



Asset of the Month

October Asset Category: Boundaries and Expectations (External Asset)

October's Asset: #11. Family Boundaries

In a healthy community, families have clear rules and consequences, and monitor the young person's whereabouts.

(46% of youth surveyed believe that they have this asset in their lives.)

What youth say about family boundaries: "Set fair boundaries." "Be a role model." "Challenge me to succeed and comfort me when I fail."

Boundaries and Expectations: It can be hard for young people to learn what is in bounds and what is out of bounds because of all of the mixed messages that they get between home, TV, school, etc. Adults and other young people can help youth along their way by :

- Talk together about things that are important. Talk about what you value.
- Limits need to be clear. Everyone needs to know what is expected of them.
- Stay in touch. Independence needs to be balanced with good communication. Adults can show they care by staying interested, involved, and informed.
- Role models are important. Young people need adults and peers who set standards and uphold them, act in ways that are respectable, and show them that some things are worth working and waiting for.
- Expect the best of each other. If adults expect young people to do their best, chances are good that they will. The same goes for teenagers' views of adults: Expecting that boundary setting is about who's more powerful will lead to conflict and true power struggles. Expecting that adults will negotiate boundaries in good faith will boost the chances that exactly that will happen.
- Accept the best each has to offer. No one is perfect. So temper your expectations to match personalities and experiences.

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

Young people especially need adults and peers who demonstrate, teach, and practice skills with them. They need adults and peers who watch how they are doing with their skills and who give them feedback along the way. They need people who not only teach them and show them the way, but also let them make and learn from mistakes.

All Children

- Use discipline to point children toward good behavior and appropriate decisions. Praise children when they do the right thing. Focus on the positive instead of the negative.
- Don't spank, hit, or shake a child. This teaches that it's okay to hit other people. Instead, model how you want the child to behave. Be calm. Put your feelings into words. If you're frustrated, take a moment to relax before you speak.
- Always show a child how much you love him. Never withhold love as a form of discipline.
- A child will not fully understand boundaries until late adolescence. As children grow, their boundaries need to grow with them in developmentally appropriate ways. Revise boundaries as children learn to make age-appropriate decisions.
- Encourage schools, neighbors, organizations, and communities to have consistent boundaries and consequences so children know how to act in different settings.
- Be firm about safety boundaries.
- Be reasonable when setting boundaries. Too many boundaries can make a child feel stifled and powerless. Too few can make a child feel lost and out of control. Change boundaries that don't work.

- Teach children to listen to their bodies. Point out that they have trouble concentration when they are tired or get crabby when they're hungry. Help children learn how to take care of themselves. For example, show them how to make a simple snack or meal, like a peanut butter and jelly sandwich.

Ages 12 – 18

- Be patient, calm, and consistent as young teenagers test the boundaries you set.
- Negotiate new boundaries as youth grow older. Work together on what's acceptable and what's not.
- Boundaries should be brief and to the point. The more complicated they are, the more confusing they get, and the more opportunities there are for loopholes and arguments.
- Parents should agree and stand together on boundaries and consequences. (This makes "Wait until your father gets home" or "Wait until your mother hears about this" threats unnecessary. It also means that they can't play one parent against the other.)
- Help teenagers think about future goals and the boundaries required to meet them.
- Respect young people's privacy needs while showing interest in their friends and activities.

FACT:

Teens want more family boundaries!

According to a recent nationwide survey of more than 218,000 students in grades 6 – 12, 53% say they either have enough or too much freedom, 35% think it's okay for parents to block violent or offensive content on TV, and 30% want restrictions on teens' Internet access.

In another survey of 600 youth ages 12-17, 49% feel that most kids their age need more guidance and attention from adults.

Family Discussion Topic: Put together a list of family rules and expectations – with youth input on rules, consequences, chores, and expectations. Need help getting started? Sample list: [Family rules](#)

1. Always tell the truth. Consequence for lying – lose a privilege for 1 week (cell phone, TV, etc.).
2. Never take something that doesn't belong to you. Consequence for stealing - Extra chores/cleaning
3. Always use peaceful conflict resolution. Consequence – Miss out on weekend activities
4. Always use appropriate language. Consequence – writing a letter of apology to whom ever heard or whom the language was directed toward.
5. Work before play (i.e. homework is to be done by 7pm – home work space is designated, and is away from distractions such as a TV, ipods, cell phones); chores need to be done before going out with friends. **Set standards** for what is acceptable work (homework and chores) – youth need to be encouraged to do their best. Consequence – "grounded" without electronic entertainment for 3 days.
6. Set clear guidelines for what you as a parent will pay for, and what the teens are expected to pay for. Parents may say "I will pay up to \$60.00 for a pair of shoes, if you want a more expensive pair you have to make up the difference."
7. Use of alcohol (at least until age 21), drugs, or any mind altering substance is unacceptable. Consequence – loss of privileges such as: use of vehicle, earlier curfew, more chores around the house or neighborhood, limited internet use, etc.
8. Don't make too many rules - keep them simple and follow through on consequences or the rules won't mean anything.
9. You will want to add rules if your family owns guns; teens start dating; teens start driving.

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

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

Contact us if your organization would like a 40 asset presentation or training. ysports@sheboygancountymca.org or ewagner@frc-sc.org .

***Next Month's Asset of the Month:** Category: Empowerment #10. Safety. If your organization has a potential asset building event or information you would like to share for the November "Asset of the Month" notice please respond by the 20th of October.

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

Healthy Communities/Healthy Youth For Sheboygan County

