

Children Need Healthy, Positive Role Models

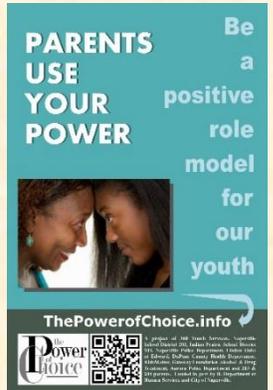
“Children learn more from what you *are* than what you teach.”

-W.E.B DuBois

Your children are watching--and learning--from your behavior. Researchers find that much of the learning that occurs during development is acquired through observation and imitation. While children do look to the media for role models, parents are still the most influential figures in their children's lives.

Role modeling can be an extremely effective parenting tool. It's very important to give our kids a healthy role model to emulate, because they WILL copy our habits—the good and as well as the bad.

Each and every day, parents build a legacy for kids to inherit. Choose to be a parent who models individual and family traits worth believing in and worth building upon. Remember that your child's friends also view you as a role model. You can have an incredible influence on all the youth in your life.



Parenting Power Tips for Role Models

Model character and health behaviors:

- Challenge yourself to identify the positive things you model—qualities like happiness, consideration, self-respect, patience, generosity, self-discipline, diligence, kindness, bravery and compassion.
- Model healthy behaviors like feeding your body with wholesome and nourishing food, expanding your mind with enlightening reading, exercising for physical and mental health, speaking well about yourself and others and enjoying life with friends and family.
- Provide clear standards of acceptable behavior. Model respect and tolerance in how you treat others. *Your* respect for the law and those in authority will be mirrored by your children.
- Share more of the choices and decision-making inherent in your own life to offer as examples. By displaying moral and ethical behavior, you can also impart values which can counter some of the negative influences children may receive from their peers or the media. The responsibility of being a role model can also encourage parents to better themselves.
- Parents serve as role models through the examples they set with their attitude and behavior within the family and in the outside world.
- Celebrations of life events are an integral of families. Children look to their parents to learn appropriate and healthy ways to celebrate those important moments without focusing on alcohol.
- Credible adults inspire kids' confidence and admiration. Hypocrisy disillusion children and sends them looking for others to follow.

Model coping skills:

- We live in a stressful world. Children look to their parents to learn how to manage that stress. Are they seeing healthy stress management that doesn't include the use of substances or unhealthy behaviors?
- Role models are human, they make mistakes. Parents who acknowledge their mistakes, learn from them and strive to better themselves can serve as powerful influences for children's emotional growth.
- Consequences are a natural part of life. All actions and behaviors have consequences. Sometimes, those consequences are unpleasant, but necessary. Parents can model appropriate responses to consequences they face in their lives. This will show children that they need to take responsibility and face the consequences of *their* behavior.
- Everyone needs support at some point in their lives...no one can do it alone. Your children need to see you asking for—and accepting-- help in those situations.

Model appropriate communication skills:

- Communicate with your children and stay active in their lives. Take the time to listen and share their concerns to help them feel both loved and respected.
- Having these important talks is all about love! You care deeply about your children and you are letting them know that you take your role as a parent seriously. Your goal is to do what you can to keep them safe and on a healthy path for today and for a future with open options.

Watch For Mom's Newsletter: Family Activities that Make Memories

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