

How to help kids feel good about their bodies

Body image is about how we feel about the way we look. Many things can affect how we feel about our bodies - like what we think, what others say and what we see on TV or phones.

What can hurt kids' body image?

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COLLECTIVE.

1. **Negative comments:** When people tease or make fun of how someone looks.
2. **Comparing bodies:** When adults or kids compare how different people look.

What parents can do to help

Watch your words

- 1 Try not to say negative things about how you or others look. If you catch yourself doing this, change it to something positive. For example: Instead of "I need new jeans because I gained weight," say "I'm happy my body is strong and healthy."

Celebrate how different we all are

- 2
 - Explain that bodies come in all shapes, sizes and colours, and they are meant to change over time.
 - Remind kids they are loved just as they are and that they belong because they are unique.

Focus on function

- 3 Our bodies are amazing! Talk about what bodies can do, rather than what they look like.
 - They help us to do so many things like run, jump, play and interact with others.
 - They regulate our temperature, digest our food and heal us when we are sick or have a cut.
 - We can see, hear, smell and taste - all thanks to our bodies!

Encourage kids to be kind to themselves

- 4
 - Everyone makes mistakes and has challenges – we get to choose to be mean or kind to ourselves. Encourage kids to choose kindness.
 - Encouraging kids to be kinder and more forgiving of themselves has a positive impact on body image and mental health.

Choose good role models

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 - Watch shows that focus on what people do, not how they look (e.g. Moana instead of Sleeping Beauty).
 - For older children, encourage them to follow social media accounts that show different types of bodies.
 - Help your kids to seek out content about hobbies, skills and interests, instead of appearance-based content.