
I N S I G H T S

FOR FAMILIES

□

Model behaviors you want

□

❖ **INSIGHTS FOR FAMILIES** is provided by your child's school in recognition of your role as a partner in education. Written by Judy McDaniel, communications consultant.

Parents are their children's best teachers. From the time they are infants, children look to their parents for examples of what to do, what to say and how to act. We've all heard the expression, "What you do is more important than what you say." This is especially true in the case of parents and their children. It is crucial to model the behavior you wish to see.

- ❖ If parents say, "It is important to read," but children never see their parents reading, the action will be much more believable than the words. Sit down in the evening with a book, magazine or newspaper. Watching parents continue their own education is a more effective message to children than any amount of lecturing about the value of school.
- ❖ If parents say, "Always be honest," but children hear their mother or father lying to neighbors or business associates, they will be more apt to model the behavior rather than what they have been told.
- ❖ Parents who tell their children not to drink or take drugs while enjoying daily cocktails are not sending an effective message. Of course you should talk to your children about responsible drinking and about the hazards of drinking too much, as well as drinking and driving. At the same time, you should demonstrate those messages by modeling the behavior you wish to see in your children and especially by not getting behind the wheel after drinking alcoholic beverages.
- ❖ Being open and honest with your children is of utmost importance. Share your world with them. If things are not going well for you, don't be afraid to tell your kids. Opening up to your children gives them a chance to see your human side.
- ❖ Teach your children to respect authority by showing them that you respect authority figures such as police officers and school teachers.
- ❖ Children learn financial responsibility by observing their parents living within a budget. Involve your children in family meetings where the family budget is discussed. When they are old enough, encourage your children to earn their own spending money beginning with mowing lawns or babysitting. Give your children responsibility for spending and saving a certain amount of money (i.e. an allowance). If young people learn early where the money comes from and where the money goes, they will have an easier time becoming financially responsible when they are out on their own.
- ❖ Show your children that all people are equal by treating others with respect and understanding. Even though people of varying racial backgrounds or from different socioeconomic classes may act differently from your family, that doesn't make them better or worse.