

Keys to Becoming an Asset Builder

-  Relationships are key
-  Assets are built through repetition
-  Consistent messages from across the community support asset building

Asset-Building Ideas for Youth Workers

Here is a short list (you can create a much longer list) of skills that youth workers can develop to build the 40 Developmental Assets. They are organized around the eight categories of assets.

Support Assets

- Smile at young people.
- Learn the names of young people. Greet them when you see them.
- Ask young people about themselves and their interests. Listen to them.

Empowerment Assets

- Invite young people to share their gifts and talents.
- If you sense that young people aren't safe doing something or being in a certain area, intervene immediately to ensure their safety.
- Notice when young people are doing something right. Say something and encourage them to continue acting in similar ways.

Boundaries and Expectations Assets

- Know the boundaries for your organization that everyone agrees on.
- Enforce boundaries when you see an infraction. Instead of being harsh with young people, redirect them to a better activity or a better way of acting. Think of your enforcement as a teaching method.
- Talk and act in ways that you want young people to follow. You're a role model, and young people are always watching and listening to you.

Constructive Use of Time Assets

- Ask young people about the activities they're involved in and which ones they most enjoy.
- Make the time you spend with young people meaningful. Play with children. Talk with teens.

Commitment to Learning Assets

- Share your values of learning. Ask young people about school and whether they're completing their homework.
- Ask young people to tell you about a good book they've read recently.
- Attend a school function for a young person, such as a play performance, a game, a recital, a concert, an open house. Connect with the young person so he or she knows you're there.

Positive Values Assets

- Talk about the values you have with young people and why you have them.
- Own your mistakes. If you tell a white lie, admit it. If you were too tired to care, say so. Show young people that acting on values isn't always easy and that admitting when you haven't also is a positive value—integrity.
- Teach young people how to solve problems with the values they have.

Social Competencies Assets

- Break down skills into manageable steps for young people to learn. Being a friend means knowing how to listen, negotiate, express affection in appropriate ways, resolve conflicts peacefully, stand up for yourself, express anger in appropriate ways, ask for help.
- Notice when young people have skillfully stood up for themselves, resisted a dangerous situation, or asked for something they needed. Tell them what you admired about how they acted.
- Integrate skill building into your programs and activities.

Positive Identity Assets

- Compliment young people.
- Discuss how community and world events can influence a person's outlook of the future. Talk about how to have a positive outlook when life gets difficult.
- Ask young people about their talents and abilities. Help them identify and strengthen them.