

**Tips for Parents**

# Body Image



Your body image is how you think and feel about your body and what you imagine it looks like. This may have nothing to do with your actual appearance. Over time, having a poor body image can lead to a range of negative effects, including disordered eating, depression, anxiety, and low self-esteem. Self-compassion helps children cope with stressful events and imperfections in life. When we have self-compassion, we are warm, kind, and understanding with ourselves. There are many ways that parents can foster positive body image and strong self-esteem and self-compassion in their children.

**Be a good role model**

Accept your own body size and shape.

- Accept your own and other people's body sizes and shapes.
- Exercise regularly and have at least one family activity per week.
- All food can fit into a healthy eating plan, regardless of body size. -Enjoy eating a range of nutritious food most of the time in order to keep your body strong.
- Be critical of media messages and images that promote thinness.

**Get them into the habit of engaging in regular physical activity**

When you appreciate and respect what your body can do, rather than what your body looks like, you are more likely to take care of your body. Help your child appreciate what their body can do by:

- Emphasizing health and enjoyment as the motivations for physical activity.
- Finding a sport/activity they enjoy.
- Being cautious of sports that have a strong emphasis on maintaining a certain body shape.
- Finding an activity that your family can enjoy doing together.

**Help them feel confident about themselves**

Encourage problem solving, the expression of opinions, and individuality.

- Teach your child various coping strategies to help them manage life's challenges.

## FEEL GOOD

- Listen to their concerns about body shape and appearance.
- Don't tease them about their weight, body shape, or appearance.
- Place value on their achievements, such as talents, skills, and character.
- Make your child feel they have an important role in the family.
- Buy clothes that fit your child – get rid of outgrown clothes.
- Listen to what they say when they are young. If you don't listen to the small stuff, they won't tell you the big stuff. To them, it's all big stuff.

### Things to remember

You are the most influential role model in your child's life, so lead by example. Give your child opportunities to appreciate their body for what it can do, rather than what it looks like.



### Parent Tips for Building Self-esteem and Self-compassion:

- 1- Find reasons to praise your child's behaviour. Although children's behaviours can be good or bad, children are always good. Praise and correction should focus on the child's behaviour, not on the child.
  - 2- Catch them being good – positive reinforcement is as important as discipline. Make sure the positivity is meaningful and appropriate.
- 3- Be consistent on what you say and follow through on consequences.
  - 4- Practice active listening when your child is speaking to you.
  - 5- Show affection verbally and non-verbally. Kids know if their parents 'like' them as well as 'love' them.
  - 6- Have shared fun with your child on a regular basis –  
*"Show me two people who have fun together on a regular basis and I'll show you a good relationship" -Thomas Phelan.*
  - 7- Find your child's strengths and help to develop them. Supporting your child in skill-building and expertise in their interested area will help build self-esteem in the long term.
  - 8- Let your child hear you talk nicely about them to someone else.
  - 9- Show Forgiveness – Everyone makes mistakes. Teach children to learn from their mistakes and move on.
  - 10- Develop a Growth Mindset – Support children in seeing challenges as a way to learn and grow rather than as successes or failures.
  - 11- Be Generous – Teach children to give to themselves as well as to give to others. Doing good helps us feel good as long as it doesn't reduce our own levels of well-being.

**Commented [TP1]:** Tried to correct the spacing here but it also changed the numbering.



12-Forgive your own mistakes. **Remember:**  
You don't have to be perfect to be a good parent!



*Good Health for EveryBODY*