



Asset of the Month

November Asset Category: Empowerment (External Asset)

November's Asset: #10. Safety

In a healthy community a young person feels safe at home, at school, and in the neighborhood.

(51% Of youth surveyed believe that they have this asset in their lives.)

Empowerment: When young people feel safe, serve others, and perceive that others value them, they can take healthy risks and try new challenges. Instead of feeling self-conscious and being overwhelmed with worry or fear, they can experiment with new ideas and activities. That doesn't mean that young people won't make mistakes. Empowered youth bounce back from mistakes. They know who they can count on when the going gets tough, and they know that difficult times will get better.

Ways you can empower others:

- Make sure that where you live is child-friendly, even if you don't have children. Keep it childproof for those occasional child visits and have materials on hand that children can use.
- Create a neighborhood association that meets on a regular basis. Include people of all ages. Give everyone the opportunity to talk, contribute, and create ways to make the neighborhood a safer, more empowering place to live.
- Take seriously young people's worries and fears. Learn the reasons for young people's feelings.

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

Ages Birth – 5

- Childproof all environments where children play to ensure safety.
- Keep track of toddlers at all times. They can dash into streets, leap from furniture, or knock over glass dishes in the blink of an eye.
- Teach children basic safety rules, such as avoiding poisons, and always use car seats and safety belts.
- Teach a preschooler his first and last name, address, and phone number.
- Be firm about safety boundaries.

Ages 6 – 11

- Encourage young people to write letters to the editor of your local paper about issues that are important to them.
- Talk to children about strangers. Ask, "What can you do if someone makes you feel afraid or worried?" Help children develop their own personal plans to handle unsafe situations. Teach children who they can go to when they feel scared or need help: teachers, cashiers, police officers, fire fighters, security guards, and so on.
- Ask children what they like and do not like about their daily routines. Make changes to improve them.
- Attend health & safety fairs and community awareness events. Encourage school field trips or presentations with the fire station, police station, water safety personnel, etc.

Ages 12 – 18

- Require safety education with potentially dangerous hobbies – hunting, skate boarding, ATV's, fishing/boating, etc.
- Talk with young people about their feelings and fears about safety. Work together to help young people feel safer.
- Post emergency numbers by the telephone and keep them current. Examples: police, fire, poison control, suicide prevention, the family doctor, the family vet.
- Teens: When going to unfamiliar places, invite friends to accompany you so you won't be alone.
- Teach teens how to report potentially violent situations or unsafe conditions.

FACT: Having a gun in the home won't make your family safer!

A gun kept in the home is 43 times more likely to kill a family member or friend than to stop a crime. The presence of a gun in the home triples the risk of homicide in the home. It also increases the risk of suicide fivefold.

Each day, 16 children and teenagers in the USA are killed with guns in homicides, suicides, and accidents. At least 50 more are seriously injured.

The safest thing for your family is *not to keep a gun in the home*.

Family Discussion Topic/Activity: Designate one area to be home base, and the other area as a tightrope. Either lay a piece of rope on the floor or use masking tape to symbolize a rope. Have everyone stand. Make sure there is enough room for youth to move from one area to another. Explain that you are going to name various aspects of their lives, one at a time. If youth always feel safe in that place, they should move to home base. If they sometimes don't feel safe in that place, they should stand on the tightrope, where they should try to balance.

Places: neighborhood, congregation, school, nearby rural community, shops, youth hangouts, a nearby suburb, after school activities, home, the world, closest city at 1am on a weekend.

Discussion questions:

- Where do you feel the safest? Why?
- Where do you feel least safe? Why?
- Why is it important to feel safe?
- What affects how safe you feel? (For example, being alone or in a group).
- What suggestions do you have to make some of the unsafe places in your life safer?

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

- Visit the Red Cross website at www.redcross.org for tons of safety information including: water
*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 or erikfrc@excel.net. Also contact us if your organization would like a 40-asset presentation or training.

***Next Month's Asset of the Month:** Category: Social Competencies #34. Cultural Competence. If your organization has a potential asset building event or information you would like to share for the December "Asset of the Month" notice please respond by the 20th of Nov.

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

