

ASSETS AWARENESS ARTICLE

Welcome to Boundaries & Expectations! Though youth often say grown-ups have too many rules, most young people thrive with consistency and structure. Boundaries help create that structure. Young people also need positive peer and adult role models to demonstrate responsibility and strong character.

Family Boundaries: Family monitors youth and has clear rules and consequences.



- Allow youth to help determine rules and consequences. If the punishment fits the crime, youth will better see why certain behaviors are inappropriate or unsafe.
- Write a family contract together. Include rules, expectations, values, and family goals. This will help youth understand that even adults have to abide by rules.

School Boundaries: School provides clear rules and consequences.

- Let youth play their favorite game, but make them play without any rules. It may seem like fun at first, but they will soon see how frustrating and disorganized the game becomes without rules. Have them reflect on what *school* would be like if there were no rules!

Neighborhood Boundaries: Neighbors are involved in monitoring youth.

- If neighbors know and have positive relationships with youth, they will become invested in caring about those youth. Celebrate National Good Neighbor Day in September by doing a good deed for a neighbor as a family.



Adult Role Models: Parent(s) and other adults model responsible behaviors.

- Help youth create eco-maps; diagrams illustrating the people they look up to and can go to for help and advice.
- It's the little things that count. Your children will repeat everything you do; including the bad stuff. If you litter, run stop signs, and tell fibs, they probably will too. Teach them integrity by modeling it. When you make a mistake, admit it.

Positive Peer Influence: Youth's friends model responsible behavior.

- You can't always choose their friends. Instead of telling your kids not to hang out with friends you don't 100% approve of, invite those friends to participate in productive family activities that you can monitor and encourage *your* children to be positive influences for their friends.
- Help kids realize that friendship shouldn't happen by accident. Role-play "friendship interviews" with them. What qualities are important in a friendship. What questions would they ask a potential friend?

High Expectations: Parents, teachers, and other adults encourage youth to succeed.

- Hide inspirational notes around the house to help encourage youth to meet goals.
- Make goal chains together. Write steps towards a goal on slips of paper, connecting the links to make a chain. As a step is completed, tear off the link. Goal chains help youth visualize progress and reminds them of the steps it takes to reach a goal.



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Let us know what you think of Assets Awareness! Have any of these ideas worked for you and your family? Contact Lori at llh38@cornell.edu to share your thoughts.