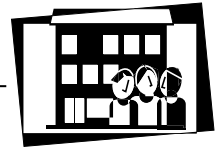


Asset-Building Ideas for Child-Care Centers

Millions of children spend time each day or week in some sort of child-care center. Parents, and indeed our entire society, rely on these centers to provide children with safe, appropriate environments. Thus, child-care centers have a major influence over our youngest generation. By focusing on the 40 Developmental Assets that all kids need, these centers can go beyond simply providing care. They can become stimulating, nurturing places that provide the foundation young people need for success in life. Here are ideas on how to build assets in child-care centers:

- ◆ **Learn as much as you can about the 40 Developmental Assets for the age of children your center serves.** Post lists in all the rooms in your center, and train staff in the Developmental Assets.
- ◆ **Make asset building part of your core curriculum** and policies.
- ◆ **Schedule annual or semi-annual conferences with parents.** Although it can be time consuming to prepare for conferences, they can help build relationships with parents while educating them about how their children are growing and developing. They also give you a chance to learn more about the children in your care.
- ◆ **Assign each child a particular child-care worker** so that each child has at least one adult with whom to form a close relationship.
- ◆ **Have written job descriptions that include asset-building language** for each paid and volunteer position. This helps people know what's expected of them.
- ◆ **Hang children's artwork and projects not only in rooms but also in the hallways and entrance to your center.** Consider framing some of them.
- ◆ **Take time to plan your programming,** and make planning a priority. Have weekly themes for activities, and give staff a regular, paid time to plan and prepare.
- ◆ **Share decision making among staff and volunteers** so that everyone feels supported and empowered to make decisions while also keeping each other informed.
- ◆ **Deal with difficulties and conflicts immediately,** before they escalate into large problems.
- ◆ **Make cultural diversity a priority.** Provide multicultural books, dolls, and toys for children to play with. Invite people from different cultures to visit and lead culturally specific activities with the children. Build a diverse staff.
- ◆ **Give child-care workers training and education throughout the year** so they can keep adding to their knowledge, skills, and creativity.
- ◆ **Publish a family newsletter on a monthly basis,** with the help of a volunteer, parent, or staff person who enjoys doing newsletters. Besides providing news about the center, include the names of all the child-care workers, their scheduled times, and the names of the children in each room. This helps parents to learn the names of people in your center.
- ◆ **Honor staff members, volunteers, and parents** for the contributions they make.
- ◆ **Set high expectations for your center.** Aim for national accreditation through the National Association for the Education of



Young Children (1509 Sixteenth Street NW, Washington, D.C. 20036; 800-424-2460; www.naeyc.org) or the National Association for Family Child Care (5202 Pinemont Drive, Salt Lake City, Utah, 84123; 800-359-3817; www.nafcc.org).

- ◆ **Create a bulletin board that includes a photograph and brief description about each staff person**, including your cook, custodian, and volunteers. This helps people put names with faces and encourages people to build community.
- ◆ **Advocate for high-quality child care**, not only for your center but for child care in general.
- ◆ **Develop asset-building days or asset-building weeks for your center**. Have asset-building activities during the day and send home a list of ideas on how parents can build assets for their children.
- ◆ **Employ and empower teenagers** by offering them the chance to care for younger children.