



Range of Discipline Techniques

Modeling

Modeling is the first way that young children learn. From birth, infants imitate emotions and language modeled by their caregivers. Toddlers learn how to play by watching their family members. Social norms, habits, language patterns, and responses to stress are all learned through modeling (Szalavits & Perry, 2010). Children's behavior is shaped by their observations of the adults around them (Cline & Fay, 2006; Galinsky, 2010; Szalavitz & Perry, 2010). Thus, an effective way to teach a child something is by modeling it.

You are modeling behaviors to your child in everything that you do. If you want your child to eat healthy, exercise, and treat others with respect then you need to eat healthy, exercise, and treat others with respect.

How to set expectations and teach behavior through modeling

- **Show your child how.** Behave the way you want your child to behave.
- **Help your child.** Do the activity with your child. Have your child help you with a task, as he or she explores new activities.
- **Have your child do it.** Step back and allow your child to do the activity, task, or behavior. Once you know that your child can do it (because you have taught through modeling), you can hold your child accountable.

Example:

Children learn how to deal with stress by watching the adults around them. If you are angry, stop, breathe, and calm yourself down before you address the situation, so that your child can see how to do it. When your child is upset, help your child by doing it together: kneel down to your child's level, breathe with your child, and wait for your child to calm down. Once you have gone through this process several times, your child will start to use this strategy without your help.

References:

- Cline, F., & Fay, J. (2006). *Parenting with love and logic: Teaching children responsibility*. Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress Publishing.
- Galinsky, E. (2010). *Mind in the making: The seven essential life skills every child needs*. New York: HarperStudio.
- Szalavitz, M., & Perry, B. D. (2010). *Born for love: Why empathy is essential--and endangered*. New York, NY: Harper Collins.