



## Positive Relationship with a Caring Adult

The underlying premise for this element is that youth will develop caring and trusting relationships. These relationships need to begin in infancy with parents and caregivers and continue into adolescence with teachers, youth group leaders, and adults in the community. A caring adult, whether a supporter, friend, advisor, or neighbor acts as a mentor and guide. Groups with a caring relationship demonstrate warmth, connectedness, good communication, support and guidance for youth.

### In our youth group.....

- Are volunteers sensitive to members' diversity?
- Do adult leaders work competently with small groups?
- Do leaders actively participate in a variety of group activities with youth?
- Do youth and adults participate equally in planning, implementing and evaluating group activities?
- Is time provided for youth and adults to meet and learn about each other?
- Are opportunities provided for youth to continue friendships with other youth and adults?
- Are adults willing to share experiences, views, values and feelings?

### Some practices your group might want to implement to help develop caring relationships:

- Use nametags so youth can get to know each other on a first name basis and so they can get to know the names of the adults as well.
- Adults and youth listen and concentrate when anyone talks.
- Encourage youth and adults to learn and participate as teams—rotate the team membership with various projects.
- Adults and youth interact and sit together at meetings.
- Celebrate and have fun together in addition to taking care of business.
- Take the time to learn about each youth's cultural background.
- Invite a parent to be a guest speaker at one of your group's gatherings.
- Remember each member's birthday with a card.
- Plan a special meeting or have an activity or ball game just for fun!

**Why help build positive relationships?** Research also tells us youth are directly impacted by relationships with caring adults. When young people feel adults in their lives care about them, they feel more connected to their community and relationships between generations are stronger and more meaningful. Communities will benefit from more engaged, connected youth.