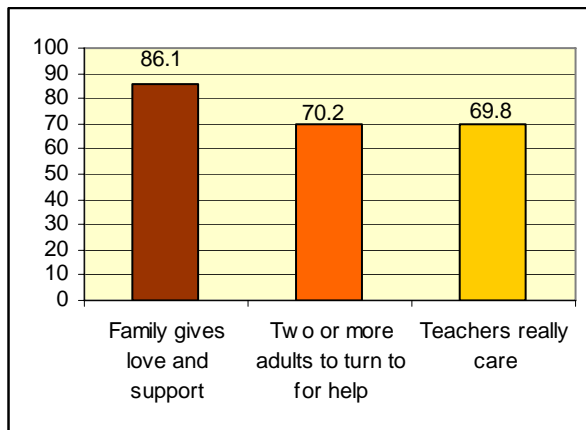


LOVE AND SUPPORT = HEALTHIER KIDS

The following statistics are from the Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS), an anonymous survey that was administered to Pulaski Community School District students in grades 6-12 in spring, 2006. The YRBS focuses on health-risk behaviors that result in the most significant mortality, morbidity, and social problems during both adolescences and adulthood. This data was self-reported by students in our district. No one from our district saw any of the completed surveys and no individual class or student was ever identified in a report. The completed survey summary only reported information at the grade level or school level.



86.1% PCMS students agree their family loves them and gives them help and support when they need it.

70.2% PCMS students feel they have 2 or more adults besides their parents they feel comfortable seeking help from for an important issue affecting their life.

69.8% PCMS students agree their teachers really care about them and give them a lot of encouragement.

The “Forty Developmental Assets” were developed by Search Institute in Minneapolis, MN (www.search-institute.org/assets/)* and have been identified as essential building blocks that kids need to grow up as caring, healthy and responsible adults. ALL adults - parents, grandparents and other relatives, school staff, community members, church, civic and business persons - can all help to build these powerful, protective assets in youth. We can do this by nurturing relationships with them, providing safe and caring environments for them to grow and engaging them in programs and activities that enhance their development. By building relationships, we provide youth with opportunities to build skills and values that will help them be resilient in the face of adversity and carry them through their lives. Some examples of things adults can do are:

- **Focus on their strengths.** Help youth to build upon the positives in their lives. Help them to develop an “I can succeed” attitude.
- **Identify positive connections they have** with peers and adults, programs, activities, clubs and organizations. Positive bonds foster resiliency.
- **Be firm but caring.** Children and teens need boundaries. Set them with their safety and growth in mind. Include them in the setting of these boundaries. Help them understand why they are there.
- **Set high expectations of behavior and performance.** Children will generally become what we expect. If we expect mediocrity, that’s what we will get. Expectations alone however are not enough. We need to make sure we give them the tools to reach the expectations.
- **Help them find opportunities to hone in on their talents or passions.** Youth who feel a sense of value will build a self-concept that is healthy and contributing. This value leads to self-sufficiency.
- **Help to find creative ways to engage them in continuous learning.**
- **Ask yourself, .How do I show support** for the youth I interact with? Ask them, .Who supports you emotionally?
- **Model the positive behavior you want to receive.** That means treating others with respect, dignity, being responsible, empathetic, and having the ability to listen attentively with your head and your heart.
- **Hold them accountable for unacceptable behavior.** Teach them why it is not acceptable and alternative behaviors that are more beneficial.
- **Don’t make them feel small or correct them in front of others.** They will take much more notice if you talk quietly to them in private.

- **Don't forget that children and teens cannot always explain themselves as well as we'd like.** Teach them how to express their feelings and thoughts.
- **Be consistent.** When mixed messages are sent children and teens will lose faith and respect in you.
- **Listen when they have questions.** Listening acknowledges their existence and value. Be honest if you do not know the answer. Teens especially can see very quickly when adults are making up the answers. Suggest that you will find out the answer and get back to them.
- **Don't forget to follow through.** If you suggested you would check on something, do it and get back to them. This builds trust and teaches them we care.
- **Teach them skills to resolve conflicts maturely.** Help them work through the process of thinking before acting.
- **Help them set goals** - short and long term. Guide them through the process of action steps needed to reach their goals.

*To download a copy of the 40 assets please go to Search Institute's website.

Taken from the Healthy Communities/Healthy Youth Berks County Initiative at the United Way of Berks County. Tips above are from information by Search Institute's Developmental Asset Framework (Minneapolis: www.search-institute.org) and Resiliency in Action by Nan Henderson, 1999 (www.resiliency.com) Resiliency in Action, Inc.