



CARING KIDS CARING SCHOOLS

**PROJECT
CORNERSTONE**
A YMCA of Silicon Valley Initiative

YMCA Project Cornerstone 2022-2023 Menu of Programs and Services

YMCA Project Cornerstone understands that the growth and development of youth is largely influenced by their families and communities, including schools. Our approach is to engage parents, school staff, and the broader community with programs and services which foster the acquisition of social and emotional skills, attitudes, and behaviors in youth (Developmental Assets) and the establishment of healthy Developmental Relationships between adults and youth. Independent research and program survey results have shown that our programs support the creation and/or improvement of caring school climates and youth who feel valued, respected, and known. Note that content and delivery for all programs and services adhere to current federal, state, county, and school district health and safety guidelines. Content may be modified and delivery may include in person, online, or a combination of both, as agreed upon by the school partner and Project Cornerstone.

Engaging Staff as Asset Builders

Staff Development:

- Introduction to Asset Building
- Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) and Asset Building
- Overview of Parent Engagement Programs in the Classroom
- Building Assets and Relationships on the Playground (Yard Supervision) (ES)
- The Dot Activity: Staff & Student Relationships
- Bridging Project Cornerstone to Middle School

In-Classroom Program:

- Middle School SEL Curriculum

Consultation:

- Map your existing programs to the Developmental Assets
- Purposefully Engaged Parents: Utilizing caring adults to empower youth
- School-specific training designed with Principal

Engaging Parents/ Volunteers as Asset Builders

Parent Workshops:

- Single-session workshops on a variety of topics
- 6-session workshop series: Take It Personally interactive study group to learn, share, and practice

School Volunteer Opportunities:

- Preschool/Transitional Kindergarten (PK / TK)
- Asset Building Champions (ABC) (ES)
- Los Dichos (ES)
- FUNvisors (ES)
- Expect Respect Clubs Support (Grades 4-8)
- School Clubs
- Middle School SEL Curriculum
- Middle School Activities and Clubs

ES: Elementary School Only

MS: Middle School Only

Engaging Students as Asset Builders

Student Opportunities:

- Expect Respect Workshop and Club (Grades 4-8)
- Middle School Activities and Clubs



Project Cornerstone serves schools and communities from Redwood City to Gilroy. Our work is supported through individual gifts, foundation and corporate grants, and contracts with schools and organizations. Schools outside of our service area are welcome to contact us about costs of our services. For more information, contact Ziem Nguyen Neubert, Executive Director, at ziem@projectcornerstone.org.

Engaging Staff as Asset Builders

All school staff – teachers, administrators, and counselors, as well as classified staff, such as yard supervisors, coaches, bus drivers, custodians, clerical support staff, librarians, cafeteria staff – have the power to build Developmental Assets in children and youth. Asset building is a natural fit for any adult in the field of education. Project Cornerstone’s training with all school staff focuses on specific ways in which they have the opportunity to build assets with their students every day.

- 1. Introduction to Asset Building** – This presentation introduces participants to Search Institute’s Developmental Assets Framework and research. The power of assets to prevent children and youth from engaging in risky behavior, as well as the promotion of thriving behaviors, is detailed, in addition to showing the impact on academic achievement and social/emotional health. The presentation also shares how Project Cornerstone utilizes the Developmental Assets model in all of its programs and services to support the needs of parents and families in this.
- 2. Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) and Asset Building** – This presentation explores the Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL) core competencies of Social and Emotional Learning and how they align with Developmental Assets/ Developmental Relationships and other models, such as Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) within the Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) framework.
- 3. Overview of Parent Engagement Programs in the Classroom** – This informational training focuses on the Project Cornerstone parent engagement programs (Preschool/Transitional Kindergarten, ABC, Los Dichos, Middle School SEL) that involve parent volunteers leading monthly scripted lessons in the classroom.
- 4. Building Assets and Relationships on the Playground** – Unsupervised time on an elementary school playground is “primetime” for negative behaviors to surface between students. Whether serious peer abuse/bullying behavior between students or a single student behaving in inappropriate ways, it is the leading time in any school day for discipline problems to erupt. This training gives yard duty and parent volunteers new strategies to approach this period in the day from an asset-building perspective rather than the more traditional “yard police.” The training is appropriate for any adult with the responsibility of supervising students during their recess time.
- 5. The Dot Activity: Staff & Student Relationships** – This activity involves all school staff and focuses on the importance of caring relationships between teachers and other adults on campus with all students. Ideal time of year to do this activity is between mid-October and end of February. The focus of the activity is the positive relationship levels between staff and students.
- 6. Bridging Project Cornerstone to Middle School (MS)** – Students who come from Project Cornerstone ABC or Los Dichos elementary schools have a lot to offer in middle schools. This is an overview of the Project Cornerstone common language, tool kit, and culture that was created. Staff will explore options of next steps for students in middle school by asking, How do we engage students and continue their development of social and emotional learning as they transition into this next phase?



Engaging Parents/Volunteers as Asset Builders

PARENT WORKSHOPS

All parents, adults, and volunteers can benefit from the educational workshops Project Cornerstone offers to school partners. They can be presented for a general “parent education” program or for a specific group such as a PTA, ELAC, or a Principal Coffee. Note: All parent trainings and workshops are available in English, Spanish, and Vietnamese. A typical workshop session is 1.5 hours and the duration can be adjusted. (See [Building Strong Families Menu of Parent Workshops](#) for current offerings and descriptions.)

- Single-session workshops: These one-time, interactive workshops use the Developmental Assets and Developmental Relationships frameworks where participants will explore strategies and resources to be successful in a variety of topics.
- 6-session Project Cornerstone for Parents: Take It Personally Parent Study Group: Parents/adults learn about the eight categories of Developmental Assets, examine and reflect upon their opportunities to build Assets with children and youth, as well as develop new skills to be more intentional Asset builders with all children. By the end of the study group, participants will take their role as Asset builders more personally as they begin to act on their new knowledge. This is a six-week series and can be scheduled at school sites, central district office sites, or YMCA branches. Each weekly session is 1.5 hours, with 9 hours total.

SCHOOL VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

1. **Preschool/Transitional Kindergarten (PK/TK)** – The PK/TK program has been developed to expose parents, caregivers, teachers, and students to the Developmental Assets model for early childhood. This program features reading early childhood literature to provide students with a set of skills and attitudes that promote a strong desire to learn. Caring adults such as teachers, parents, and caregivers will also build preschoolers’ social, emotional, and cognitive skills during the reading, discussion, and participation in activities. The ABC Preschool/TK program’s lesson plans, books, and trainings are available in English and Spanish.
2. **Asset Building Champions (ABC)** – Parents who volunteer for the ABC program read children’s books and lead classroom activities and discussions on a monthly basis. The curriculum is aligned to the CASEL SEL framework and the Developmental Assets and Developmental Relationships. It teaches students important life skills such as decision making, peaceful conflict resolution, and interpersonal skills, covering all areas of peer abuse and giving students the skills to avoid being the target of bullying behavior from other students. In addition to providing meaningful opportunities for parent engagement and for students to interact with caring adults, the ABC program helps create a common language for behavioral expectations throughout the school. (ES)
3. **Los Dichos** – Los Dichos is a Spanish-language program that opens new doors for Spanish-speaking parents to support not only their children’s education and development, but that of all children in their community. Each month, Los Dichos volunteers read specially selected bilingual books in the classroom and lead activities and discussions about topics including Latino heritage, tolerance, family pride, peaceful conflict resolution, and other important values. Students develop a sense of positive cultural identity and a greater sense of cultural competence and respect for one another is achieved. (ES)
4. **FUNvisors** – This program brings caring adults on campus during recess time to engage youth in positive ways. Parents volunteer on a consistent basis during lunch recess and provide activities such as sports, games, arts and crafts, and team building. This is an opportunity to promote positive peer interactions and increase UPstander actions during recess.
5. **Expect Respect Club** – After completion of the initial 3-hour Expect Respect Workshop led by Project Cornerstone staff, parent volunteers may be invited to assist school staff to facilitate on-going Expect Respect Club meetings to help students implement their action plan and/or to volunteer once the school activities or clubs are set up.
6. **School Clubs** – Project Cornerstone offers ongoing support for parent volunteers interested in empowering youth to form a club of any kind that meets the needs of your school community. Club facilitators create a caring space that empowers youth to discover their strengths, develop their talents and interests, and build relationships. Examples include: Book Club, Club 41, and Zen Lounge. For club descriptions see [Middle School Activities and Clubs](#).
7. **Middle School SEL Curriculum** – The Middle School SEL (Social and Emotional Learning) Curriculum is a parent and/or staff engagement program designed for 6th, 7th, and 8th graders. Volunteers and/or staff are trained in CASEL’s 5 core competencies of SEL and the Developmental Assets and Developmental Relationships model for positive youth development. Facilitators lead a lesson using a prepared slide deck with embedded videos, engaging student activities, and discussions in classrooms each month. The program’s goal is to help school communities achieve the following:
 - Help students explore relevant Social and Emotional Learning topics in a safe and caring environment and develop skills to handle age-specific issues.
 - Enhance the relationship between staff and students through the Social and Emotional Learning topics and discussions.
 - Contribute to a positive school climate where every student feels valued and supported to achieve and thrive.
 - Continue asset building language for those students who had Project Cornerstone’s ABC (Asset Building Champions) or Los Dichos programs in their previous elementary schools.

STUDENT OPPORTUNITIES

- 1. Expect Respect Workshop and Club** – To empower students to combat bullying and peer abuse, Project Cornerstone developed the Expect Respect workshop. Expect Respect helps students from different social groups work together to find common ground and create a “new normal” for their school where all students are accepted and supported by their peers. This diverse team of students attends a half-day workshop where they learn about bullying’s serious consequences, how to identify bullying behavior, and how to effectively be UPstanders. Then, the team identifies the kinds of bullying that take place at their school and creates an action plan to stop bullying and improve the overall school climate.

After the workshop, students meet twice a month as the Expect Respect Club with an advisor who is a school staff member. Schools are encouraged to invite other students to join the club after the initial workshop as it should be open to all students and not seen as an exclusive group or club. Parents are also encouraged to help facilitate the club. The primary task of the Expect Respect Club is to implement the action plan developed at the workshop and to provide school-wide student leadership in the promotion of respectful treatment of peers and the reduction of bullying. Follow-up support is provided to the school team, if needed, to help ensure the success of their action plan. An Expect Respect Club Advisor Manual is available for all school staff working with the student club.

The Expect Respect workshop is aligned with the Olweus research model, with the recommendations of the American Academy of Pediatrics and the American Academy of Family Physicians for effective bullying prevention programs. Expect Respect is aligned with and reinforces the curriculum for the ABC program so that students learn and apply the same vocabulary and concepts. The ABC program is not a requirement to hold a successful Expect Respect workshop at your school.

- 2. Middle School Activities and Clubs** – Supported by parent volunteers, students are empowered to form a club of any kind that meets the needs of their school community. Caring spaces are created for youth to discover their strengths, develop their talents, and get to know peers and caring adults on campus. Examples include: Book Club, Club 41, and Kindness Club. For club descriptions see [Middle School Activities and Clubs](#).

