

Parents as Role Models



Parents tend to be the strongest role models in their child's life and this can be a strong parenting asset. Imagine all of the wonderful things you want your child to be, for example, kind, respectful, and honest. If you choose to model those traits, your child is likely to follow suit. As a role model it is important to recognize that you have a range of emotions and responses. It is not realistic to expect you can always model happy, calm behaviour. There are upsetting moments in life that can make you feel sad, frustrated or angry. However, if your child sees that you are angry, for example, but able to handle it appropriately, they are more likely to handle their own anger appropriately too. A similar outcome can be expected with respect to alcohol. If your child sees that you choose to celebrate special occasions with or without alcohol – they learn something. If alcohol is used, it is critical to model responsible drinking. This is not a moral

judgement about choosing or not choosing to drink alcohol, but an observation that what a child sees and experiences is more likely what they will choose for themselves.

Communicate - Talk to your teen about the choices you make to be a good role model. Ask them what they think is important in a role model, and why? Find ways to talk about the topic of role modeling when out with them. For example, if their soccer coach is supportive and encouraging, mention it and ask them what they think. Alternately, if an adult is behaving inappropriately, such as a parent booing at a sport event, talk about this too.

Provide opportunities - Find opportunities for your teen to act as a role model for younger children. Ask if your teen's school has such opportunities and/or seek them out in your community.

Be aware of other influences - Know your teen's friends and their friends' parents. Be aware of what is being modeled in the homes that your teen is visiting. Help your teen try to make sense of the lifestyles they see in advertising and on TV shows.

Learn from mistakes - Everybody makes mistakes; it is part of being human. If you do make a mistake, such as losing your temper or over-drinking at a family function, it is possible to talk to your teen about this without burdening them with adult problems. You can apologize and explain that you made a mistake but that you are trying hard to change. The important thing is to reassure your teen that you love them and that adult problems are not their fault. When something goes wrong, use it as an opportunity to discuss different choices (e.g., What would they do differently next time? What did they learn from this? What do they think would happen if they tried it differently?).

The information above was compiled from the Alberta Health Services' Parent Information Series. For more information on role modeling and other topics for parents please visit <http://www.albertahealthservices.ca/2434.asp>

What's Bugging You?

Have you ever seen a bedbug, a cockroach, or a mouse? Most pests are looking for food, water and shelter. If we provide them what they need they will stick around. Some pests carry germs, others do not. Some will bite humans while others will not. Pest control begins with some basics:

- Try not to panic. Most pests are harmless.
- Get a positive identification. If you know what you have you can find out how to prevent the pests from becoming a problem.
- Clean. Many pests will hide in clutter. Get rid of items you do not need. Get items off the floor.
- Fix water leaks. Pests need water. Turn off taps, do not have standing water around and fix leaks.
- Food. Clean up food spills. Keep food in tight containers.
- Travel. Keep suitcases up off the floor and off the bed. Check for bugs prior to returning home. Launder items when you return home and keep the suitcases outside in the garage. If you have brought any pests home they won't be brought in.

If you are renting the landlord should be providing pest control. If you have questions about what is bugging you please contact Environmental Health or visit www.albertahealthservices.ca/eph.asp