

Building the Support Assets

Support — Young people need to be surrounded by people who love, appreciate, and accept them. They need to spend time in places where people care about them.



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 Support Assets: family support, positive family communication, other adult relationships, caring neighborhood, caring school climate, and parent involvement in schooling.

Try it...

For all parents

- You have a direct role in supporting your children and facilitating positive family communication.
- Get to know your children's friends and make your home welcoming so that kids want to come to your home.
- Your involvement in school can help your student learn and affect teacher attitudes toward your children, thus creating a more caring school climate.
- Your connection to other adults and other people's kids in your neighborhood affects your children's experience of a caring neighborhood.
- Your choices about adults with whom you connect your children, such as friends, teachers, and youth workers, affects your children's experiences of positive relationships with other adults.

For parents with children ages birth to 5

- Look at children when you speak to them. Eye contact is a simple way to let them know you care.
- Read all childcare or school newspapers, notes, and printed announcements posted or sent home. Respond quickly to requests.

For parents with children ages 6 - 9

- When you and your child disagree, be respectful and let her or him know it's okay for people in families to have different opinions and that you still care.
- Make mealtime talking time. Consider having each person take a turn answering a question or telling something about the day.

For parents with children ages 10 - 15

- Stay involved in your kids' schooling during the middle school years—a time when most parents pull back.
- Be willing to talk during times that are comfortable for your children, such as while riding or driving, or on a walk. Sometimes not having to make constant direct eye contact can make the conversation flow better.
- Allow your child to express differences of opinions of various subjects. Kids feel supported when they know you value their opinions.

For parents with children ages 16 - 18

- Keep in mind that it's not true that all kids want their parents to stop being affectionate with them when they become teenagers. Ask your kids what's comfortable for them and then support them in ways they appreciate best.
- Attend all school conferences.
- Help your teenagers identify the passions and interests that get them excited, such as playing a musical instrument, participating in a sport, or planning a creative get-together for their friends.
- Spend time each week with each of your teenagers individually.

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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