

America's Promise-The Alliance for Youth

The Five Promises

www.americaspromise.org

The Five Promises are those developmental resources that young people need for success in life. Children who receive at least four of the Five Promises are much more likely than those who experience only one or zero Promises to succeed academically, socially and civically. They are more likely to avoid violence, contribute to their communities and achieve high grades in school. Receiving at least four of the Five Promises also appears to mitigate gaps across racial and economic boundaries. To experience the full power of the Promises, young people must experience these critical supports throughout their lives-in their families, at schools and out in their communities.

Promise 1- Caring Adults:

Caring adults are the centerpieces of children's development. They serve as guides, caretakers and advisers, who give positive and productive guidance throughout their development.

Parents come first. But children and youth also need other caring adults in all aspects of their lives: in their schools, neighborhoods, activities and communities. They need a network of caring and nurturing relationships with adults among their extended families, neighbors, teachers and coaches. And by all accounts, this positive influence in their lives proves to be substantially beneficial.

Promise 2- Safe Places:

To develop intellectually and emotionally, young people need physical and psychological safety at home, at school and in the community. Without such "safe places" – environments that support and encourage inquiry, exploration, and play without fear of harm – children aren't able to get support, form positive relationships and concentrate on school.

Promise 3- A Healthy Start:

Children grow and learn better when they are born healthy and practice healthy habits throughout childhood, including proper nutrition and exercise, and have access to high quality learning opportunities. Healthy and well-nourished children are more able to develop their minds and bodies as they should, and they are far more capable of concentrating, learning and thriving throughout their school years.

Promise 4- An Effective Education:

Our increasingly knowledge-driven world demands people who have the education and skills to thrive in a competitive marketplace, and to understand the increasingly complex world in which they live. That means that in order to compete and succeed, all young people will need an effective education that prepares them for work and life.

Promise 5- Opportunities to Help Others:

Through service to others and community, young Americans develop the character and competence they need to be helpful, hopeful and civically engaged all their lives, regardless of their own life circumstances. The chance to give back teaches young people the value of service to others, the meaning of community, and the self-respect that comes from knowing that one has a contribution to make in the world.

When paired with learning, serving creates a stronger commitment to school and contributes to academic achievement. Service as a form of experiential education connects the classroom to the real world and engages students in understanding contexts in which they live, learn, worship and play.