



40 WAYS COACHES CAN BUILD ASSETS AND PROTECTIVE FACTORS FOR AND WITH YOUTH*

We share examples for each asset/protective factor below.

To share your examples or get connected to the **Lamoille Area Coaching Collaborative** Resources check out www.healthylamoillevalley.org/sports

SUPPORT

- **Family support-** Have a team meeting with athletes and their families prior to the season to outline expectations and guidelines. Keep in touch and connected throughout the season. Try your best to get to know each family and check-in with them. Keep in mind that family commitments are important and come before sports.
- **Positive family communication-** Remind parents/caregivers to use positive encouragement and constructive criticism. Support parents/caregivers in being protective factors.
- **Other adult relationships-** Assign a player (not their own child) for parents to watch during the game and at the end to tell the player something they did well.
- **Caring neighborhood-** Remind players to invite people to the games.
- **Caring team climate-** Encourage team members to cheer for each other. Create the appropriate culture that supports social-emotional development. Teach teamwork and build a team of positive peers with expectations that peers support each other.
- **Parent involvement with team-** Encourage parents to be involved as assistant coaches, snack providers, etc.

EMPOWERMENT

- **Community values youth-** Have the players thank the team sponsor, referees, others. Create connections between coaches and their players, families and community. **Youth as resources-** Ask players for input on how games are going, what they need to improve on and what they think the team could do as a whole.
- **Service to others-** Have players pick up trash around the rink, gym or field after the game. Create opportunities to make a difference/contribute.
- **Safety-** Never jeopardize the physical, psychological, mental or emotional health of a young person.

BOUNDARIES AND EXPECTATIONS

- **Family boundaries-** Communicate a Code of Conduct for youth and parents/caregivers with expectations (including when "representing us when on the road" or "in the community.") Know how you would respond if you notice parents are drinking or drunk during a practice, game or trip or if something seems unsafe.
- **Team/League expectations/boundaries-** Ensure that the team has clear rules and consequences. Enforce policies consistently through the lens of restorative practices. Find out what policies exist for your league/ in towns at fields, game and practice sites? What is the impact of the policies (or lack of) on "health and positive youth development?" What policies might you like to put in or see on different levels?
- **Neighborhood boundaries-** Be respectful and behave in any neighborhood as you would want people to act in yours.
- **Adult role models-** Be a role model on and off the field/court/rink. Your behavior sets the standard for athletes and spectators. Recognize the impact of your behaviors and actions on youth. What are they learning from you and through how you act in the world and what you say?
- **Positive peer influence-** Practice and promote unselfishness and teamwork.
- **High expectations-** Have realistic expectations and maximize your athletes' potentials. Create Healthy, Positive and Safe Team Culture/Norms, Spaces and League Culture/Policies. This starts with creating expectations and supports and a coaching philosophy.

CONSTRUCTIVE USE OF TIME

- **Creative activities-** Create a team cheer. Offer opportunities for designing creative practice drills/activities.
- **Youth programs-** Teach age appropriate skills. Encourage effort without focusing on results. Share healthy expectations of success. Find the balance of contribution, feeling valued and competition.
- **Religious community-** Don't schedule practices to conflict with religious commitments.
- **Time at home-** Encourage players to practice at home. Encourage players to use their creativity while also finding balance and variety in how they spend free time.

COMMITMENT TO LEARNING

- **Achievement motivation-** Make sure athletes tell you what their goals are and praise them as they move toward meeting their goals. Use developmental milestones and coaching considerations based on age and positive behavior techniques. Seek your own professional development.
- **Team engagement-** Encourage players to watch the game even when they are on the bench.
- **Homework-** Encourage players to do homework before their team commitments and to plan in advance.
- **Bonding to team-** Remember, it's still a game, fun needs to be everywhere.
- **Reading for pleasure-** Have a book about an inspirational athlete to give to a player after each game. Have players write something that they learned in the book. Pass it around. Make sure each player gets it.

POSITIVE VALUES

- **Caring-** Praise players with a smile, nod, or compliment. Remember they look to you for approval. Connect with each team member in a positive, age appropriate, culturally sensitive way about what is going on in their lives and connect with parents/caregivers, too. Be aware of developmental milestones and coaching considerations based on age, positive behavior techniques, etc.
- **Equality, equity and social justice-** Don't play favorites; move players around to different positions. Aim for active participation from every player. Recognize implicit and systemic bias that may impact your coaching and/or league administration.
- **Integrity-** Treat players with respect, avoiding put-downs, sarcasm, or ridicule, & require the same from them. Challenge players in a positive way... mentally. Trickle down effect happens with parents.
- **Honesty-** When you tell a player what you like about her or his effort or performance, be specific and support skill development in a positive way.
- **Responsibility-** Give players responsibility such as helping with equipment.
- **Restraint-** Focus on good sportsmanship. Stay calm when players make mistakes.

SOCIAL COMPETENCIES

- **Planning and decision making-** Be organized and ready for practices and games. Understand that kids are there for different reasons and motivations and have different skills (athletic, social, emotional, leadership.)
- **Interpersonal competence-** Model for athletes the need to encourage players as they improve their skills.
- **Cultural competence-** Make sure players who are new to the sport understand its rules and strategies.
- **Resistance skills -** Support youth in feeling valued. Remember that youth involved in positive organized activities are much less likely to be involved in risky behaviors. Recognize that not all youth sports build protective factors.
- **Peaceful conflict resolution-** Demonstrate how to peacefully resolve conflicts during games. Set the standard for absolutely no swearing.

POSITIVE IDENTITY

- **Personal power-** Involve players in making decisions by asking them for input and inviting their questions.
- **Self-Esteem-** Help players develop confidence & self-esteem by greeting them individually when they arrive. Build foundation and confidence in your players in why they are doing something and what they are doing.
- **Sense of purpose-** Praise players for the important role they play in the team (i.e., team leader, biggest fan) or for particular skill they have mastered.
- **Positive view of personal future-** Remember that you are developing good human beings first, then developing athletes second.

* Adapted by Healthy Lamoille Valley from "40 developmental assets and tips for being a great coach and role model" adapted by Prevention First from a document created by the Search Institute - www.search-institute.org