CHAPTER E.

Creating a Positive Home Environment

Resources for Parents and Caregivers

Chapter Highlights:
✓ Tips and Best Practices to build positive home environments
✓ Parent/Caregiver Support Resource List

- E-1: Parents & Caregivers: Contributing Positive Asset Building, Youth Development and Character Education for San Francisco’s Young People
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Parents & Caregivers: Contributing Positive Asset Building, Youth Development & Character Education for San Francisco’s Young People

Parents/Caregivers are the most important influence in the lives of our students. SFUSD encourages the development of Caring Relationships, High Expectations and Meaningful Participation for students at school, after school and at home. Here are some tips to help young people build assets and develop into healthy adults:

Caring Relationships
☆ Provide a high level of love, support and positive words
☆ Provide a sense of safety by being present and alert
☆ Teach empathy and friendship skills

High Expectations
☆ Establish clear rules and consequences and monitor children’s whereabouts
☆ Model positive, responsible behavior and peaceful conflict resolution
☆ Help young people develop positive values, tell the truth and accept personal responsibility
☆ Help young people learn to plan ahead and make choices
☆ Talk to young people about goal setting, decision making, and ways to resist negative peer pressure and dangerous situations

Meaningful Participation
☆ Encourage community involvement where adults value young people and provide them with useful roles in the community
☆ Provide opportunities for young people to participate in family activities and family decision making
☆ Work with children to enhance their commitment to learning so that they are motivated to do well in school and to complete homework daily

Adapted from Pass It On at School! Activity handouts for Creating Caring Schools, copyright © 2003 by Search Institute
**Asset-Building Ideas for Parents and Guardians**

Being a parent or guardian can be very hard work—no surprise there, right? Most parents and guardians have things they love about their role as well as problems with their kids that they have to deal with. What might be surprising, though, is that one of the best ways to deal with problems is to focus on positives. Research shows that a more effective approach to raising health—competent kids is to concentrate on building developmental assets. These assets form the foundation young people need to make healthy choices and to succeed in life. The more assets your kids have, the stronger this foundation will be.

There are probably lots of asset-building things you already do for your children—even if you don’t call them that. Here are some ways to be intentional about asset building:

- **Post the list of 40 developmental assets on your refrigerator door.** Each day, do at least one asset-building thing for each family member.

- **Connect with other parents who are interested in asset building.** Form relationships in your neighborhood, on the job, through a congregation, or through a parent-education organization.

- **Regularly do things with your child,** including projects around the house, recreational activities, and service projects. Take turns planning activities to do together as a family.

- **Eat at least one meal together** as a family every day.

- **Negotiate family rules and consequences** for breaking those rules.

- **Develop a family mission statement** that focuses on building assets. Then use it to help you make family decisions and set priorities.

- **Talk about your values and priorities,** and live in a way that is consistent with them.

- **Give your children lots of support and approval** while also challenging them to take responsibility and gain independence.

- **If you are parenting alone, look for other adult role models** of both genders who can be mentors for your children.

- **Nurture your own assets** by spending time with people who care about you and are supportive. Also, take opportunities to learn new things, contribute to your community; and have fun. You’ll take better care of your children if you take care of yourself.
Think about the way you were parented and how that affects your relationships with your children. If there are parts of your relationship with your parents that were very difficult or that get in the way of your parenting, consider talking with someone about these issues.

Don’t let anyone in your family (including you) watch too much television. Find other interesting and meaningful activities for your children to do—some with you, some with their friends, some by themselves.

Learn as much as you can about what your kids need at their current ages.

Recognize that children need more than just financial support. They also need emotional and intellectual support. Balance family time with other priorities like work, recreation, and hobbies.

Don’t wait for problems to arise before talking with your children’s teachers. Keep in regular contact with them about how your children are doing and what you can do to help your children learn.

Think of teenagers as adults in training. Teach them something practical, such as how to change a tire on a car, prepare a meal, or create a monthly budget.

Be aware of differences in how you relate to your children. Are you more comfortable with one gender? If so, why? What impact does this have on your family?

Talk to your children about the 40 developmental assets. Ask them for suggestions of ways to strengthen their assets.

Do intergenerational activities with extended family and other neighborhood adults and families.

Be an asset builder for other young people in your life.

Remember you are not alone. Other asset builders in your children’s lives include coaches, child-care providers, religious education teachers, club leaders, and neighbors. Work with these people to give kids consistent messages about boundaries and values.

The developmental assets are 40 opportunities, skills, relationships, values, and self-perceptions that all young people need to succeed. Adapted from Pass It On! Ready-to-Use Handouts for Asset Builders, copyright @1999 by Search Institute, www.search-institute.org. This handout may be reproduced for educational, noncommercial uses Only (with this copyright line). All rights reserved.
ASSET-BUILDING IDEAS FOR INDIVIDUALS

Here are ideas for how youth, adults, and families can build assets for children and adolescents.

Ideas for Young People

☐ Learn the names of your neighbors (both adults and children). Go out of your way to greet them.
☐ Choose one way to build a positive relationship with a young child through baby-sitting, playing catch, or volunteering as a coaching assistant.
☐ Post the 40 developmental assets in your room or in your locker. Choose a different asset each day and focus on building it for your friends.
☐ Examine the co-curricular activities you are in. Are you in enough of them? Are you in too many? Are you feeling challenged? Do you enjoy the activities? Do you feel you have enough time to do the activities, complete homework, and also have time for yourself, family, and friends? If not, consider making some changes.
☐ Write a note to (or call) one of the main asset builders in your life, thanking her or him for making a difference in your life.
☐ Talk about the 40 developmental assets with members of your family. Which assets do family members think are the strongest in your family?
☐ If you have a part-time job during the school year, limit your work schedule to 15 or fewer hours per week to allow time for schoolwork and other activities that are important to your overall development.
☐ Even if your family provides a warm, caring, supportive place to grow, also seek support through adults in schools, community organizations, and congregations.

Ideas for All Adults

☐ Learn the names of all children and teenagers who live near you or who work in shops or community centers you frequent. Greet them by name.
☐ Build at least one sustained, caring relationship with a child or adolescent either informally or through a mentoring program.
☐ Take time to play or talk with young people who live near you or work with you.
☐ Look at the list of 40 developmental assets at least once a week and commit to at least one act of asset building every day.
☐ Support initiatives designed to expand opportunities for young people to participate in teams, clubs, and organizations.
☐ Expect young people to behave responsibly. When they do not, tell them what you expect and how you would like them to act.
☐ Never allow the quality of schools or youth programs to suffer because of a lack of financial resources or volunteers.
☐ Thank people who work with children and youth (teachers, youth group leaders, social service providers, clergy, and so on).
ASSET-BUILDING IDEAS FOR INDIVIDUALS

Ideas for Families

☐ Post the list of 40 developmental assets on your refrigerator door. Each day, purposefully nurture at least one asset in each family member.

☐ Model- and talk about- the values and priorities you wish to pass on to your children.

☐ Nurture your own assets by spending time with supportive people, using your time constructively, and reflecting on your own values.

☐ Regularly do things with your child, including projects around the house, recreational activities, and service projects. Let your child or teenager choose which activities to do together as a family from time to time.

☐ Talk to your children about assets. Ask them for suggestions of ways to strengthen assets.

☐ Eat at least one meal together every day.

☐ Become active in your child’s education through school activities, monitoring homework, and having conversations about school and learning.

☐ Be a friend and asset builder for the friends of your children; welcome them into your home.
A. Understanding the Parent and Caregiver Volunteer

- Parent and caregivers have the right to visit/observe/interact with their child at school.
- Parent and caregivers have a genuine interest, investment, and concern for their child’s welfare.
- Parent and caregivers are often untrained to “tutor” students, or manage behavioral problems in a school setting.
- Parent and caregivers can volunteer in different ways:
  - Work on projects at home for the teacher.
  - Volunteer in a classroom, the library, the cafeteria, or on the yard.
  - Play a role in school governance.

B. Common Obstacles for Parent and Caregivers

- Lack of time because of work, school, or other responsibilities.
- Being scared/intimidated in an unfamiliar domain.
- Bad experiences with schools in the past.
- A perceived lack of skills (from parent and caregivers and teachers).
- Language differences.
- Some parent and caregivers think it is not their place to interfere with the teacher’s job.
- Can be unaware they are needed/wanted, or feel unwelcome.

C. Recruiting Parent and Caregivers: ASK, ASK, ASK

- Have written flyers/invitations and materials printed in the language of the parent and caregiver.
- Personal invitations are the most effective: Ask them in person, or give them a call.
- Have informal gatherings for parent and caregivers. Parent and caregivers who have good experiences will come back.
- Have the students make invitations to their families to come to a school event.
- Have current parent and caregiver volunteers speak about their experiences and encourage each other.
- Let parent and caregivers know how the school runs, and who key staff members are. Once parent and caregivers are familiar with the people and culture of the school, they will feel less estranged from it.
- Put up a parent and caregiver/volunteer bulletin board, and hang welcome signs up in all languages.
- Hang a calendar outside classroom with requests for jobs on specific days.

D. Being Prepared for Parent and Caregiver Volunteers

- Let parent and caregivers know you’d like them to come to school to visit, and to help out in the classroom. Do this early, before something negative happens to warrant a phone call.
- Have a list of things you need done, times to do them, and supplies on hand.
- Take a moment to let the volunteer know important rules in your classroom. You can also have students explain class rules and practices, which will reinforce their learning!
- Be flexible! Find out what parent and caregivers can do. Every parent and caregiver has something to offer.
- Take advantage of all your families’ languages! Match parent and caregivers with a student who speaks the same language. Have another parent and caregiver translate requests.
- Break down big jobs into smaller ones.
- Use simple, positive language. Be sure not to talk down to parent and caregivers, but don’t use jargon.
- Recognize their efforts with a thank-you note/phone call/newsletter article.
RESOURCES FOR PARENTS & CAREGIVERS

These organizations and committees provide valuable information to parents:

CARECEN (415) 642-4420
Chinese for Affirmative Action (415) 274-6760
Coleman Advocates for Children (415) 239-0161
Community Advisory Committee for Special Education (415) 920-5040
Our Family Coalition (415) 981-1960
Parents for Public Schools (415) 468-7077
Parent Advisory Council (415) 263-0308
Support for Families of Children with Disabilities (415) 920-5040

SFUSD Office of Parent Relations
(415) 241-6185
555 Franklin Street, room 102, SF, CA 94102
http://portal.sfusd.edu/template/default.cfm?page=chief_academic.parent_relations

Synopsis: The Office of Parent Relations partners with parent and caregivers to ensure the opportunity for educational excellence for all children and helps schools build their capacity to increase family engagement and involvement.

SFUSD Parent Teacher Association
PTA Office: 555 Franklin Street, Room 203
San Francisco, CA 94102
241-6048
www.sfpta.org

SFUSD Translation Department:
415 241.6081
555 Franklin Street SF, CA 94102
http://portal.sfusd.edu/template/default.cfm?page=chief_dev.translation

Synopsis: This department will assist you in translating your documents. Please note that it takes a minimum of two weeks for documents to be translated so plan accordingly.

Free On-line Translator:
http://www.freetranslation.com/
Synopsis: Each of these websites provides programs that will translate documents at no charge. (Always have someone proof read before sending out)

Information Technology Department, San Francisco Unified School District:
Adam Zabarte, Administrative Systems
zabartea@sfusd.edu
241-6220 Ext. 3406
202-0758 Fax

Synopsis: WITH SITE ADMINISTRATOR APPROVAL, Adam can assist you with creating call lists through the SIS system. Lists can be filtered according to your needs (e.g. home language, etc.) and an automated system makes the calls home for you.
San Francisco School Volunteers:
601 McAllister St.
San Francisco, CA 94102
phone 415.749.3700
fax 415.749.3760
www.sfsv.org

Synopsis: Trains volunteers to increase family involvement and to help develop skills. Also provides trainings and workshops for parent and caregivers in the areas of transitions, communication and academic support.

Parents for Public Schools – San Francisco
9 Stilleran Street, Suite 6, SF, CA 94134
415.468.7077
www.parents4publicschools.com
www.ppssf.org (local chapter website)

Synopsis: Local chapter of national organization of parents, who supports, promotes and works to improve public schools through parent and caregiver involvement.

NEA Parent and Caregiver Resources Index:
http://www.nea.org/parents/index.html

Synopsis: This National Education Association website provides valuable information regarding parent and caregiver involvement in their child’s education including research that links involvement with student achievement, transitions, academic support, workshop ideas and access to other quality web-based resources.

National Coalition for Parent and Caregiver Involvement in Education
http://www.ncpie.org/DevelopingPartnerships/

Synopsis: A comprehensive and meaningful partnership meets the needs of the families, schools, and communities involved. This website includes discussions on communication, community collaboration, ways parent, caregivers and educators can better support youth at school, home, advocacy and shared governance.

PTA “National Standard for Parent and Family Involvement Programs”
http://www.pta.org/archive_article_details_1118251710359.html

Synopsis: Effective parent and caregiver involvement programs include activities that are addressed by the following six standards: communication, families, student learning, volunteering, school decision making, and community collaboration.

Parent Partners: Workshops to Foster School/Home/Family Partnerships
University of California, Berkeley
GEMS
510.641.7771
http://store.yahoo.com/lawrencehallofscience/gemparedprog.html

Synopsis: Parent Partners is especially designed for educators and activist parent and caregivers seeking to increase parent involvement in their children's education.

Grandparents as Parents: A Primer for Schools
http://www.kidsource.com/kidsource/content2/grandparents_3.html

For more resources, call the Office of Parent Relations at 241-6185