



Building the Positive-Identity Assets

All young people need to feel good about themselves and their abilities. Here are ideas on how to build the four Positive-Identity assets for children and youth at different ages:

Ages Birth to 1

- Always love, accept, and respect babies.
- Play together with babies in ways that make them laugh and enjoy the time together.

Ages 1 to 2

- Create a loving, supportive, and affirming atmosphere for children.
- Dwell on what children do right instead of what they do wrong. When they make mistakes or act out, focus on the behavior, not the child. For example, instead of saying, “No! You are so naughty,” try saying, “No, it’s not okay for you to do that.”

Ages 3 to 5

- Break new tasks and skills into small, manageable steps that children can master without becoming too frustrated.
- Talk with children about the good things that happen in their lives.
- Find ways to teach children about their cultural heritage, such as through stories or special foods.

Ages 6 to 11

- When children are facing problems or difficult times, help them think of all the possible ways they could deal with the situation. Then help them pick what they want to do.
- Encourage children to find inspirational, positive role models.
- Talk with children about what gives your life meaning and a sense of purpose.

Ages 12 to 15

- Expect young people to experience ups and downs of self-esteem during these years.
- Avoid comparing young people with each other.

Ages 16 to 18

- Let teenagers know that you are proud of and excited by their talents, capabilities, and discoveries.
- Support teenagers as they struggle with issues and questions of identity.
- Let teenagers know that you are willing to listen if they want to talk about their sense of purpose in life, including their ideas about how they would like to contribute to the world.