

You are the Experts of your Family!

It is important to help our children develop healthy behaviours, but we must also be conscientious of our own behaviours as parents and caring adults. Using self-control and mindfulness about our own behaviours, allows children to learn by watching what we do.

Spending time together as a family supports relationships and influences healthy decision making.

Making the Time:

Children learn from watching what parents and other adults do. The more time parents spend with their children, the more time children will have to watch and learn how to behave in relationships, deal with stress, and practice healthy habits.

When adults are mindful of their actions and make healthy choices, children will be more likely to choose the same healthy habits. Through this, children learn how to establish positive relationships and problems solving skills.

To teach effective communication and conflict resolution, it is important to demonstrate use of positive language.

Walk the Talk:

Teaching children to make good choices is greatly influenced by choices parents make. Model healthy habits to help children identify the benefits of making healthy choices. Explain to children why these choices are important.

Parents are the most important people in a child's life. Children watch parents' behaviour closely, while learning and imitating along the way. Parent behaviours show children how to treat others with respect. By bringing focus to the positives, adults can show children how to make positive thinking a priority in their lives.

Children learn what healthy relationships look like by watching adults who model respect and love for other people.

Relationships:

Talk about important people in your life and describe the values you admire in them to help your child identify positive characteristics. Talk about the importance of personal values and the role of self-respect to help your child make positive choices.

Healthy relationships require time, communication, and trust. Role model empathy and cooperation so children develop the skills to interact positively with others. By watching you, children will learn that these are important things to consider when building relationships with other people.

Role Modelling a Balanced Lifestyle:

- **Physical Activity** – Children need 60 minutes of activity each day. Adults can model healthy choices by joining in and with their children in physical activity.
- **Relaxing** – Parents can model healthy choices by making time each day (individually or with the family) to relax with a quiet calming activity to promote balance and stress relief (reading, playing music, writing, meditation, yoga, etc.).
- **Try New Things** – When you make the effort to try new things, your children will be more likely to do so as well (healthy choices: new foods, activities, etc.).
- **Healthy Nutrition** - think about which foods are available for you and your child to snack on and model healthy choices when it comes to nutrition. You and your child will both benefit.

Parents and caring adults who display moral behaviours instil those values in children. Treating others with respect and being open to new ideas helps children develop the ability to do so as well.

When you're relaxed, your children are better able to follow.

Open your child's eyes to new possibilities by trying new

Cycles of behaviours have been found across generations.

Parents' attitudes and behaviours towards others set an example.

Children tend to grow up and act like adults around them. Children watch how others handle anger and conflict, friendships, and free time, as well as responsibility and personal health and wellness habits. This gives parents and caring adults the opportunity to practice the habits and behaviours they would children to have.

Strategies for Role Modeling:

Communicate!

Children value their parents' opinions. Take time to focus on a conversation with your child. Listen and ask about what is going on in his or her life. Spend time together with fun and satisfying activities. All of these things will strengthen your relationship and open up new opportunities for guidance and communication.

Make Mistakes and Meet Challenges!

It is good for children to see how parents face challenges and solve conflict respectfully. When an issue comes up, have a conversation with your child about how to solve the problem without using aggression or hostility. This will demonstrate effective problem solving and help your child develop critical thinking skills.

Media Influences: Children may see many different family values and behaviours on TV shows they watch. These shows may model behaviours that do not reflect your family's values. Be aware of your children's TV viewing and discuss appropriate behaviours you and your child see on TV to help distinguish acceptable behaviours from those seen on TV, and help children learn how to use their own judgement.

Children are influenced in many different ways. Parents can "re-influence" children by teaching acceptable behaviours, offering different perspectives, and encouraging children to practice their own problem solving strategies.