie if they fear your reaction. If you suspect or know that your child is lying, ask, "Why do you think I might be having trouble believing you right now?" In other words, give them the opportunity to tell the truth.
- Be clear about your boundaries, values, and reasons. Most teenagers are actually relieved to hear their parents say, "We expect you to not have sex or drink alcohol as a teenager." Explain why—and be open to questions.
- Encourage your children to have integrity by standing up for what they believe in. Sometimes that means they may lose a friend or get teased. Doing the right thing is more important than being popular.
- Call your children's attention to times when their words and actions don't match and times when they do. Encourage them to do the same for you.

For parents with children ages 16 - 18

- When you fudge the truth, admit it and apologize. This sounds simple, but it is not always easy.
- Affirm your teenager when he or she acts in ways that are caring or responsible. Teenagers need to hear that you're proud of them and that they are making good choices (even when you're not happy with all their choices).
- Instead of spending a lot of money on holiday gifts, make a family contribution to a charitable organization or other worthy cause.

Want more ideas on how to instill positive values 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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