

Building the Support Assets

Boundaries and Expectations — Young people need clear rules, consistent consequences, and encouragement to always do their best.



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 *Boundaries-and-Expectations Assets*: *family boundaries, school boundaries, neighborhood boundaries, adult role models, positive peer influence, and high expectations.*

Try it...

For all parents

- Be clear about your family expectations. Examples could include working hard even at tasks you don't like, returning a lost object to its rightful owner, being friendly to others, and doing family chores.
- Know that your children always watch what you do and listen to what you say (even if they don't act like it). You're their #1 role model.
- Connect your kids with other adult role models, such as teachers, coaches, neighbors, extended family members, and so on.
- Teach your children about family traditions, such as helping others, telling stories about the impressive things your ancestors accomplished, or lighting candles during certain holidays.
- Get to know your neighbors. Once you do, talk about how you'd like your neighbors to be involved in your kids' lives. Neighbors are more likely to enforce neighborhood boundaries when they already have positive relationships with kids.

For parents with children ages birth to 5

- Be firm with boundaries, even when your kids are being cute.
- Stay positive, saying yes to reinforce positive behaviors more often than you say no to correct negative behaviors.

For parents with children ages 6 - 9

- Learn about school rules and boundaries. If you aren't sure what these are, ask a school administrator or a classroom teacher.
- Talk with your children about behaviors you see in public or in entertainment (such as movies and television). Ask them what they think is appropriate and inappropriate and why.

For parents with children ages 10 - 15

- Notice your children's positive behaviors. Let them know you admire their manners, friendship skills, kindness, and so on.
- Talk with your teens and "tweens" about what they expect of themselves. Listen to what they say and share how it reflects or is different from what you expect of them.
- Subtly affirm positive friendships and resist the urge to criticize those that seem potentially negative. Many teens get defensive about friends their parents don't like and may get even more determined to maintain the relationship.

For parents with children ages 16 - 18

- Talk with your spouse or partner about boundaries for teens' behavior, and reach agreement. Your kids need you to stand together.
- Consider creating expectation contracts for both you and your teenager to sign about significant issues. A driving contract often is helpful for teenagers once they get their license. The National Safety Council has a two-page example at www.nsc.org/issues/teendriving/agreement.pdf.
- Continue talking about important issues around succeeding in school, not using alcohol or drugs, and setting goals for after graduation. As teens get older, there's more to discuss and negotiate.

Want more ideas on how to build the Boundaries-and-Expectations Assets with 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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