



Developmental Assets

There are 40... How many does your child have?

Asset #38 – Self Esteem

Creating an environment in which children receive appropriate, positive feedback and reinforcement about their strengths, skills and competencies is the key to building good self-esteem. And, self-esteem is one of 40 Developmental Assets, together which have been proven to prevent substance abuse, eating disorders, suicide and a variety of other social problems. More importantly, these assets help children grow up healthy, caring and responsible.

Sometimes we struggle to know what to do to help children develop self-esteem. Educator, Diana Looman and her daughter Julia, have written a wonderful guide called “100 Ways to Build Self-Esteem and Teach Values”. This book provides insights and practical ideas for “creating more love and less fear, more joy and less pain, and more achievement and less failure in people of all ages”.

- Create a safe and loving environment to allow self esteem to grow.
- Make one-minute love connections, i.e. a lunch box love note or answering machine messages.
- Make a habit of giving ten words of acknowledgement each day to a child and watch the closeness grow.
- Help children substitute empowering thoughts and words into everyday statements, media slogans, fairy tales, song lyrics.
- Create an ‘esteem theme’ – a positive theme each week such as courage; read about it, discuss it and practice it.
- Create a special song for your child and sign/hum it on special occasions or at bedtime.
- Get into the habit of spending a few moments each night with your child, picturing the next day unfolding in a positive way.
- Create a family book that allows you to celebrate the little and big things in life. Leave it in a place that is accessible for all to write in as well as read.