

# ideas for parents

## Easy Ways to Build Assets for and with Your Child

### FAST FACTS

#### ASSET #3: Other Adult Relationships

Youth are more likely to grow up healthy when they receive support from three or more nonparent adults.

**45%**

of youth surveyed by Search Institute have this asset in their lives.\*

#### What Are Assets?

Assets are 40 values, experiences, and qualities that help kids succeed.

"Other adult relationships" is one of six support assets.

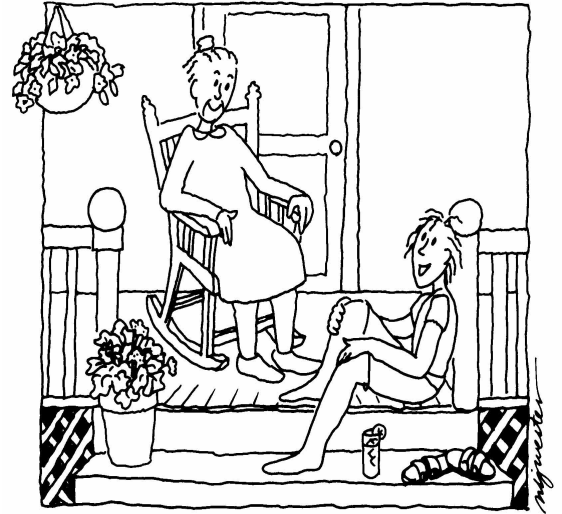
\* Based on Search Institute surveys of 217,277 6th- to 12th-grade youth throughout the United States during the 1999-2000 school year.

## The Support of Others

**T**hink back to your childhood. Was there one adult you really enjoyed talking with? Maybe it was a grandparent, a club leader, an aunt, a coach, a neighbor, an older cousin, someone in your congregation, or your piano teacher. This person helped you sort through growing-up issues. Even if you can't recall any specific conversations, you will remember the warm feelings brought by talking with that person.

Young people need parents to talk to, but they also need other adults to bounce ideas off, to ask questions of, to laugh with, to help sort through sticky situations. Researchers have discovered that young people who have other caring adults to talk with are:

- Less likely to do risky things, such as use alcohol or other drugs or be sexually active.
- More likely to grow up successfully. Even children in abusive, financially stressed, chaotic, or otherwise difficult situations



- have better futures if they find at least one caring adult outside the home.
- Likely to think they can make a difference and that they matter.
  - Better able to succeed in school.

### Tell Them **THANKS!**

With your child, identify all the adults who regularly interact with her or him. Include teachers, grandparents, club leaders, coaches, cooks, bus drivers, aunts, uncles, employers, school administrators, paraprofessionals, custodians, neighbors, other extended family, and the parents of friends. Jot a short note to each one, telling them how much you appreciate their care, their dedication, and their interest in your child.



### time together

Three ways to encourage your child to build relationships with other caring adults:

1. Help your child find an adult you both trust who shares a similar hobby or interest with your child.
  - Play games with other families where teams consist of adults of one family paired with children from another family.
2. Use letters, phone calls, and email to keep relationships strong with caring adults who are far away.

# In Search of Other Adults

**C**hildren can link up with other adults through programs and opportunities such as these:

- Neighborhood get-togethers
- Religious programs
- Music lessons
- Sports leagues
- Community recreation
- Internships
- Family reunions and gatherings
- Parents' friends
- Tutoring
- Theater projects
- Youth groups and programs
- Cultural activity groups
- Community bands, orchestras, and choirs
- Camps
- Mentoring
- Service-learning programs in schools

**Quick Tip:**  
Help your child connect with three caring adults.



## Swap Experiences

*Ask your child which adult he or she most enjoys being with and why. Then tell about a significant adult from your childhood. Explain what you gained from that relationship.*

## More Help for Parents

**Tag, You're It!** by Kathleen Kimball-Baker. This book provides 50 commonsense ideas for any adult to connect and build developmental assets with young people. (Published by Search Institute, [www.search-institute.org](http://www.search-institute.org); 800-888-7828.)

## talk together

Questions to discuss with your child:

- Which adult outside of our family would you like to get to know better? Why?
- If you had a tough question that you didn't want to discuss with me (us), who would you go to?
- How can we show our appreciation to the significant adults in your life?

## FINAL WORD

**"I have always believed that I could help change the world because I have been lucky to have adults around me who did—in small and large ways."**

**—Marian Wright Edelman, author and president of the Children's Defense Fund**

This newsletter and other asset resources are produced by Search Institute, [www.search-institute.org](http://www.search-institute.org); 800-888-7828.  
Copyright © 1997, 2003, 2005 by Search Institute. Major support for Search Institute's *Healthy Communities • Healthy Youth* initiative is provided by Thrivent Financial for Lutherans.