

Building Positive Values

The Positive-Values Assets (26 to 31) are as follows:

26. **Caring:** Young person places high value on helping other people.
27. **Equality and Social Justice:** Young person places high value on promoting equality and reducing hunger and poverty.
28. **Integrity:** Young person acts on convictions and stands up for her or his beliefs.
29. **Honesty:** Young person “tells the truth even when it’s not easy.”
30. **Responsibility:** Young person accepts and takes personal responsibility.
31. **Restraint:** Young person believes it is important not to be sexually active or to use alcohol or other drugs.

Children and teenagers need strong principles to confidently make decisions without feeling they have to follow the crowd. The following ideas and tips can help you build the Developmental Assets* in the positive-values category.

Think about ways you can build these assets

- Building positive values requires many *conversations* about what you value and why, opportunities to see *you* acting on your values, and opportunities for *your child* to act on her or his values.
- It’s easy to forget that your children cannot read minds. While your values may seem clear and obvious, they may be less visible to your child. To make values their own, young people need to have conversations and see and take action.
- Pick one of the assets in this category that is important to you. Think back to how you decided this value was one you wanted to act on consistently.
- On average, only 40 percent of boys (compared to 60 percent of girls) report having Asset 26: Caring—placing a high value on helping other people. If you have a son, he may need extra opportunities to build this asset.

Have a conversation about . . .

- An instance when you acted on a value that was particularly important to you and how that made you feel about yourself.
- A time your child acted on one of these values and how he or she felt afterward.
- Ways you could act on asset 26 or asset 27—together or individually.

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

- Thank your child when he or she owns up to a negative behavior. Note that while you don't approve of the behavior, you appreciate (and are proud of) your child for being honest.
- Notice when your child builds one of these assets. Be as specific as you can in telling your child what you noticed. Express your pride in the person your child is becoming.
- Remember that children need practice and that no one can be expected to be perfect. Try not to be too harsh when your child messes up or does something that goes against the values you've tried to instill. But do ask how your child could have handled a situation differently. Talking and thinking about these things help the learning sink in.