



Asset-Building Ideas for Organizations that Employ Young People

Bring out the best in the young people who work with you by doing things to build assets. Building assets in the youth you employ not only gives them essential skills but also makes them well-rounded, competent people. You benefit by having healthy, competent workers. Here are some ways to build assets in your employees:

- ◆ **Encourage the development of basic skills, such as writing, reading, mathematics, science, technology, and communication.** Show how these skills are important in your organization.
- ◆ **Take a personal interest in your young employees.** Share with them your personal interests and hobbies. Ask about theirs.
- ◆ **Teach young people skills you need them to perform** by modeling and explaining those skills.
- ◆ **Tell young people what you expect them to do and how you expect them to act when they are working.** When they act inappropriately or make mistakes, correct them gently while showing them appropriate alternatives for the future.
- ◆ **Give young employees a lot of feedback.** When you are not satisfied with their work, let them know how they can improve. Be sincere in your praise when young people have worked hard to earn it.
- ◆ **Point out the positive values that your organization believes in.** Explain why these values are important to you and the organization.
- ◆ **Provide adequate support for employees.** This includes orientation, training, supervision, criticism, and praise. For many young people, the job with your organization is their first work experience. Many do not know what to expect. Give them the big picture about what your organization does as well as the details of their jobs.
- ◆ **Use the “sandwich” model when you have a problem with an employee:** First praise, then talk about the problem, then praise again.
- ◆ **Offer young people opportunities** for advancing within the company.
- ◆ **Be clear about how young people can spend their time when work is slow.** One fast-food restaurant gives employees time to do homework during their work shift.
- ◆ **Invite young people to conferences, workshops, or seminars.** Explain why these continuing education opportunities are valuable.
- ◆ **Most young people have a strong desire to please the adults around them.** Don't exploit this. Teach young people how to take personal pride in their work.
- ◆ **Refer to the list of 40 Developmental Assets often.** Think of creative ways to build these assets for and with young people.
- ◆ **Acknowledge major accomplishments and milestones in young employees' lives,** such as graduation, or academic or sports achievements.
- ◆ **Create schedules that allow young people adequate time to do their school-work and participate in other activities.** Studies show that young people are most successful when they work 15 or fewer hours per week during the school year.