



# Asset of the Month

July Asset Category: Positive Values (Internal Asset)

## July Asset: #31 Restraint

In a healthy community a young person believes it is important not be sexually active or to use alcohol or other drugs.

(43% of youth surveyed believe they have this asset in their lives).

### Parenting Tips & How-to-live the Asset of the Month: Restraint

While we may never agree on *all* the values that are important for young people, most people can agree on a few. The 6 positive-values assets are one way of naming a set of positive principles, standards, and qualities that virtually everyone can affirm. When young people feel pulled or pressured to engage in high-risk behavior, the value of restraint gives them strength to resist the temptation. The positive-values assets provide the foundation for young people's character. There are many other values that may be equally important for young people, but we can get started by building these 6 values for all youth.

#### All Children

- Parents and other adults model, monitor, and teach healthy habits. Children learn to take care of their bodies, which includes developing healthy sexual attitudes.
- Examine your own beliefs, values, and views about health and sexuality. What do you want children to learn from you? Find ways to get these messages across. For example, you might point out to children that the family eats vegetables and foods with protein before eating dessert. Teach children that *they* can decide who touches them and when.
- Model happy and loving relationships. Children who see adults hugging and kissing as part of a committed relationship are more likely to grow up with healthy sexual attitudes.
- Limit the television programs children watch and the sites they visit on the internet. Shows and sites with graphic sex or violence aren't appropriate for children. Find more suitable programs, or do something together.
- Use correct names for body parts. It's important for children to learn that you're comfortable talking about the human body and sexuality.
- When youth make inappropriate remarks about sexuality and body parts, stay calm. Let children know what's not acceptable, but don't reward them by giving their comments a lot of attention.
- Discuss how characters on television and in the movies relate to each other. Talk about who's respectful, loving, and empathetic-and who's not.
- As children are ready to learn about sex and sexuality, give them accurate, appropriate information. Don't assume they'll learn everything they need to know in school or from their friends. Give them information a piece at a time, and be prepared to answer questions.

#### Did You Know?

When children are exposed to healthy lifestyles and healthy sexual attitudes, they're more likely to make these things a part of their lives. As they grow, children will gradually learn to use restraint and avoid unhealthy and risky behaviors. Teenagers who've been raised in an environment where healthy lifestyles are important are less likely to engage in early sexual intercourse or use alcohol or other drugs.

#### Teens

- **Important:** "Just say no" is a joke. Anyone who thinks 3 words are enough to stop teens from using drugs (or drinking or having sex) doesn't get it. You (teens) need people who respect you enough to give you reasons; you need facts so you can make informed decisions. To learn more about sex, alcohol, and other drugs, ask an adult you trust, check out credible resources, visit your library. This asset is essential to your teen's success; the risks of teen pregnancy, STDs (including HIV/AIDS), drunk driving, impaired judgment, addiction, legal consequences, and more are real.

## Don't Be a Clueless Parent!

**FACT:** According to an ongoing study of more than 9,700 parents, children, and teens, parents are seriously out of touch with the reality of drugs in their children's lives. The study found these differences:

### Parents

21% think their teens might have used marijuana  
45% believe their children have friends who smoke pot  
38% suspect their kids have been offered drugs  
43% think it would be easy for their children to find marijuana  
33% say their teenagers view marijuana as harmful  
94% say they talked with their teens about drugs during the past year

### Teens

44% say they have  
71% say they do  
59% say they have  
58% say it would  
18% think it is  
67% remember such discussions

## **FACT: Everybody is NOT doing it!**

- 50% of girls and 45% of boys ages 15-19 are not having sex. (After increasing steadily for more than 2 decades, the percentage of teenagers who are having sex is decreasing.)
- 70% of 8<sup>th</sup> graders, 52% of 10<sup>th</sup> graders, and 45% of 12<sup>th</sup> graders have never used an illicit drug.
- 55% of kids in grades 6-8 and 29% of teens in grades 9-12 don't use alcohol.
- 63% of high school students don't smoke. (But teen smoking is on the rise. Tobacco use among teens jumped by nearly 1/3 during the past 6 years; smoking among African American teenagers almost doubled.)

## What to do when kids fall in love...

When kids fall in love, parents can feel baffled about how to respond and how to help kids make sense of their intense feelings. As parents, we also tend to get anxious when our kids fall in love too much (or too hard)—or when our kids don't seem interested at all in dating. Consider these tips to help guide you and your kids through the perils of young love.

### Tips for all parents...

- Affirm the joy of falling in love—even if *your* love life hasn't always been easy. Try to remember what it was like when you first fell in love.
- Take kids' feelings seriously. You may not think it's a big deal for a sixth grader to fall in love, but it's a huge deal to your sixth grader. Treat it with the same seriousness as your child does. (That also means if the relationship goes sour, be caring and compassionate. Don't say, "You're so young. Others will come along.")
- Model and talk about appropriate ways to express love and care. Our society tends to be sex obsessed. Instead, focus on the relationship aspect of dating, such as getting to know someone, revealing your *self* to them, and caring for each other in tender ways, such as holding hands.
- Don't make assumptions about your child's sexual orientation. Create safe ways to talk about attraction without attaching a bias to sexual orientation, which your kids will pick up right away. You want your kids to talk to you, not avoid you.

- Be calm about young love. Be careful not to overreact (and make it a bigger deal than it is) or under react (by dismissing it). Ask your child questions, such as, “What do you like about this person?” “How does this relationship make you feel?”
- Remember that your child being attracted to someone doesn’t mean your child is having sexual intercourse. Talk about attractions and appropriate ways to act.

### **Early Sexual Activity: An Introduction**

Who has the most influence on whether your child engages in early sexual behaviors? You do. That’s why it’s so important for parents to talk to their kids about sex and to give them clear guidelines about what is expected—and why. What exactly does “early” mean? Most parents and sex educators would hope it means before graduating from high school, but today only 35 percent of kids abstain from sexual intercourse until they’re 18. Visit [www.searchinstitute.org](http://www.searchinstitute.org) for tips on encouraging abstinence. The asset-building approach encourages kids to abstain from early sexual activity. In fact, kids who value restraint and believe it’s important not to be sexually active (along with not using alcohol and other drugs) are more likely to succeed.

\* Visit <http://www.familyresourcesheboygan.org>. Learn more about Restraint and the other 39 assets. This website also lists other great websites for parents, youth group leaders, teachers, etc. with tools, handouts, etc.

### **July HCHY Events/Announcements**

1. **We need your help!!** Please contact Mike or Erik (contact info below) with how you are putting assets into action. We are putting together a short newsletter called “Assets in Action” with HCHY Happenings and stories and testimonials on the impact asset building is having around the county.
2. We are lining up trainings and presentations – please contact Erik Wagner (892-6706) or Mike Burns (451-8000) to reserve a training or presentation for your youth group, parent group, service club, students, staff, etc –**there is no cost for trainings/presentations and the time spent will be well worth it.**

**\*Please forward this information to co-workers, clients, families, and other contacts.**

\*Please respond with feedback, ideas for upcoming assets of the month, etc., or if your organization would like to be listed as a resource to: [ysports@sheboygancountymca.org](mailto:ysports@sheboygancountymca.org) or [erikfrc@excel.net](mailto:erikfrc@excel.net) .

**\*Next Month’s (August) Asset of the Month:** #18 Youth Programs. Category: Constructive Use of Time

Sponsor:

*The Asset of the Month campaign is an effort under the Healthy Community/ Healthy Youth Initiative:*

