

Healthy Role Modeling at Home

Overview

Having a healthy role model to look up to supports children in feeling more secure and confident in making responsible decisions. It's important to teach children how to make healthy and responsible decisions so that they are able to tackle all of life's curves with resiliency and self-autonomy. Serving as a healthy role model for your children also supports the development of long-lasting nurturing relationships. There are many ways to set a healthy example for children at home and how you do so can look different depending on the household. If you have healthy habits that you'd like to work on, involving the entire family can serve as a fun and interactive way to accomplish your personal health and wellness goals while setting a good example for children.

Take Action

There are opportunities for healthy role modeling in all areas of the house! Every space and function of your house can serve as a space to practice healthy habits that lead to stronger physical and emotional well-being.

In the bathroom:

- **Create a "getting ready" routine to start and end the day.** Show your children how to develop a healthy morning and evening routine. Invite children to participate in a routine you currently or together create one as a family. Sing or follow along to a favorite family song while brushing your teeth or washing your hands, and switch up the tunes each week to learn more songs and develop language and music skills!

In the kitchen:

- **Cook together as a family and limit distractions during mealtimes.** Involve your children in the cooking of meals to teach children about the importance of healthy Invite children to contribute to meal planning and choosing the fruits and veggies they would like to incorporate. Empowering children to play a role in healthy eating helps them to be more open to trying new things.
- **Choose healthy snacks to model healthy eating.** Be mindful about what you eat in front of your children and when you do go for a special treat, create space to talk with children about the importance of moderation and mindful eating. Enjoy snack time together and try to choose healthy snacks such as apples and peanut butter, trail mix with string cheese or come up with a new creation with items on hand.

In the living room:

- **Invite children to join in on your fitness routine or create space to exercise together as a family.** Enjoy a mid-day “recess” break with a family workout in the living room. If you already have time set aside for exercise - invite children to join in or set them up with an activity of their own. Share the importance of movement for physical and mental health. Ask everyone who joins to discuss how they feel before and after a workout. Use questions such as, *How does your mind/brain feel now after a few minutes of movement? How were you feeling before versus after we started moving and grooving our bodies?*
- **Limit screen time and use of devices.** Role model healthy screen-time consumption by setting a timer for yourself and your children while watching television or playing video games. Limit the amount of time spent on phone apps or the computer and engage in structured activities for free play together as a family. Disconnect from work as close to a routine schedule as possible and limit distractions by turning off notifications or shutting off devices during family time. Remember that it is okay to use screen-time as a way to wind-down, but try to balance with art projects, physical play time, or reading. When children are engaging in screen time - join in with them and invite them to share their thoughts and takeaways.

In the backyard/outside:

- **Spend time outside.** Get outdoors with your children by teaching them how fun gardening can be! Don't have a green thumb or a place to garden? Not to worry, learn how to create container gardens at home or turn kitchen scraps into something new. Take a walk around the neighborhood or move lunch or exercise to the backyard for some fresh air. If you have a favorite activity that you enjoy outside - share with your children and invite them to share with you one of theirs.
- **Share in the importance of caring for the earth.** Goal setting is a great way to role model healthy behaviors, and we all play a part in protecting the great outdoors. Gear up with your gloves, masks, trash bags, and other safety gear and make a difference in your community by going on a neighborhood trash pickup run. Talk about the positive impacts of recycling and appropriate trash disposal and how to treat our earth with a kind touch or set goals as a family to make your home more green.

One of the biggest ways you can be a healthy role model is by creating a space where children feel safe, supported and comfortable sharing. Children experience many of the same feelings and emotions that adults do but may not fully understand why or how to communicate about them. Knowing how to recognize, process and react to different feelings is all a part of social emotional learning - a process that continues throughout our lifetime. Integrate opportunities for emotional check-ins and supports for emotional regulation and self-management.

Many of the activities done together at home and as a family are great opportunities to check-in on your child's social and emotional well-being. Use this time to talk about how they are feeling, what's happening at school or with friends and explore empathy. Helping children to see that no feeling is a bad feeling - some just feel better than others - allows them to feel more comfortable in sharing and recognize healthy ways to manage the ups and downs of life.

- Practice self-care and invite children to identify activities or a routine that cares for their body, heart and mind.
- Create an environment where children feel encouraged to share as much or as little as they are ready. Integrate these conversations into activities they enjoy

the most - when they feel the most at ease or empowered.

- Model the different ways you acknowledge and manage feelings and emotions as they come up and invite them to share how they may have felt or reacted if they were in your shoes.

Tips



Start conversations with your children about where they could make healthy changes in their lives. Have a SMART goal planning session where each family member develops one SMART goal and shares with one another to provide accountability.



Share your passions and hobbies with your children and inspire them to find their own. Even if they don't share the same passion as you, it is important for children to explore more of what brings them joy while seeking to understand the perspective and experiences of others.



Discover new interests together with your children by trying something new! Support children in feeling okay to step outside of their comfort zone and try something new - reminding them that new habits take time.

For more activities and ideas like this one, be sure to [sign up for our news and updates](#). And if you like what you see, please [donate to support our work](#) creating more ways to help build a healthier future for kids.

Additional Resources

[10 Tips: Be a Healthy Role Model for Children](#)

[Parent Tips: Be a Good Health Role Model](#)

[MyPlate: Be a Healthy Role Model for Children](#)

Staff as Healthy Role Models

It's important for all school staff, whether or not they are members of the school health team, to practice healthy role modeling to support and encourage healthy habits among students.

Create a Family Self-Care Plan

Make self-care a priority with a family self-care plan.

Cooking with Kids

Get creative in the kitchen together as a family and chop, stir or whip up a new favorite recipe!

Making the Most of Screen Time

Explore ways to utilize screen time for learning, movement connection and more!

