

Messages to Parents and Guardians

The bottom line for speaking to parents and guardians is to emphasize that building Developmental Assets helps them get what they want for their children. Even when you run into the attitudes expressed by "I don't have the time nor energy to do anything more than I'm already doing" and "I don't have access to any more resources," you can acknowledge the good things that parents and guardians already do as well as the welcome statement that they don't have to do it alone. In the first case, you can suggest that they identify and congratulate themselves on the good things they do, and then be more intentional about doing them. You can also point out that little things count: Building assets consists of small but important gestures-like stopping and talking to young people-and doesn't take much time. In the second case, you can suggest that, with just a little effort, they can help their children connect with others to bring more resources to their children's lives- extended family, other adults, community institutions, and so on. (If they're ready for another step, they can also try to be a resource for another family's children and have a positive impact on other children's lives.) Another key to speaking with parents and guardians is to emphasize that as the most important influences on their children's lives, they have a responsibility to continually try to communicate with their children. You can point out that many of the assets-three of the first six, in fact-can come only from them.

Messages specific to this audience:

- Building assets is consistent with what parents and guardians want for their children.
- Parents and guardians are probably already building Developmental Assets, but perhaps they could be more intentional, consistent, or systematic.
- Parents and guardians can have positive influences not only on their own children but on other children as well.

Ways that members of this audience might help build assets:

- For older children, negotiate family rules and consequences for breaking those rules.
- Do intergenerational activities with extended family and with other neighborhood adults and families, e.g., a game night, a barbecue, a dance, or a cross-generational discussion about some local or current issue.
- Teach their teenagers something practical, such as how to change a tire on the car, prepare a meal, or create a monthly budget.