

# RESILIENT KIDS

NEWSLETTER by Michael Grose - Australia's leading parenting educator

## The power of positive role models

*"Children learn what they live."*

**It has been estimated that ninety to ninetyfive per cent of all human behaviours are learned through modelling.**

Modelled learning is largely unconscious, picked up from non-verbal behaviour and is strongly influenced by the quality of the relationship that exists between the model and the learner. The higher the regard the more likely a person is to follow an example, which makes parents such influential models.

That also means it is a little scary being a parent. Someone is watching and perhaps copying every move we make: - the good and the bad stuff, the behaviours we are proud of and the behaviours we want to forget!

For healthy development children need to be surrounded by adults who model responsible, caring behaviour. If they experience nurturance they are more likely to be nurturant. If they experience encouragement they are more likely to encourage others and if they experience optimism if they are more likely to develop a positive view of the world and themselves.

Twentieth Century poet Edgar Guest best expressed the power of modelling in his poem

**"The Living Sermon":**

*"All the lectures you deliver may be very wise and true,*

*But I'd rather get my lesson by observing what you do.*

*Though I might not understand you and the fine advice you give.*

*There's no misunderstanding how you act and how you live."*

As significant adults in children's lives parents and teachers need not leave modelling to chance. We need to harness its power and consciously model behaviours and language we want children to learn before they move into adolescence. For instance, if we want children to resolve conflict in civil ways they need to see adults do the same. If we want children to watch less television and read more then our chances of success increase if we set the example ourselves.

The period of life before puberty offers the prime opportunity for parents to model pro-social behaviours that often last a lifetime. The impact of modelling on children by parents and other significant adults in their lives is profound and shouldn't be left to chance.



## WHAT'S YOUR CHILD LIKE?

DOES YOUR CHILD HAVE POSITIVE ROLE MODELS IN HIS LIFE?

### DOES HE

1. Have same gender role models whom he is close to? **Yes [2] No [0]**
2. Have a number of positive young people or adults whom he admires in his broader circle of contacts? **Yes [2] No [0]**
3. Copy behaviours that worry you of wellknown people? **Yes [0] No [2]**
4. Become easily influenced by peers? **Yes [0] No [2]**

5. Copy the positive social behaviours of people he likes and admires? **Yes [2] No [0]**

### SCORE:

- 10:** Healthy role modelling!  
**6-8:** Perhaps needs some guidance about the type of role model he has or the types of behaviours or attitudes he copies.  
**0-4:** Need to be pro-active and ensure access to a number of positive role models who can influence and assist.



## TRY THIS...

PUTTING IT INTO PRACTICE

**To ensure good role modelling for children:**

1. Ensure that your child has **exposure** to at least one positive role model of each gender on a regular basis.
2. Begin a **conversation** about role models and heroes with children. Differentiate between heroes and role models. The former are usually people from entertainment or sports who they admire. They may not be positive role models however some of their qualities are worth aspiring to.
3. Identify your **own** role models and work out what you wish to emulate in those people.
4. **Consciously** model one social behaviour at a time that you want children to learn.

## ACTION PLAN

First Step . . .

Next Step . . .

*For more ideas about promoting resilience in children visit [www.parentingideas.com.au](http://www.parentingideas.com.au)*

## QUOTE

*'Children have more need of models than of critics.'*

CAROLYN COATS