

30. Responsibility

Give young people a chance to stand on their own two feet

Following rules is important, but is doing as you're told enough? To become strong, upstanding, and successful adults, possessing a personal desire to be responsible is also significant. Accountability is more than following rules. It means you're responsible for knowing *why* you follow the rules and when it may be beneficial to change the rules. Give young people the chance to do their best—sometimes without assistance. Responsibility is Asset 30 of Search Institute's 40 Developmental Assets, the qualities, experiences, and relationships that help young people grow up healthy, caring, and responsible.

Here are the facts

Research shows that young people are more likely to succeed if they accept and take personal responsibility for their actions. About 63 percent of young people, ages 11–18, say they accept and take personal responsibility for their actions, according to Search Institute surveys. Take time to model and teach young people how to take care of themselves, follow through with commitments, and learn from mistakes.

Tips for building this asset

There are four keys to instilling responsibility in young people, according to authors Don Dinkmeyer, Ph.D. and Gary McKay, Ph.D. In their book, *Raising a Responsible Child*, Dinkmeyer and McKay list the following keys to teaching responsibility: 1. Let the young person do it him or herself; 2. Expect it to take time; 3. Ask, don't demand; and 4. Use natural and logical consequences.

Also try this

In your home and family: Create a chart of family chores, listing everyone's responsibilities, even yours.

In your neighborhood and community: When you make a commitment to a neighborhood or community group, follow through. Don't minimize the responsibility simply because you're a volunteer.

In your school or youth program: When a young person won't take responsibility for her or his actions, help him or her understand the consequences. For example, if a homework assignment isn't completed on time, let the student experience the natural outcome of receiving a zero. If he or she asks for an opportunity to bring the grade up, great! If the student doesn't seek that opportunity, avoid offering it. It will be a great lesson for the student to see how that zero affects his or her overall grade.