



CARING KIDS CARING SCHOOLS CARING COMMUNITIES

YMCA Project Cornerstone Menu of Programs and Services

Project Cornerstone engages students, parents, school staff, and the broader community with programs and services that foster social and emotional skills, and cultivate the attitudes, behaviors, and experiences needed for youth to thrive.

Independent research and program surveys show that Project Cornerstone supports the creation of caring school climates where youth feel valued, respected, and known.

Implementing Project Cornerstone programs leads to positive outcomes such as increased well-being, healthier relationships, greater school engagement, academic success, and lifelong skills.



ENGAGING STUDENTS

- Preschool
- TK/Kindergarten
- ABC (Elementary School)
- Los Dichos (Elementary School)
- Middle School SEL
- Expect Respect (Grades 4-8)
- Student Leadership Council (Grades 9-12)
- Asset of the Month Toolkit
- Summer Fun



ENGAGING PARENTS AND COMMUNITY MEMBERS

- Volunteer Facilitator/Reader for Preschool, TK/Kindergarten, ABC, Los Dichos, or Middle School SEL
- Workshops for Parents and Community Members
 - Single Sessions
 - Take it Personally (TIP)
- Asset of the Month Toolkit



ENGAGING STAFF

- Consultation, Collaboration, and Planning
- Overview of Programs and Services
- Staff Professional Development Trainings

Project Cornerstone partners with schools, community organizations, and businesses. For more information, contact Debbi Headley, School Partnerships Director, at debbi@projectcornerstone.org.

ENGAGING STUDENTS

School Programs

Project Cornerstone's school programs serve as MTSS Tier 1 support for all students, fostering a shared language and skill set across students, staff, and families. Our programs engage parents and community members as classroom facilitators, aligning with LCAP goals for parent engagement. Volunteers and school staff receive training to confidently lead lessons that build social-emotional skills and a sense of belonging and connection for all students. Each lesson includes a parent/guardian newsletter to extend the learning from school to home, ensuring that parents/guardians understand and can support the skills, tools, and concepts being taught to their students.

Research-Based

Project Cornerstone programs align with the Search Institute's Developmental Assets and Developmental Relationships frameworks and CASEL's 5 Core Competencies of Social Emotional Learning (SEL).

Diversity & Inclusion

Project Cornerstone makes a concerted effort to select highly regarded works of literature for the preschool through elementary programs that reflect the stories and experiences of a diverse demographic of students so that youth can see themselves represented in the books. Selected books magnify the voices of diverse authors and illustrators from marginalized and underrepresented communities.

"I have learned from YMCA Project Cornerstone ABC that if you are an UPstander, you can help change the world little by little."

– Elementary School Student

"I found the MS SEL program to be incredibly helpful. I learned how to manage my emotions, identify my values, and cope with stress."

– Middle School Student

Programs

Preschool

A bilingual program (English/Spanish) for 3-year-olds, using carefully selected children's books to teach social-emotional skills and foster a love for literature.

TK/Kindergarten

A 2-year bilingual program (English/Spanish) offering books and activities that build cognitive, social, and emotional skills for 4- and 5-year-olds.

Asset Building Champions (ABC)

A 3-year program focusing on empathy, inclusion, and becoming UPstanders. Students learn life skills like managing emotions, conflict resolution, and celebrating differences through specially selected children's books and Project Cornerstone lesson plans differentiated by grade level for elementary-age students.

Los Dichos

A 3-year bilingual (English and Spanish) program centered on positive cultural identity, with activities that celebrate Latino heritage and teach important social skills using specially selected bilingual children's books and Project Cornerstone lesson plans. Los Dichos provides a unique opportunity for Spanish-speaking parents to engage in their children's education and development.

Middle School SEL

A 3-year program for grades 6-8, offering modules on topics like stress management, conflict resolution, digital citizenship, and navigating friendships. The curriculum includes slide decks embedded with engaging student activities, a high-interest video clip, and opportunities for peer discussion. A pre-recorded lesson is also available for flexibility in facilitation. Schools determine when the modules are taught (e.g., in home room, advisory classes, or during a course such as ELA or PE).

Expect Respect

A leadership program for grades 4-8, focused on empowering students to create an inclusive school community by discussing bullying prevention, empathy, and leadership skills. A Project Cornerstone staff member leads an interactive 3-hour workshop with 20-30 selected students who represent the school population. Students develop an action plan to implement positive changes at their school with the support of a school advisor.

Additional Student Engagement Opportunities

Student Leadership Council (SLC)

A selected group of high school students volunteer as members of the SLC. Students meet regularly with Project Cornerstone and Board Committee members to provide youth voice and participate in projects to enhance and support Project Cornerstone's programs and services while gaining leadership skills.

Asset of the Month Toolkit

This toolkit highlights 12 Developmental Assets, providing monthly editable posters and handouts in English and Spanish. Each handout includes asset descriptions, discussion topics, and activities for engaging youth and is designed for use by schools, after-school programs, community organizations, and families.

Summer Fun

During the summer, Project Cornerstone offers lessons and videos on its website for continued student and family engagement. ABC and Los Dichos lessons include books, daily activities, and family-oriented projects. Middle school lessons feature video content, reflection questions, and a challenge. Conversation starters, focused on a Developmental Asset, provide adults with questions and/or activities to do with youth.



ENGAGING PARENTS AND COMMUNITY MEMBERS

School Volunteer Opportunities

Project Cornerstone invites parents and community members to become trained volunteers, playing a key role in fostering positive school environments and supporting youth development. Volunteers can engage in the Preschool, TK/Kindergarten, ABC, Los Dichos, and Middle School SEL programs, helping students feel valued and respected.

"Being a volunteer has transformed me into a better individual and parent."

- Parent Volunteer

Workshops for Parents and Community Members

Single-session Workshops

These interactive sessions provide tools for building healthy relationships and improving communication with youth. Workshops are available in English, Spanish, and Vietnamese and can be scheduled in-person or virtually. [See current workshop offerings here.](#)

Take it Personally (TIP)

A 6-week workshop series where parents and adults learn about the eight categories of Developmental Assets, reflect on their parenting, and develop skills to support youth. Topics include building a web of support, expressing care, setting/upholding boundaries, and more. Each session is 1.5 hours, available at school sites, district offices, or YMCA branches.

Additional Opportunities for Parents and Community Members

Asset of the Month Toolkit

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ENGAGING STAFF

Professional Development and Training

All school staff play a crucial role in building assets and relationships with students and one another. Project Cornerstone offers targeted training to help staff seize opportunities to learn and grow with their colleagues to create meaningful connections and safe, caring environments. Professional development options include:

Building Assets and Relationships on the Playground

Designed for any adult responsible for supervising students during recess, including yard duty staff and parent volunteers. This training offers strategies to manage recess time through an asset-building approach, focusing on reducing negative behaviors.

Classroom Management

Provides teachers with asset-based strategies for classroom management, promoting equity, amplifying diverse voices, and maintaining high standards with support and care.

The Dot Activity: Staff & Student Relationships

Guides staff in an interactive activity to identify which students have positive relationships with caring adults on campus and which students need additional support, leading to action plans to connect with all students.

Inclusion

Fosters a more inclusive school community by exploring equity and inclusion in teaching practices, including discussions on identity, colorblindness vs. seeing color, and creating a culture of zero indifference.

Introduction to Asset Building

Provides an overview of the Search Institute's Developmental Assets framework, illustrating how asset-building promotes well-being, social-emotional skills, and academic success.

Overview of Programs and Services

Provides a comprehensive overview of Project Cornerstone's offerings for students, parents, and staff.

Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) and Asset Building

Explores the alignment between CASEL's SEL core competencies and the Developmental Assets, and how they integrate with PBIS and MTSS frameworks.

Who Takes Care of Us and

How Do We Take Care of Each Other?

Focuses on self-care, stress management, and peer support for educators, aimed at fostering a healthier work environment and promoting staff well-being.

Custom Designed Staff Professional Development

Project Cornerstone staff collaborates with school administration to design, develop, and implement the content for a staff PD that meets the specific needs of a school staff. A custom designed staff PD requires an additional fee.

