

Fast Facts: Role-Modeling

A role model is a person who serves as an example by influencing others. For many children, the most important role models are their parents and caregivers. Children look up to a variety of role models to help shape how they behave in school, relationships or when making difficult decisions. Children also look up to other relatives, teachers and peers as well as celebrities, such as athletes or entertainers.

Negative role models, however, may influence children. Sometimes widely admired public figures can make poor personal choices. Young children may assume that the behaviors of negative role models are typical, safe and acceptable. Parents and caregivers can intervene by emphasizing that role models who embrace inappropriate behavior are not acceptable.

What can I do?



- Ask your child to identify what qualities he admires in his role model
- Give examples of people in your community who you feel have positive qualities and are a good influence on others
- Talk about people you look up to for guidance and inspiration

What do I say about role models who have made mistakes?

- Remind your child that all people have good and bad qualities and that anyone can make a mistake. Explain that it is important to apologize and to learn from our mistakes.
- Ask your child what he thinks of the role model's behavior and what he would have done differently in the situation.
- Give example of more positive and healthy ways to handle the situation.
- Encourage your child to become involved in activities that reflect your values, such as religious programs, athletics, after school programs, clubs and volunteering.
- Remind your child that he or she does not have to do everything that the role model does. Your child can copy what he or she likes but still be him or herself.
- Give examples of people in your community who you feel have positive qualities and are a good influence on others.

Modeling Healthy Behavior

"You can preach and you can preach, you can tell and you can tell, but **we all learn primarily by example**. There is something about what we're not intending that seeps through much stronger than what we are intending." My father told me not to smoke, and then he stole my cigarettes and smoked them himself: I was a smoker for nearly 25 years." - Audrey Kindred

I need to stand back and observe myself in the moment, asking myself, "What am I modeling?"



Instead of saying:

Try this:

Stress

"I had a tough day. I need a drink."

"I had a tough day. I think I'll talk a walk to relax."

White Lies

"I can't attend, I'll be out of town."

"It's a busy time for me so I can't make it."

Anger Management

"@#\$\$%^&*!!"

"I need five minutes to cool off and then let's talk about this."

Conflict Resolution

"I'm going to give x a piece of my mind."

"I disagree with x but will try to hear them out and see their side of it."

Competitiveness

"Did you win your game today?"

"You had a game today...was it a good game? Did you have fun?"