
The Coach's Role in Developing Assets in Youth

Young people today, more than ever, need adults who can help them grow into strong healthy, caring, productive young people. Adults do this by teaching youth positive skills, attitudes and behaviors called "developmental assets." Just as financial assets allow a person to weather difficult times and to plan for a positive future, "developmental assets" provide the emotional resources youth need to avoid problems and to be successful. Research by the Search Institute (*Copyright © 1996 by Search Institute, Minneapolis, Minnesota; 1-800-888-7828. All rights reserved*) has identified 40 assets that are essential for youth to blossom into productive citizens. The more assets a young person has, the more likely he or she is to succeed in school, stay healthy, and volunteer in the community. The fewer assets available to a youth, the more likely he or she is to try alcohol or drugs, commit a crime, or do poorly in school. Parents, teachers, coaches, faith communities, business leaders, everyone, can help build assets in our youth. In fact, we need everyone to work together to create the kind of community where all youth thrive.

Coaches have a unique and powerful role to play in building assets in young people. They can be the adults to whom youth turn for advice. They can model responsible, caring interactions with others. They can motivate youth to achieve new goals. A coach can make all the difference in the world to a young person...especially a young person who doesn't have many assets to begin with.

TEN WAYS COACHES CAN BUILD ASSETS EVERY DAY

1. Ask youth for their ideas and listen, really listen, to their responses.
2. Give youth tasks and responsibilities they can handle.
3. Tell a youth what he or she is doing right twice as often as you point out mistakes.
4. Talk to athletes, other coaches, parents and officials with respect.
5. Show interest in youth beyond what he or she can do in the gym or on the playing field / court.
6. Set consistent and realistic expectations for behavior.
7. Demonstrate fairness and honesty in how athletes are treated.
8. Help youth learn from mistakes and losses by focusing on what they can each do to improve.
9. Talk with parents about how their child is doing and how they can support him or her.
10. Give youth a chance to make decisions.