

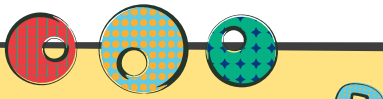


Ideas for Educators

42 Ready-to-Use Newsletters for School Success

1. FAMILY SUPPORT

Family life provides high levels of love and support.



What Are Assets?

Assets are 40 values, experiences, and qualities that help kids succeed.

Family support is one of six support assets.

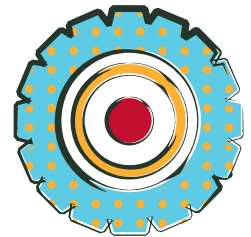
68% of youth surveyed have this asset in their lives.*

*Based on Search Institute surveys of 148,189 6th- to 12th-grade youth throughout the United States in 2003.

- Send an e-mail to each parent once a semester that highlights something the student did well.
- Host a classroom event where parents can come see their students in action, such as a “family fun night” with games based on *Are You Smarter Than a 5th Grader?*
- Create an assignment that allows students to draw on a parent’s area of expertise.
- Create an assignment that encourages students to share a family experience or encourages family cooperation in order to complete the assignment.

Bringing School and Family Together

Addressing the idea of family support is less about taking an active role in every student’s family life than it is about allowing space in your classroom for it. Students who experience this asset are more confident, more secure, and more willing to take on intellectual challenges. They are able to express greater empathy and kindness toward others and are less likely to be aggressive or troubled.



Think of creating opportunities for student-parent connections. Give the students a chance to share their concerns in a letter for parent-teacher conferences. If you work with journaling, occasionally use prompts that help a student examine his relationship with his family. For a creative writing piece, have students retell a favorite family story or try to capture the essence of their family in a metaphor.

In essence, open up your classroom to provide students with a way to bring their home and school together.

Teachers Need Support Too

In the same way that your students thrive when they're experiencing positive relationships at home, so do you. In the same way you encourage your students to make time for their families and friends, you need to heed this advice in your own practice.

You don't marginalize these important relationships for your students, so you shouldn't for yourself either. How will prioritizing your family and friends affect your evenings? Weekends? Vacations?

This week, be purposeful in *making* time for your family and friends. Note how increasing the amount and quality of time you spend with them affects your energy and performance in school.

