

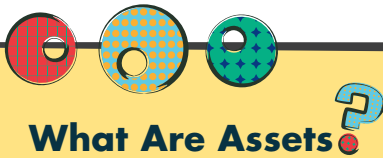


# Ideas for Educators

42 Ready-to-Use Newsletters for School Success

## 32. PLANNING AND DECISION MAKING

Young person knows how to plan ahead and make choices.



### What Are Assets?

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

**Planning and decision making** is one of five social-competencies assets.

29% 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.

- Model good planning in your classroom.
- Start with highly structured planning.
- Make planning rewarding and make consequences real.

### Teaching the Concept of Planning

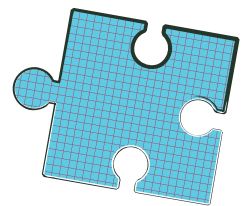
As adults we value the idea of planning. Like jugglers, we constantly have several balls in the air and we exercise good planning skills in order not to drop any. But even though planning is second-nature to us, it is thoroughly *unnatural* to most students. It is a skill that needs to be taught. We need to have a highly structured plan in place for teaching the art of planning and decision making, and we must also demonstrate the rewards of good planning.

Begin by taking baby-steps. With younger children, planning is very basic:

- Have them make limited choices in what they need to plan for.
- Make rewards immediate.
- Model planning constantly in your classroom.

As children get older, make the planning process slightly more complicated:

- Make a range of planning tools available.
- Keep your planning and classroom structure consistent so it's easy for kids to plan.
- Model planning constantly in your classroom.
- Ask kids to help you plan.



By the time students reach high school, you can use a little tough love to encourage better planning. Don't overload them in order to force them to plan, but do make the consequences for poor planning immediate in order to raise their level of concern. Begin to use real-world examples (salaries tied to meeting deadlines, serious consequences for poor performance) and demonstrate that good planning actually minimizes extra effort.

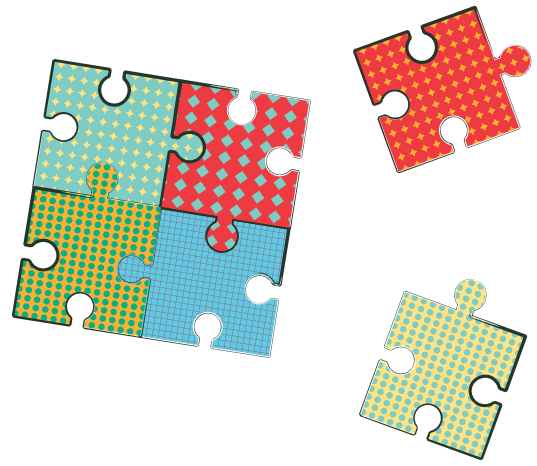
## Beyond the Daily Lesson Plan

Chances are quite good that you have a daily lesson plan. Depending on your talent for organization, that plan might also span a week, a semester, or even the whole year. But what if you had a Life Plan book? Would it be equally well structured? Are you as mindful about your own time and needs?

Look through your planning for a particular week and think about the headings that are presently accounted for. It probably looks something like this:

- ⦿ Lessons and resources
- ⦿ Special events, such as field trips or class activities
- ⦿ Meetings
- ⦿ Individual tasks to complete, such as forms to fill out or duties to perform

These headings represent a full week of work and effort, and the better the planning, the easier it is to perform all of these duties and responsibilities. But what if you add an extra layer to your week? What if you're organized and purposeful toward your other needs? Add this layer to your list of headings:



- ⦿ Time with colleagues
- ⦿ Moments of quiet and solitude
- ⦿ Exercise
- ⦿ Reading
- ⦿ Hobbies and interests

If time with colleagues is important to you, then you can create pockets of time in your week. If exercise is important to you, then schedule it the same way you would a meeting or another duty.

You will never *find* time for most of this second layer. That just doesn't happen very often. But if you *make* time this week for these other portions of your life, then the habit of carving out this space will become ongoing.