

Healthy body images for children

Children have access to a lot of types of media. They see many messages about what makes a body “good” or “bad.” Parents might not be able to shield kids from negative body talk. But they can help kids develop healthy body image. Families can take steps to build kids’ self-confidence. Everyone can like and enjoy their body.



Photo above by Choreograph, below by Pizelheadphoto, courtesy iStockphoto

Quick facts on body image:

1 Set a good example for kids. They will understand if you make negative comments about your own body and appearance. Keep it positive. Kids may apply what you say to themselves.



2 Don't compare bodies or say that some bodies are better or worse than others. “Body shaming” can harm kids’ feelings about their own bodies.

3 Talk about healthy, realistic body image. You can show kids that there are many different types of bodies that are healthy. You can also tell them some body types are rarely shown in the media.

4 Instead of talking about how bodies look, talk about what they can do. Exercise can be a lifelong habit that keeps bodies healthy and strong. Starting a fitness routine as a family can build confidence.

5 Be aware of the praise you give to kids. Focus on your children’s skills and personalities rather than their looks.



>> For more information on body image, visit www.aap.org