

Teaching Our Girls to Love Their Bodies

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HERE ARE A FEW WAYS WE CAN HELP OUR GIRLS TO LEARN TO LOVE THEIR BODIES:

WE NEED TO CONTINUOUSLY REPROGRAM OUR KIDS FROM THE MESSAGES THEY ARE RECEIVING FROM THE MEDIA AND SOCIETY. YOU DO NOT NEED TO BE STICK THIN IN ORDER TO BE BEAUTIFUL. OPEN UP THE DISCUSSION AS TO WHY THESE IMAGES ARE NOT THE NORM.

WE MUST SET HEALTHY EXAMPLES IN BOTH OUR EATING HABITS AND OUR EXERCISE HABITS. KIDS ARE SMART AND WILL FOLLOW OUR LEAD. IF YOU ARE ALWAYS ASKING IF YOU LOOK FAT IN THESE PANTS, WHAT DO YOU THINK YOUR DAUGHTER WILL BEGIN TO SAY?

TEACH YOUR DAUGHTERS ABOUT GENETICS. LOOK AT OLD FAMILY PHOTOS AND NOTE THE SIMILARITIES. POINT OUT AUNT MARTHA'S GORGEOUS SMILE AND LET YOUR DAUGHTER KNOW THAT SHE INHERITED THAT GREAT SMILE FROM HER FAVORITE AUNT.

KEEP YOUR KIDS ACTIVE! STRUCTURED SPORTS ACTIVITIES ARE WONDERFUL, BUT THEY ARE NOT THE ONLY SOLUTION. THE KEY IS TO MAKE FITNESS PART OF DAILY LIFE.

FOCUS YOUR ATTENTION ON WHAT YOUR DAUGHTER'S BODY CAN DO - NOT WHAT IT LOOKS LIKE. THOSE MUSCULAR THIGHS ARE FOR RUNNING FASTER THAN THE BOYS, YOU KNOW!

by **char** on February 28th, 2007

<http://www.wearyparent.com/teaching-our-girls-to-love-their-bodies/>

OUR BODIES OURSELVES- BODY IMAGE



How Parents Can Help



- Make your home a safe haven. Girls receive hostile messages from society about how they should look. When they are at home, they need to feel protected from the constant scrutiny regarding their weight, their complexion, their hair and every other aspect of their appearance. Tell your daughter she's beautiful on a regular basis, while also focusing on attributes that have nothing to do with physical appearance. It is especially important for father figures to make positive comments about their daughter's appearance and abilities.
- Ask your neighbourhood schools to teach media literacy, including how the media contributes to looksism, racism, ableism, homophobia and ageism.
- Help your daughter understand that advertisers and their clients (from fashion magazines to music video channels) must make girls feel bad about their bodies in order to turn a profit. Only by exploiting our insecurities will they get us to buy their products, which we hope will improve the way we look.
- Expose her to accomplished women who are successful for their achievements. Unlike boys, who see men they can emulate daily as their principals, town leaders, and national leaders, most role models available to girls are pop stars, actresses and models—women who have become famous at least partly because of their looks.
- Teach her about the necessity of body fat during puberty right before her growth spurt.
- Prioritize meals in your home. Try and eat at least one meal a day together as a family, without the television.
- Increase the chances that your daughter will eat healthy meals and snacks by packing lunches, creating standard meal times, and stocking your home with healthy food.
- Prioritize daily exercise, emphasizing physical activity as essential to good health, not as a vehicle to look thin.
- Be cognizant of what you say to boys versus girls. Research shows that mothers give different information to boys than girls. We may unconsciously say "eat more" to boys while implying that girls should diet. Girls often personalize criticism more than boys.
- Limit music video channels and when possible watch them with your children. Teach your children to analyze the roles women have in the videos, the messages communicated in the videos about relationships and status, and who is making money off the videos.
- Teach her to view the media with a critical eye and stress activities other than media in your home. Girls are more likely than adults to compare their bodies to the images they see in media, and to emulate the kind of behaviour they witness.

www.ourbodiesourselves.org

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