

Positive Body Image Tips for Parents

- Make your home a haven, free from negative comments about appearance or weight.
- Work on your own body image and avoid diet-talk & body complaints around children.
- Encourage children to enjoy what their bodies can **do**, more so than what they look like.
- Make enjoyable physical activity and relaxed healthy eating, a family priority
- Focus on children's uniqueness, strengths and attributes that are unrelated to looks.
- Examine own prejudices about weight and appearance, then help your child challenge prejudice and stereotypes too.
- Reassure your child that the physical changes that occur at puberty (esp weight gain for girls) are normal and everyone develops at their own rate.
- Limit the amount and type of media your child watches, uses or reads. Talk to your child to help him/her develop a critical awareness of the images & messages that we receive everyday.
- Point out examples of successful men and women who don't fit the ideal image. This helps to diversify our notions of what it means to be 'masculine' or 'feminine'.
- Discuss body image issues when they arise. Listen to your child's concerns and always affirm your child's body & his/her uniqueness & individuality.
- Pick up on your child's self-defeating thinking (eg perfectionism or self-comparisons) and question it.
- Encourage your children to look after their bodies whatever their size or shape.
- Work with other parents, teachers & the whole school community to combat teasing about weight & shape.

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