



Developmental Assets

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

Asset #14 – Adult Role Models

“Children learn what they live”. It is estimated that ninety to ninety five per cent of all human behaviors are learned through modeling. Young people learn how to act and interact with others by watching, imitating or modeling their parents, caregivers and other adults. That is why having parents, other adult family members and non-family adults model positive, responsible behavior, is one of 40 Developmental Assets. Developmental Assets are the values, supports, experiences and relationships young people need to grow to their full potential.

Having good role models is one of the greatest desires of most young people. In Search Institute surveys have reported only 45% of children reported having parents and other adults who modeled healthy and responsible behavior. As significant adults in children’s lives, we need not leave modeling to chance. We need to harness its power and consciously model the behaviors and language we want children to learn before they move into adolescence.

Here are some ideas for building this asset:

- ❖ Always remember that you are your child’s most important role model. Set high standards for yourself and follow them – even during difficult times. Treat your child with love and respect.
- ❖ Nurture the relationships young people have with healthy and responsible role models; extended family members, teachers, coaches, youth group leaders. Tell these adults how much you appreciate the positive role modeling they do.
- ❖ Be what you want young people to be. If you value reading, then let them see you read. If you don’t want them to use tobacco or drugs, then don’t use them yourself.
- ❖ Talk with young people about the people they admire and why. Help them see that heroes are ordinary people.
- ❖ Consider bringing speakers into schools, agencies, and the community who model lifelong positive behavior and actions rather than those who are profiting from the poor choices they have made.