



How to support your child's body confidence

As a parent you are in a position to have a positive impact on how your child feels about their body and their self esteem. Children though can be very sensitive about body image and appearance. Often you may not even be aware of the messages your child is hearing from you.

TIPS ON HOW YOU CAN BE A POSITIVE BODY IMAGE ROLE MODEL FOR YOUR CHILD

Your own relationship with your body – This may not be easy but being aware of your own body image will help you be conscious of the messages you send your kids. Try to avoid making negative comments about the way you look. If your child knows you feel comfortable with your body, this can help them feel comfortable in their own skin.

Do not talk about diets – Dieting is the biggest risk factor for developing an eating disorder. Avoid talking about diets, your “naughty” eating habits, or your weight and size. This can give kids the impression that weight and size are highly valued and they may feel pressure to look a certain way or be a certain size.

Talk to your child about how they feel about their body – Acknowledge if they are feeling uncomfortable or bad then focus on what their bodies can do rather than what they look like; not just physical activities but their other skills such as playing musical instruments, creative outlets and how amazing their brain is!

EARLY INTERVENTION

Even with the best of intentions, sometimes life throws us a curve ball. It is important to recognise the warning signs of body dissatisfaction and low self esteem as early as possible.

BEHAVIOURS TO BE AWARE OF

- Withdrawal from social events and activities that they used to enjoy
- A focus on diets, calories and health; talk about wanting to be healthier or fitter; becoming obsessive about checking the nutritional content of what they are eating; excessive exercise.
- Being irritable or anxious around meal times or refusing to eat certain foods or whole food groups.
- Complaints about the way they look, e.g. “I’m ugly” or “I’m fat”, or their abilities, e.g. “I’m hopeless”.
- Frequent weight changes or rapid weight loss.
- Change in clothing style such as wearing baggy or oversized clothing.

SUPPORT

If you notice any of these signs it is important to seek help as early as possible.

You can speak to an experienced counsellor about any concerns through our

Butterfly's National Helpline

1800 ED HOPE (1800 33 4673)

support@thebutterflyfoundation.org.au

P.T.O



Butterfly Education



Further information

BALANCED AND ON-MESSAGE RESOURCES AROUND WEIGHT, SIZE AND HEALTHY EATING

- ASDAH - Association for Size Diversity and Health – sizediversityandhealth.org
- Body Positive Australia – bodypositiveaustralia.com.au
- If Not Dieting, Then What? – Dr Rick Kausmann – ifnotdieting.com
Available: thebutterflyfoundation.org.au > shop > Butterfly Resources
- Moderation Movement – facebook.com/moderationmovement

STORY BOOKS FOR CHILDREN

- *Full Mouse Empty Mouse* by Dina Zeckhausen
Available: thebutterflyfoundation.org.au shop > Butterfly Resources
- *Shapesville* by Andy Mills and Becky Osborne
- *Your Body is Awesome* by Sigrun Danielsdottir

EATING DISORDER RESOURCES

- National Eating Disorders Collaboration – nedc.com.au
- Feed Your Instinct – feedyourinstinct.com.au
An interactive tool for parents if they are concerned their child may be developing an unhealthy relationship with food, weight, exercise or their body.
- How Far Is Too Far – howfaristooofar.org.au
To increase understanding of risk factors and warning signs related to eating, exercise and body image.

BODY ESTEEM EDUCATION

- Butterfly Education provide evidence based, age appropriate workshops and presentations to young people in Years 3 – 12. Sessions address body esteem and associated topics; self-esteem, media and peer influences, language, food and exercise behaviours and weight based teasing.

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