

# Hey Mom and Dad: You're models!

April 2015 Newsletter



If you're a parent, you have a special ability to inspire your kids. And you don't have to be President of the United States or even president of your gardening club. You just need to be you.

## Parents are role models

A positive role model is someone who serves as a good example.<sup>1</sup> For many kids, their parents and other caregivers are key role models. By watching and copying them, kids learn how to behave in relationships, how to make decisions and how to live productive lives.

There are negative role models too. Some adults — including celebrities — are people our kids admire. When they act badly, kids may think that behavior is acceptable. So it's important to talk about the different choices people make. And it's crucial to provide positive role models for your kids.

## Be someone to look up to

How can you inspire your children? First, remember that they're always watching and listening.

Be genuine with them. Respect them. Be kind and forgiving. Be ready to have fun. Show them how responsible, trustworthy adults behave. Show them the kind of adult they want to become.

Give kids lots of chances to feel admired and inspired. Here are some specific things you can do to help motivate your children:

- **Work with them.** Kids love their parents' attention. Next time your children need help with homework or household projects, work with them instead of just telling them what to do.

Your attention builds their self-esteem because they feel important when you work with them or play with them. Whatever you can do “with” your kids gives you a chance to inspire them.

- **Focus on efforts — not outcomes.** Children are always learning — in school and at home, with teachers, siblings and playmates. As rookies, they may not get things right the first or even second or third times. But their efforts should be recognized.

Children can become discouraged more from their efforts being overlooked than from actual failures. So remember to be part of the cheering squad and let your kids know you see them trying.

- **Love your kids for their individuality.** We're all “wired” differently. Think of your own family when you were growing up. If you had siblings, were you all the same or different? Did your family encourage your different skills and strengths?

Kids need respect for who they are and what they can do. Some people are leaders and some are followers. Some are artists, mathematicians, doctors, salespeople and so on. Inspire your children to follow their inner drives by supporting their interests and needs.

## Need inspiration yourself?

It can be daunting to realize your kids need your approval and that you're their role model. Want to polish up your parenting skills? Consider taking a class or getting some counseling.

Remember: Parenting is one of the hardest job in the world — and surely one of the most important!

<sup>1</sup>[www.aacap.org](http://www.aacap.org)