

The Power of Positivity: How to be A Healthy Role Model for Kids

Jacklyn Eding, LMSW, CAADC-DP, Clinician

Research shows that just one trusted adult can have a profound effect on a child's life, influencing that young person toward positive growth, greater engagement in school and community activities, better overall health, and prevention of risky and threatening behaviors. In a world of increasing negativity, being a positive influence in a child or teen's life can feel challenging. Here are some tips to that can help you be that one adult for the kids in your life.

1. Practice Patience

- Remaining calm and understanding in challenging situations can provide youth with a sense of security and safety. Creating a space for listening, pausing, and reflecting allows for better understanding and an increase knowledge of a child's needs.

2. Provide Encouragement

- Positive praise and support are crucial in building resiliency. Offering sincere and genuine compliments, celebrating achievements, and helping kids set achievable goals, fosters a sense of independence and increased self-esteem.

3. Practice Emotional Regulation

- Kids learn how to regulate their own emotions through the adults around them. When interacting with youth and adolescents, it is important to model healthy ways to control intense emotions, remain calm, and practice healthy problem solving.

4. Spend Quality Time

- When fostering a positive relationship, it's important to spend dedicated and intentional time with the children and teens in your life. Meaningful interactions allow for youth to feel heard, valued and understood, and builds a deeper connection. Consider screen-free ways to spend time together.

5. Support Their Likes & Interests

- Knowing, making an effort to understand, and supporting a child's interests encourages a sense of high self-esteem and accomplishment. It also helps kids feel valued and understood by the people in their lives.

6. Maintain a Positive Attitude

- Demonstrate optimism in times of struggle or challenges. Model for kids that setbacks can also be a time to grow and learn.

7. Provide Understanding

- Children who feel understood are more likely to be open and honest in their communication. They learn that their thoughts and opinions matter, and they feel more confident in expressing themselves.

8. Model Healthy Coping Skills

- Practice, demonstrate, and encourage healthy coping skills such as taking deep breaths when experiencing intense emotions. When you regularly utilize healthy coping skills, you can also prevent children from developing their own unhealthy coping mechanisms.

9. Model Healthy Conflict Resolution & Communication

- Encourage open discussions and utilize active listening. Show kids that they are worth hearing and that they are validated in their emotions. Manage conflicts with patience and control so that children can learn that disagreements are a normal part of life and do not have to lead to anger and resentment.

10. Show Up

- Most importantly, kids need to know you are there for them. They don't need you to be perfect, they need you to be there, be present, and be reliable.