

The Power of Being a Positive Role Model

“Children learn more from what you *are* than what you teach.” -W.E.B. DuBois

Your teen is watching--and learning--from your behavior. Researchers find that much of the learning that occurs during development is acquired through observation and imitation. While teens 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 teens a healthy role model to emulate, because they WILL copy our habits—the good as well as the bad.

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

PARENTS
USE
YOUR
POWER

Be
a
positive
role
model
for
our
youth



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A project of 360 Youth Services, Naperville School District 203, Indian Prairie School District 204, Naperville Police Department, Linden Oaks at Edward, DuPage County Health Department, Gateway Foundation Drug and Alcohol Treatment, KidsMatter, Aurora Police Department and District 203 & 204 parents. Funded in part by the Department of Human Services and the City of Naperville.

Parenting Power Tips for Healthy 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 teen.
- 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 teens 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. Teens look to their parents to learn appropriate and healthy ways to celebrate those important moments without focusing on alcohol.

Model coping skills:

- 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 teens 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 teen needs to see you asking for—and accepting—help in those situations.
- We live in a stressful world. Teens 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.

Model appropriate communication skills:

- Communicate with your teen 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 teen 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.
- Credible adults inspire teens' confidence and admiration. Hypocrisy disillusion teens and sends them looking for others to follow.

Watch for May's newsletter:
Celebrating life milestones
with a healthy approach



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