Modeling
Partnering for School Success: Take and Teach Lesson 6

Notes to facilitator

Introduction
This is one of nine Take and Teach lessons designed to encourage parents’ involvement in their children's education. Each lesson is based on University of Minnesota Extension’s Parenting for School Success booklet, which should be used as a companion resource.

It’s recommended that you offer this lesson only after you have taught “Lesson 1: Parents Make a Difference,” which provides an overview of factors and parental roles in aiding children’s success in school, as well as learning in the wider world.

Lesson goal
“Lesson 6: Modeling” seeks to help participants understand the importance of parental modeling of good behavior (positive role modeling) in order to support their children's education and learning. Remember a key objective of all lessons – to persuade parents to be more intentional about helping their children learn in school, at home, and in the community.

Lesson objectives
Participants will:
• Demonstrate an understanding of how modeling good behavior contributes to children's education and learning.
• Identify positive and negative examples of role modeling and the possible effects on their children.
• Determine ways they can be good examples and positive role models for their children in order to support their success in school and life.

Suggested scripts
Suggested scripts for facilitators are indented and printed in the “Lesson Plan” in sans serif typeface. Here’s an example:

Children learn better when parents and other adults set a good example. Setting a good example is also called modeling good behavior, or positive role modeling.

Time
Allow 60 minutes for the lesson.

Handouts
Each participant should receive one copy of the following:
• "Role Play: Modeling Good Communication and Relationship-Building Skills" handout – Master form provided; make copies
• Parenting for School Success booklet (already received)
Materials

- "Survey Topic Map" (for facilitator use only) – Document included
- Flipchart and markers
- Writing paper – Provide one sheet for each participant
- Pencils or pens – Provide one for each participant
- Timer (or simply check a clock)
Lesson Plan

Note: Suggested scripts are indented and in sans serif type.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Learning activities</th>
<th>Materials</th>
<th>Time</th>
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| Welcome and introduction | • "Survey Topic Map" (for facilitator use only)  
• Parenting for School Success booklet | 10 min |

Briefly review the last session you conducted for participants and ask how they fared completing any tasks they were assigned. For example, if participants most recently attended Lesson 1, ask them how things are going on the action steps they set to support their children’s learning in school and at home. Discuss briefly.

Respond to any questions participants might have about what they have learned to date.

Begin the content portion of the lesson. Say something like the following:

Remember filling out a survey in Lesson 1? In that survey, many of you asked to learn more about modeling and teaching good behavior to your children. We’ll talk about that topic and related issues today.

Children learn better when parents and other adults set a good example. Setting a good example is also called modeling good behavior, or positive role modeling.

There are several things that parents can do to set a good example for their children, such as:
• Read books, magazines or newspapers.
• Take a continuing education class.
• Talk about the importance of education.
• Help their children with homework.
• Set goals for their children’s success.
• Get involved in their children’s school.

You can learn more ways to set a good example for children by reading the “Modeling” section on pages 12-13 of the Parenting for School Success booklet.

Learning activity #1: Thinking about the example you set

Say the following:
Children mimic the behavior and actions they see around them. Your actions tell your children what values and principles should guide their lives even more than words do. It’s like the old saying, "Actions speak louder than words." As a parent, you’re always setting examples for your children, whether you realize it or not.

So, think about what kind of example you are setting for your children related to school and learning. Do your actions say you value learning or not? We'll talk more about that shortly.

**Learning activity #2: Positive and negative role modeling**

Say the following:

Role modeling can be positive or negative. You can be a good example or a poor example for your children. Think about the behavior of adults around you when you were growing up or the behavior of adults around you and your children now. Think of people you know personally and people in the media. Why are they good or poor role models? First, give me the names of some poor role models and a few reasons you think they are.

Record participants’ responses on a flipchart.

Now give me the names of some good role models and a few reasons you think they are.

Record participants’ responses on a flipchart. Next, say:

If school, education, and learning are important to you, how are you showing that to your children? Parents, relatives, teachers, coaches, neighbors, relatives, and other adults motivate children to succeed in school and life by showing they value learning. Parents are especially important role models to children. One way to show you value learning is to learn something new yourself. What could you do to show your children you’re willing to learn new things? Refer to the "Modeling" section of

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Write participants' responses on the flipchart. After recording responses, comment on what they said and add any ideas they did not mention. Say:

There are many ways you can show your children that you value learning. You can show them in "big" ways, such as:

- Obtaining GED certification or a college degree.
- Enrolling in a continuing education class to study a subject you enjoy.
- Learning a language other than English if that's your primary language.
- Learning English if that's not your primary language.
- Receiving training for your current job, or learning a new trade or profession.
- Participating in school activities.

You can also show your children that you value learning in the smaller, "everyday" ways I mentioned earlier, including:

- Reading or looking at books, magazines and newspapers while children do homework. It's especially important to read or tell stories to your children when they're young and to continue reading as they grow older. This way, you will model reading as an enjoyable, fulfilling activity they can pursue their entire life — not just in school.
- Paying bills (and using math) while children do homework.
- Consulting (and reading) a manual to fix something around the house.
Learning activity #3: Modeling good communication and relationship-building skills – Role play

Start this activity by saying:

Let’s do some role playing to put into practice what you have learned about modeling behavior to show that you value learning. It’s also important for parents to model good communication and relationship-building skills so their children learn how to deal with difficult situations. That’s why the scenario encompasses modeling different behaviors and skills.

First, let’s read the scenario. Take out your "Role Play: Modeling Good Communication and Relationship-Building Skills" handout.

Read the scenario yourself or ask volunteer(s) to do so. When done, respond to any questions about the scenario and follow these steps:

1. Divide your class into small groups of at least four people, but no more than eight – with at least two females in each. If a group has more than four members, ask additional members to play an extended family member, such as an older sibling or grandparent, or another school staff member. Ask each group to assign roles: Maria, the mother; Juan, the father; Elana, the child; Mrs. (or Mr.) Carter, the teacher; any additional roles, as necessary.

2. Direct each group to act out the scenario – first holding a discussion between Elana and her parents and extended family members, as applicable, and next holding a discussion between the parents and teacher, as well as other school staff – as applicable. Tell participants to improvise (make up) dialogue and spend about 5 minutes on each discussion (for a total of 10).

Note: Tell participants that their goal is not to solve the more complex problem of Elana’s failure to do her homework – that’s not possible in this scenario anyway. Instead, ask them to model good communication and relationship-building skills to address the immediate
situation of Elana not giving the teachers’ notes to her parents. This will lay the foundation for future conversations about Elana not doing her homework (and risking a failing grade).

3. Next, ask participants to take another 5 minutes to discuss (within their small groups) what they felt and observed while they acted out the scenario.

4. Finally, reconvene the entire group and lead a discussion by posing the following questions:

   - Did the parents set a positive example for working with their child and school staff to handle difficult situations regarding their child’s schoolwork?
   - Did the parents handle communication with the teacher and the school effectively?
   - Who else in the school or community could help with the situation?

Wrap up the activity by saying:

Modeling good communication and relationship-building skills will help you develop positive relationships with your children so you can take future steps to solve more complex problems related to schoolwork and learning. In addition, your children will learn good communication skills from you (their parents), as well as see you communicate effectively with their teacher and school.

Assign homework

As parents, you can show your children you value school and learning by setting a good example and being a positive role model. Write down one or two things you can do in the next week to set a good example for your children about school and learning.

Give participants about 5 minutes to make some notes.

Closing

If participants are returning for another lesson, say they will
be asked to report how they did on their homework to set a
good example for their children about school and learning. If
participants are not returning, urge them to report their
progress to someone in their life (spouse, friend, relative) as a
way to hold themselves accountable.

Thank participants for coming and wish them luck in
supporting their children's learning and success in school.
Role Play: Modeling Good Communication and Relationship-Building Skills

Handout

Introduction

This role-play exercise is designed to help you practice modeling behavior to your children that shows you value learning. As you act out and discuss the following scenario, remember that your objective is not to solve the more complex problem of Elana’s failure to do her homework. Instead, practice using good communication and relationship-building skills to address the immediate situation of Elana not giving the teachers’ notes to her parents. This way, you will lay the foundation for future conversations about the harder problem of Elana not doing her homework.

Directions

1. Familiarize yourself with the following scenario:

   Mrs. (or Mr.) Carter, Elana’s teacher, calls Maria, Elana’s mother, to tell her that her daughter has not been turning in her homework assignments for the past month. Mrs. (or Mr.) Carter says she (or he) has sent notes home with Elana several times but has received no response from her parents. What’s more, the teacher says Elana will receive a failing grade unless she completes the homework.

   Maria had no idea this was going on. She did not receive any notes, and Elana has not mentioned anything. Maria and her husband Juan (and Elana’s father) have been distracted lately because of financial problems. Maria and Juan have argued a lot lately in the children’s presence.

2. Assign the four major roles – Elana, Maria, Juan, and Mrs. (or Mr.) Carter – as well as any additional roles (other family members or school staff) if there are more than four people in your small group.

3. Act out the scenario, improvising (making up) the discussions. Your goal is to hold conversations that might occur between the teacher and parents, as well as the parents and Elana, after the parents hear about Elana’s situation. Spend 5 minutes on each conversation (for a total of 10). Again: Your main goal is to practice using good communication and relationship-building skills around Elana’s failure to show the teachers’ notes to her parents. Don’t try to solve Elana’s homework problems in this setting.

4. Talk about the role-playing experience, as directed – first for 5 minutes within your small group and then for another 5 minutes with your facilitator. Think about what you experienced, what you observed, and what you learned.