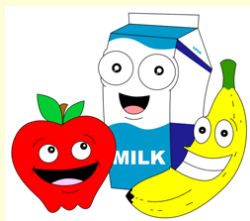


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Promoting Positive Body Image in Children

Whatever their size or weight, children may develop either a positive or negative view of their own bodies. Body image awareness can begin as early as preschool, so it is essential that parents and other adult role models play a pivotal role in promoting a positive body image for children. Children with a positive image of themselves feel more comfortable and confident. They don't obsess about calories, food or weight. They have the energy they need to enjoy physical activity. Children with a negative body image, however, feel more self-conscious, anxious and isolated. They are at greater risk for excessive weight changes and/or for eating disorders. Keep in mind that body image can affect both boys and girls. Read these 5 tips to help your child develop a positive body image:

*Start
healthy
habits
early!!*



*Take
advantage
of the
beautiful
weather,
get
outside!*



*Lead by
example...*



Monitor *Your Own* Body Image

Parental body image has a powerful influence on how children feel about their own bodies. If you talk about your body in negative ways, or if you refer to extreme dieting or exercising often, your children will absorb these negative messages. They will most likely begin to worry about their own bodies and may possibly think they should be dieting too.

Focus on Health

Instead of focusing on numbers on the scale, concentrate on delicious nutrition and fun physical activity. Children get their "workout" by playing. They also need to enjoy regular meals and learn how to make smart, tasty snack choices. Pass this message onto your children: nutrition and fitness are great goals because they give us energy to do all things that we want to do.

Find Physical Activities That Fit

All children need regular physical activities that they enjoy. Some children enjoy sports while others do better at individual activities, like walking or bike-riding. Some may find their niche in yoga, karate or dance. It doesn't matter what kids do for physical fitness; it just matters that they do something. Make sure the focus is on becoming fit, strong and capable, and not on weight.

Myth-Busting the "Perfect Body"

Help your child become a savvy media critic by talking about what they see on television, in magazines and online. Help them understand that the pictures of models they see in ads may have been retouched or otherwise manipulated to appear "perfect." Check out this YouTube video that may help children understand this concept better:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iYhCn0jf46U> (adapted from eatright.org)

Helping Your Child Develop A Positive Body Image

Follow these steps to help your child develop a positive body image and relate to food in a healthy way:

- Make sure your child understands that weight gain is a normal part of development, especially during puberty.
- Avoid negative statements about food, weight, and body size and shape.
- Allow your child to make decisions about food, while making sure that plenty of healthy and nutritious meals and snacks are available.
- Compliment your child on her or his efforts, talents, accomplishments, and personal values.
- Restrict television viewing, and watch television with your child and discuss the media images you see.
- Encourage your school to enact policies against size and sexual discrimination, harassment, teasing, and name-calling; support the elimination of public weigh-ins and fat measurements.
- Keep the communication lines with your child open.

Resource provided by <http://www.womenshealth.gov/body-image/kids/>

Resources

Nourish Interactive is a helpful site for tips on how to get your child eating healthy and enjoy exercise. <http://www.nourishinteractive.com/>

Super Kids Nutrition provides an abundance of healthy eating tips and resources <http://www.superkidsnutrition.com/nutrition-resources/>

Website on positive body image for boys <http://www.common sense media.org/blog/boys-and-body-image-tips>

Body Positive- Boosting body image at any weight. This is an amazing website with an abundance of resources. <http://www.bodypositive.com/childwt.htm>

HEALTHY BODY=
HEALTHY MIND &
HEALTHY IMAGE

Healthy ideas for family time:

*Family bike
ride*

*

Cook together

*



*Walk the dog
together*

*

*Have fun
family
competitions,
like relay
races*

