

ideas for parents

Easy Ways to Build Assets for and with Your Child

FAST FACTS

ASSET #16: High Expectations

Youth are more likely to grow up healthy when both parents and teachers encourage young people to do well.

49%

of youth surveyed by Search Institute have this asset in their lives.*

What Are Assets?

Assets are 40 values, experiences, and qualities that help kids succeed. "High expectations" is one of six boundaries-and-expectations assets.

* Based on Search Institute surveys of 217,277 6th- to 12th-grade youth throughout the United States during the 1999-2000 school year.

Encouraging Their Best

When you give a child a helium-filled balloon, it brings great joy. But if the balloon is leaking and gradually deflates, the child becomes frustrated. If the balloon is difficult to hang on to and floats away, the child cries.

A balloon is like expectations. If they're too low or too high, they're not helpful. But if the expectations are high—yet still within reach—the child holds the taut string of the balloon with an arm extended up. Expectations should make our children stretch but still able to see what they're stretching toward.

Expectations should differ based on each child's temperament, abilities, gifts, and talents. A natural-born athlete who is bored in physical education, goofs around most of the time, and still gets an A, doesn't have high enough expectations set on her. The dyslexic child who struggles to keep up with the state standards of reading for his age has expectations placed upon him that are too



high—that may be out of reach.

High expectations can bring out the best in our children, yet expectations constantly need to be evaluated and revamped so that they encourage our children without discouraging them, and challenge our children without frustrating them. What do you expect of your child?



Helpful Hints

Tips that make setting high expectations with your child easier:

- **Don't push your child—let her or him develop at her or his own speed.**
- **Tell your child when he or she is doing well.**
- **Periodically check out your expectations with your child.**
- **Challenge yourself and model the benefits of high expectations.**

time together

Three ways to set high but reasonable expectations with your child:

1. Expect the best from your child, keeping in mind her or his abilities and interests.
2. Ask children what they expect from themselves.
3. Encourage your child to tackle subjects and hobbies that are challenging, but not too difficult. Work together.

A Progress Report

Examine your expectations of your child in each of the following areas:



| EXPECTATION | Child seems stretched | Child seems bored | Child seems overwhelmed |
|----------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| Social skills | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Academics | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Physical health | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Hobbies | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Extracurricular activities | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

Quick Tip:
Encourage children not to compare themselves to others.

talk together

Questions to discuss with your child:

- What do you think we expect of you—at home, at school, in the community? Are those expectations realistic? Why or why not?
- Where do you feel bored? Where do you feel defeated? Why?
- How can we set high expectations together that are realistic, yet challenging?

What about You?

Our expectations of our children often come from the expectations we as parents received when we were children. What did your parents expect of you as a child? As a teenager? How realistic were those expectations? How are those expectations affecting your parenting?

More Help for Parents

Awakening Your Child's Natural Genius: Enhancing Curiosity, Creativity, and Learning Ability by Thomas Armstrong. This book suggests creative ways to develop your child's learning ability, curiosity, and creativity to her or his fullest potential. (Published by J.P. Tarcher.)

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“High expectations are the key to everything.”

—Sam Walton

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