

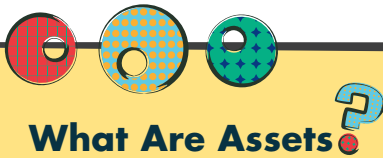


Ideas for Educators

42 Ready-to-Use Newsletters for School Success

18. YOUTH PROGRAMS

Young person spends three or more hours per week in sports, clubs, or organizations at school and/or in community organizations.



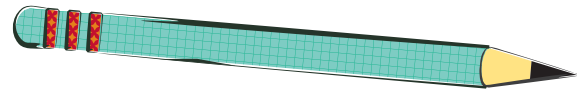
What Are Assets?

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

Youth programs is one of four constructive-use-of-time assets.

57% 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.



bemoans that kids aren't allowed to be kids anymore and then complains that the youth of today are lazy and disconnected. So how do teachers address these conflicting notions?

Strong and diverse youth programs allow students to explore their interests in a variety of ways. This has, time and again, been shown to lead to a greater sense of self-satisfaction and well-being because students are developing a sense of themselves and their strengths. It's important to acknowledge that students are people outside of your room. Consider:

- Make space for activities in students' lives.
- Become involved yourself: coach or lead a group.
- Help kids and clubs connect: post a list in your classroom; suggest a specific club to a student who excels in that area.
- Think of activities as other avenues for learning.

- Making sure students have time to pursue those activities.
- Inviting different club leaders to come into your classroom to give students a chance to find out about the different offerings.
- Finding ways to let students bring their outside interests into the classroom.

Over-Involved, Under-Involved— How about Just Involved?

We are constantly fed two opposing messages about today's youth: "Young people are over-involved" and "young people are under-involved." Society

Of course the flip side to this asset is that we make sure kids do not become overcommitted and overstressed. Always encourage a student to scale back if grades or quality of life is suffering from

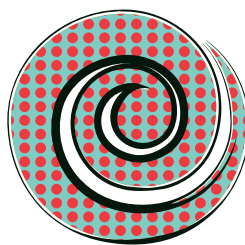
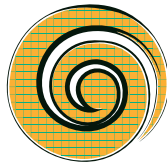
too many things to do during a single day. Finding a balance between school, work, and personal life is tricky but vital for continued student success.

Involving Yourself

We all strive to get our students involved in a variety of activities, knowing that it's good for their health, their personal development, and their school engagement. But what most coaches, advisors, and group leaders also know is that there are few better ways to connect with young people and the community at large than by joining them outside of the school day.

The key is to find opportunities for this that don't become a burden or stress. Some simple examples:

- Instead of having an either/or approach toward coaching and your family, find meaningful ways to bring your family and the activity together, such as having your own children come to practices or being bat- or ball-kids at games.
- Involve your friends and family as volunteers to help organize and lead activities—it's a great way to build community and share interests.



- Share the responsibilities with a colleague, and ask for help early and often. Be creative about getting other adults involved in your activity.

For those of you who aren't involved in an organized youth program outside of school, or who don't see it as being something manageable, there are other, smaller ways you can connect:

- Pick one of your own hobbies, like chess or knitting, and offer to lead a group that explores it.
- Volunteer to assist with a preexisting group within your school community. It's a great way to help, and it also strengthens relationships with your colleagues.
- Find opportunities to work with youth in places where adults and youth intersect, such as your place of worship or health club.

This is not about adding more work to your life. Instead, it's about working with youth apart from your classroom. This is a sure way to engage in your work in a joyful and energy-giving manner.