

IMPROVING FAMILY COMMUNICATION

Asset Building Ideas for Families

- Post the list of 40 assets on your refrigerator door. Each day, purposefully nurture at least one asset.
- Ask your kids every day about what they are doing and thinking. Tell them about your day, too. Form the habit of frequent conversation.
- Take time to nurture your own assets by spending time with supportive people, using your time constructively, and reflecting on your own values and commitments.
- Regularly do things with your children, including projects around the house, recreational activities, and service projects.
- Actively seek support from your extended family, from neighbors, from a congregation, and from others in your network of friends.
- Eat at least one meal together every day.
- Don't tolerate hurtful words or actions in your home. Model loving, respectful behavior toward your spouse, children, other family members, and friends.
- Keep track of all family members' whereabouts and plans. Let each other know about changes.
- Involve your children in family decisions. Ask for their input and advice.
- Keep track of responsibilities with things-to-do lists. Encourage your children to make lists of their own.
- Talk with your kids as openly as you can about alcohol and other drugs, tobacco and sex. If you're uncomfortable discussing certain topics, admit it and encourage your kids to talk with other adults you know and trust.
- Teach your children about their heritage. Encourage them to feel proud of their cultural, ethnic, and racial identity without feeling superior.
- Create a family environment that encourages positive discussion about differences. Don't tolerate jokes or other put-downs that demean people who are different.
- Find out who your children's friends are. Get to know them.
- Express confidence in your children's abilities. Children who trust their own abilities have personal power.
- Express your love regularly and often. Show and tell your children every day how much they mean to you.

Material adapted from What Teens Need to Succeed by Peter L. Benson, Ph.D., Judy Galbraith, M.A., and Pamela Espeland, 1998