

ideas for parents

Easy Ways to Build Assets for and with Your Child

FAST FACTS

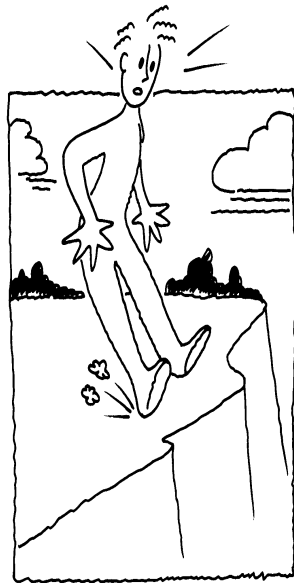
ASSET CATEGORY

Boundaries and Expectations

The more your child has clear, consistent boundaries and high expectations, the more likely he or she is to grow up healthy.

Youth Speak

- "Expect me to be a good student and to do things right."
- "Help me grow to be an individual."
- "Challenge me to succeed and comfort me when I fail."



Why Boundaries and Expectations Make a Difference

Search Institute researchers found that young people have fewer boundaries as they get older. While it's normal and healthy for teenagers to take more responsibility for themselves as

they grow, the problem is that not enough young people have clear boundaries in the first place. Positive peer influence is one boundary asset that can help youth make good decisions for themselves (see *6 Key Areas of Boundaries and Expectations* below). But while 87% of 6th graders report that their best friends model responsible behavior, only 52% of 12th graders do.

Boundaries are important to our children because they give clear messages about what's expected. Every day young people face many options and choices. Without boundaries to guide them, they may feel unsure and confused—and make unhealthy decisions. With boundaries, they have the supports that help them choose wisely and grow up healthy.

Expectations also make a difference in children's lives. Having teachers and parents who expect them to do their best is important for children. For example, research shows that regardless of ability level, young people's scholastic achievement tends to be higher in classes where teachers have high expectations. When parents and teachers set high, yet realistic, expectations, children strive to do well.

6 Key Areas of Boundaries and Expectations

Search Institute researchers have identified six assets in the area of boundaries and expectations that are crucial for helping young people grow up healthy. Check your family's areas of strength:

- Family boundaries*—Family has clear rules and consequences, and monitors the young person's whereabouts.
- School boundaries*—School provides clear rules and consequences.
- Neighborhood boundaries*—Neighbors take responsibility for monitoring young people's behavior.
- Adult role models*—Parent(s) and other adults model responsible behavior.
- Positive peer influence*—Young person's best friends model responsible behavior.
- High expectations*—Both parent(s) and teachers encourage the young person to do well.

Watch the next six newsletters for more ideas on building boundaries-and-expectations assets!

Helpful Hints

Tips that make boundaries easier:

- **Discuss boundaries with teachers, coaches, employers, clergy, and adults in other places where your child goes so that all boundaries are consistent.**
- **When you're unsure about setting and enforcing boundaries, seek advice from another parent or a teacher.**
- **Involve your children in family meetings to discuss boundaries and what happens when boundaries are violated.**
- **Think of boundaries as something positive rather than something negative!**

