

ideas for parents

Easy Ways to Build Assets for and with Your Child

FAST FACTS

**ASSET
CATEGORY**

Support

The more love, support, caring, and adult contacts a child has, the more likely he or she is to grow up healthy.

Building Support

*African American Parents Say:**

- "Praying together, eating, going out."
- "Eating meals (with teens), it's a way to get out from teens what they might not tell you."

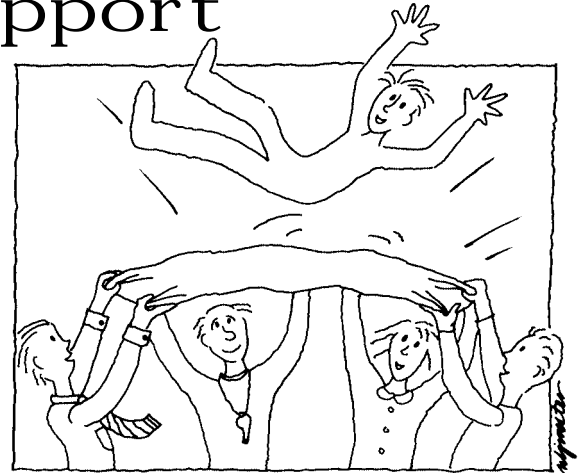
*The Minnesota Family Strength Project Research Report 1997 and 1999.

Everyone Provides the Strength of Support

Who are the people that really support you in your life? These people are important champions. They cheer us on when things go well. They stick with us when life throws us a curve ball. They listen. They ask questions. They smile. They hug. They're people we like to be around.

What kind of a champion are you for your child? Are you a fair-weather supporter? A rain-or-shine supporter? What's your unique way of supporting and loving your child?

Your love and support for your child are critical. But you can't go it alone. You need others. Your child needs others. How supported and cared for does your child feel by teachers, neighbors, coaches, grandparents, aunts, uncles, parents of their friends, youth workers, and mentors? These other key adults



are important players in helping your child jump over the hurdles in life. In fact, the more supportive adults your child has, the better. And by nurturing and loving all the children in our communities, we help them grow to be loving, caring people themselves.

Look to future newsletters for details on all six support assets!

6 Key Areas of Support

Search Institute researchers have identified six specific assets in the support category that are crucial for helping young people grow up healthy. Check the areas of strength in your child's life:

- Family support—Family life provides high levels of love and support.
- Positive family communication—You and your child communicate positively, and your child is willing to seek you out for advice and counsel.
- Other adult relationships—Your child receives support from three or more non-parent adults.

- Caring neighborhood—Your child experiences caring neighbors.
- Caring school climate—School provides a caring, encouraging environment for your child.
- Parent involvement in schooling—You are actively involved in helping your child succeed in school.

Name Three

Have each family member name three ways the family supports her or him.



Support through the Years

Age Ways to Love and Support Your Child

- 0-1
 - Hold your baby and look at her or him during feedings.
 - Respond to your baby's needs.
 - Rock your baby often.
- 2-3
 - Cheer your child on as he or she masters new skills.
 - Touch your child often. Hug. Cuddle.
 - Stay positive when setting limits for your child.
- 4-5
 - When you interact with your child, get down to her or his eye level.
 - Share your child's excitement about her or his interests.
 - Find other caring adults to participate regularly in your child's life.
- 6-10
 - Answer your child's questions. If you don't know an answer, say so and work together to find it.
 - When you and your child disagree, point out you still love her or him.
 - Be silly with your child.
- 11-15
 - Accept the identity your child is forming.
 - Affirm independence and interdependence.
 - At least sometimes, be available to listen.
- 16-18
 - Continue to show affection for your teenager.
 - Let your teen overhear you complimenting her or him to someone else.
 - Seek your teen's opinion or advice on a big decision.

Quick Tip:
A good way to love your child is to be accessible.

More Help for Parents

What Kids Need to Succeed: Proven, Practical Ways to Raise Good Kids. This book gives practical tips for building assets for and with young people. (Available from Search Institute, www.search-institute.org; 800-888-7828.)

Support for Parents

Parents need support, too. Research shows that parents need the help of immediate and extended family, friends, and communities.

So asking for help or advice is not a sign of weakness. Instead, it provides good ideas, encouragement, and reinforcement—all of which are needed to face the challenges of parenting that will come along the way.

FiNal WoRD

“It isn't walls and furniture that make a home. It's the family.”

—Natalie Savage Carlson

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