



PARENTS USE YOUR POWER

February 2015

Modeling Healthy Behaviors

We know the significance of *talking* to our children about important issues like alcohol and drug use, but remember the phrase “*actions speak louder than words*”? Your children are watching--and learning--from your actions as well as from your words.

Researchers find that much of the learning that occurs during development is acquired through *observation* and *imitation*. Parents know that when their children are young, they learn basic skills like walking and talking by watching those around them. As those children enter adolescence, they begin to learn important life skills like problem solving, stress management and decision making. They will learn those skills by *observing* and *imitating* adult role models. While young people sometimes look to the media for role models, parents are still the most influential figures in their children’s lives.

Modeling healthy life skills is an extremely effective parenting tool. It takes strong character to give our kids a good role model to copy.

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Support in
raising
healthy
drug-free
teens



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A project of 360 Youth Services, Naperville School District #203, Indian Prairie School District #204, Naperville Police Department, Junes Dicks at Edward-DePage County Health Department, KidsMatter, Gateway Foundation, Alcohol and Drug Treatment, Aurora Police Department and District #203 & 204 parents. Funded in part by IL Department of Human Services.

PowerTalk Activity for Families

Choosing healthy role models can help adolescents build resilience. Use this month’s activity “Family Chat” to discuss characteristics of a positive role model.

NEXT MONTH:

Who are YOUR role models?



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Parenting Power Tips for Positive Role Models:

- Identify **positive qualities** to model, 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.
- Model **decision-making** in your own life. By displaying moral and ethical behavior, parents 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.
- Demonstrate **attitudes and behaviors** within the family and in the outside world that reflect your values. Parents who show a willingness to interact with others and who focus on the richness of life that results from diversity, can help their children learn to appreciate and respect cultural differences. Model respect and tolerance, to provide clear standards of acceptable behavior.
- Everyone needs **support** at some point in their lives...no one can do it alone. Your children need to **see you asking for help** in those situations.
- Role models are human, they make mistakes. Those who **admit their mistakes** learn from them can better themselves and 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.
- Celebrations of life events are integral to all families. Children look to their parents to learn **appropriate and healthy ways to celebrate** those important moments.
- Show them how to take the time to **listen and share concerns** to help them feel both loved and respected.
- **Credible** adults inspire kids’ confidence and admiration. Hypocrisy disillusion children and sends them looking for others to follow.
- 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**.



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Kim Russell