



PARENT MESSAGES THAT WORK

Parents can provide good models for their children by what they do and by what they avoid doing

- Show that you value your freedom to think and act independently—that you don't have to do something because 'everyone is doing it.' This helps your children see that unwanted peer pressure can be rejected.
- Be consistent in your words and actions. For example: a phone call interrupts your dinner and you say, "Tell them I'm not home yet." Or you routinely travel over the speed limit yet caution your adolescent not to. The message your children hear is that it's OK to be dishonest for your own convenience.
- Demonstrate your own sense of self-respect and self-esteem. For example, taking care of your health through exercise and diet offers a strong model for your children. Be creative and constructive in your use of free time, showing that there are alternatives to being a 'couch potato' or 'hanging out'.
- Show respect for your children's lives and concerns by being a good listener. Be sincere, ask questions and use a touch or a look for encouragement.
- Be cautious in using prescription or over-the-counter medicines as a quick fix for pain or stress. Your example can help counter the media messages that chemicals can cure discomfort.
- Be aware of how your own use of alcohol can influence your children. Drinking in front of children has not been shown to be harmful, but your children will notice how much you drink, when you drink, and why. Avoid using excuses for drinking, like having a rough day. Your drinking behavior tends to be the drinking behavior your children will have when they grow up.
- Talk honestly about stress or conflict in your own life. Children need to know that such struggles are a natural and normal part of life. They have a good model when they see that you are coping with problems without relying on alcohol or other drugs.