

Choosing Foods for Me

Fourth-grade nutrition education newsletter

Lesson 9

Obsessed over image

Preteens and teens are concerned about their appearance. Images on television, in movies, in magazines and on the Internet or in video games can lead young people to believe that they're not beautiful if they don't have a certain body size or shape.

What is body image?

Body image is how you think you look and how you feel about your body.

What is a healthy body image?

Having a healthy body image means having a realistic image of how you look and appreciating your body as it is.

How can you help your child have a healthy body image?

- Set a good example: If you are overly concerned about weight and appearance, your child will be too.
- Make choosing healthy foods a family affair and it will benefit everyone.
- Be active in ways that are fun.
- Talk positively about your own body. You're a role model. If your child hears you talking positively about your body, your child will too.
- Listen to your body. Eat when you are hungry, stop when you are full. Talk about this during family meals.
- Acknowledge your child's accomplishments often. Build self-esteem by focusing on things other than weight or appearance.
- Focus on characteristics like honesty, loyalty and being a good friend. When your child shows these positive characteristics, applaud her or him.



Having a healthy body image means having a realistic image of how you look and appreciating your body as it is.

- Listen to your child. Ask your child to share feelings with you, and validate the feelings that are shared.
- Celebrate occasions without involving food. Visiting a friend or family member, going to the park or going swimming are some ways to celebrate occasions without involving food.

What do you see on TV?

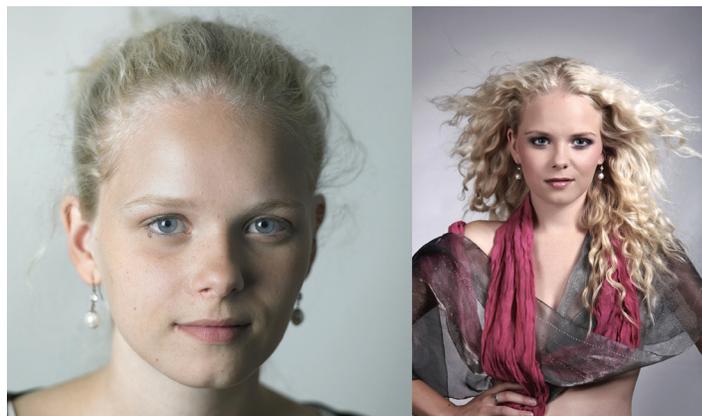
Americans watch a lot of television. Images we see on TV have an impact on us.

- Watch a television show together with your child. Ask your child if there was a variety of body types and sizes on the show. Did any character's body size cause the character to be treated positively or negatively?
- Be more aware of body type and size as you watch TV with your child. Acknowledge TV shows that deal positively with characters that have different body sizes. Talk about how the TV show could be improved when dealing with body type or body size.

What magazines do you have at home?

Images in magazine have an impact on us. Collect magazines you have at home.

- Sit down with your child and look at the body types and sizes in the magazines you have at home. Discuss how they affect your child.
- Go to the library or store and seek out magazines that have a variety of body types and sizes.



Models and actors have a lot of help to look the way they do.

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