

## ***Tapping into the Best of Your Community***

“Without a sense of caring, there can be no sense of community.”—Anthony J. D’Angelo, business founder

You live in a community, but how well do you know your community? Have you discovered what it has to offer your family—and your kids? More and more communities are becoming asset-building communities, and you may live in one without even knowing it. Find out the riches of your community with these ideas.

### ***Try it...***

#### ***For all parents***

- Find out if your community has a registered asset-building community by visiting [Search Institute’s Healthy Communities • Healthy Youth Online Community!](#) Click on your state, providence, or country and see what’s available. Click on “Show all initiatives” when the next window pops up. More than 600 asset-building initiatives, called Healthy Youth • Healthy Communities initiatives, are now operating worldwide.
- Discover what your community offers your family and kids through its parks and recreation department, community education program, community nature center (if your community has one), and schools. Although other community programs exist, you’ll find most of them through these departments.
- Ask other parents what your community has for kids, especially if you’re new to the community or haven’t made deep connections with it. For example, you may learn that there’s a kung fu program or a great individual piano teacher the kids are excited about.
- Visit your city or county hall and ask for information for kids and families. Many have brochures or catalogs that they can give you. Others can connect you with people who work in these areas.
- If you’re interested in a religious community, a congregation often has many opportunities for kids and families. See what’s available in your community.
- Connect with your neighbors. Focus on building community and connections with those who live closest to you. Over time, those relationships will be beneficial to you and your kids.
- Find out if your neighborhood block participates in [National Night Out](#). If not, take an active role on getting something started. Start small by getting to know a few of your neighbors, or enlist the help of the whole block (including kids) to have a barbecue.

### ***For parents with children ages birth to 5***

- For young children, a sense of community is very personal. Help your family get to know neighbors and trusting adults in your community.
- Watch for family events that your community sponsors, such as an annual carnival, an annual parade, or a family ice cream social. Attend these to meet other people and have some fun.
- Form community by connecting with other parents of young children, such as through your child-care center, preschool, congregation, or workplace. Some parents create a short asset-building small group and use [Taking Asset Building Personally](#) Guide.

### ***For parents with children ages 6 - 9***

- When you attend school open houses and other school events, meet parents and ask which activities they have their kids in and why. You often can discover a hidden gem that's not advertised.
- Participate in family service projects offered by your community, your child's school, or your congregation. These are often one-time, easy events that help you make a difference.
- Plug into small communities in areas that you care about. For example, if you care about education, volunteer to help out with the parent-teacher organization at school. If you belong to a religious community, make a deeper connection in your congregation. If you enjoy soccer, volunteer to be an assistant soccer coach. Get to know people in these areas.

### ***For parents with children ages 10 - 15***

- As children enter puberty, they sometimes leave behind the groups of people and activities with which they're familiar. Sometimes they gravitate toward something else, but sometimes they're not sure where to turn. If they're not sure, offer to help them find other opportunities.
- Continue to connect your child with trusting, caring adults in your community, such as neighbors, parents of their friends, teachers, coaches, and so on. Kids feel more part of a community when people know them.
- A number of congregations offer service projects and work camp experiences for kids at this age. These experiences not only help kids feel like they make a difference, but they also help connect them to other kids and adults who care about serving their communities.

### ***For parents with children ages 16 - 18***

- If your community has an asset-building initiative, see if there are leadership opportunities for your teenager. Many of these communities have a number of leadership and other opportunities for teenagers. To find out if your community has a registered asset-building community visit [Search Institute's Healthy Communities • Healthy Youth Online Community!](#) Click on your state, providence, or country and see what's available. Click on "Show all initiatives" when the next window pops up.
- Encourage your teenager to go deeper into her interests. For example, if your daughter enjoys swimming, maybe she wants to get involved with the high school's

swim or synchro swim team. If your son enjoys theater, encourage him to explore the school's drama club—or try out for a school play. Even though these are specific activities, teenagers feel more part of the community when they're engaged and involved.

- If your teenager is interested in sports or other activities, there may be opportunities for him to teach classes, help out with a club, or coach. If this is something your teenager might be interested in, explore your local community center or parks and recreation department to see if organizers are looking for teen instructors, coaches, referees, or umpires.
- If your community offers a community service day, help out as a family, even if you can only volunteer for an hour. This helps everyone in your family see how they're making your community a better place.

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**Share your opinions on parenting resources - participate in an over-the-phone focus group on Thursday, April 2nd at 5:30 p.m. (Central Daylight Time)!**

We want your input to ensure we meet the needs of parents. To participate in the one-hour phone discussion [please fill out this brief form](#)--space is limited, so don't delay! This is not a sales presentation, and you have no further obligation after the meeting.