

Building Positive Identity

The Positive-Identity Assets (37 to 40) are as follows:

- 37. Personal Power:** Young person feels he or she has control over “things that happen to me.”
- 38. Self-Esteem:** Young person reports having a high self-esteem.
- 39. Sense of Purpose:** Young person reports that “my life has a purpose.”
- 40. Positive View of Personal Future:** Young person is optimistic about her or his personal future.

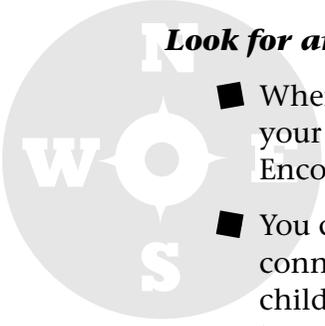
Children and teenagers need to believe in their own self-worth and their ability to make good things happen. The following ideas and tips can help you build the Developmental Assets* in the positive-identity category.

Think about ways you can build these assets

- Reflect on your personal behavior. If you do something well, do you attribute it to luck or do you acknowledge the hard work you put into reaching your goal? Girls, in particular, need support in acknowledging positive results that have come from their hard work because they are more likely to attribute their successes to luck than to effort.
- Think about how these four assets relate to your own life. Does your child see you as someone who acts on what’s in your control and is optimistic? If not, what might you try to change in your own life to model these assets for your child?

Have a conversation about . . .

- Your child’s dreams about the future. What would he or she like to do or be? Even if your child’s choices seem unrealistic to you, ask what interests her or him about the choices.
- Dreams you had about what you wanted to be when you were the same age as your child.



Look for and encourage your child's asset-building actions

- Where do you feel your child makes a difference in the world? In your world? Where would your child like to make a difference? Encourage your child to take steps toward action.
 - You can further encourage your child's interests and dreams by connecting her or him with someone who is doing what your child wants to do. Find books that help your child explore the interest. Try not to make this into “homework,” though. Part of the joy of dreaming is to explore lots of possibilities—many of which we have no intention of acting on.
 - One of the trickier assets in this group is Asset 38: Self-Esteem. At one time, parents were encouraged to lavish praise on their child even if an accomplishment was minor. Recent research suggests that self-esteem is built when young people master skills and have a *realistic* sense of the accomplishment. Encourage your child to try new experiences, to do her or his best, to persist even when something is hard, and to realize that it's okay to be “good enough” rather than perfect.
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