

# **Body Image and Self-Esteem**



A Parent Education Event - March 28, 2018

# Please add to the board...

- (1) A comment you've heard your child make about themselves - can be positive or negative
- (2) A comment you remember that someone made about you growing up - can be positive or negative

# Who am I? Who are you?

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# Over 50%

Of girls aged 6-8 indicate that their ideal body is thinner than their current body

# 34%

Of boys aged 6-8 indicate that their ideal body is thinner than their current body

# 3x greater

Kids who feel bad about their body size and start dieting are at about 3 times greater risk for binge eating, weight gain and other eating disorders compared to their non-dieting counterparts.

**87%**

87% of female characters age 10–17 on the most popular kids' TV shows are below average in weight.

# What is body image?

One's perceptions, feelings, and attitudes towards one's body

Body image develops early on in childhood, but changes over time and with development

Body image is influenced by family and culture



# **In many ways, this age is the most difficult**

Because their bodies are changing rapidly and often in unsatisfying ways

Because they don't always have much or accurate information about the ways their bodies are changing

Because they don't feel normal

# Body Image Ideals are impacted by...

**Culture** - What does the image of body perfection look like in your culture? For people of your racial/ethnic background? In the country you were born in? What aspects of beauty/body are most important in that culture?

**Time** - How has the concept of “beauty” or “perfection” changed since you were growing up? Think back to images you’ve seen of the most beautiful men and women in different decades.

**Media** - Our media is OBSESSED with the way people’s bodies look. Kids are bombarded with ads, shows, and images constantly. Think about the number of ads per day you saw growing up versus today.

# Also GENDER!

For girls:

Magazines criticize female celebrities for being too heavy or too thin, TV and movie stars showcase unrealistic body types, Ads tell girls that, with the right beauty products, they can look picture-perfect.

Female characters in family films, on prime-time TV, and on kids' shows are nearly twice as likely to have uncharacteristically small waists as compared to their male counterparts.

With the advent of social media, girls are no longer passive consumers of these messages; they can create them.

Girls often imitate celebrities by posing provocatively in selfies. They see their photos ranked for attractiveness on apps such as *Hot or Not* and in online beauty pageants on Instagram. They're told they can "improve" their images with editing apps that whiten their teeth or put a sparkle in their eyes.

# Also **GENDER!**

For boys:

Unlike their female counterparts, however, most boys aren't out to get skinny. They want to bulk up to be increasingly muscular and unrealistically buff.

Researchers have found a significant relationship between men's exposure to muscular-ideal media and negative self-image.

With the advent of social media, online forums and blogs make it easy to seek and share information about diet and fitness.

Frequent exposure to sexual material can impact men's self-consciousness about their own appearance.

# So what is the impact of all this?

Boys are encouraged at an early age to think that being a man and being physically strong go hand in hand. As they grow older, the pressure to "man up" can sometimes lead to crash diets, over-exercising, smoking, or even taking dangerous supplements. Exposure to highly sexualized material can impact men's self-esteem and relationships.

The pressure to live up to such narrow beauty standards and always be "camera-ready" can affect both physical and mental health. Online communities dedicated to promoting unhealthy behavior, such as "thinspo" (for "thin-spiration") and "pro-ana" (pro-anorexia) sites, urge followers to starve themselves. When girls compare themselves to their favorite celebrities, they usually feel that they don't measure up. Lowered self-confidence and self-esteem can lead to depression, poor school performance, and risky choices.

**What can we do  
about it?**

# Listen and Observe

- Watch what your child is saying
- Listen to the comments they're making
- See what seems important to them

Where is this coming from?

Why are they talking about/doing this?

How can I respond non-judgmentally?

**Encourage them to  
be KIND to their  
bodies and THINK  
about the incredible  
things they do**



# Give them information!

Seek out reliable sources of  
information that empower them about  
their bodies

[Our Bodies, Ourselves](#)

[It's Perfectly Normal](#)

[The Period Book](#)

[What's Happening To My Body?](#)

[The Care and Keeping Of You](#)

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**Keep an eye on  
social media  
platforms and  
google searches**

## **Seek out alternate media!**

Avoid TV, movies, and magazines that promote stereotypes and outdated gender roles.

Seek out unconventional role models and talk about people from media and real life who have different body types and say why you find them beautiful (for example, they're kind or wise).

# Expose myths about body image

Help kids realize that even the most “perfect” people have insecurities

Point out things that have been Photoshopped or go on YouTube and watching videos about Photoshopped images together

Read magazines and talk about the advertising you see and how fake it is

Help them think about the gendered ways people think about bodies

# A group activity...

Please pair off with people sitting near you and wait for Lauren to hand you a scenario

Take 3-5 minutes to talk about the scenario and come up with a few tips for a parent on how to approach the scenario

Be prepared! Each group will be asked to read out their scenario and their tips!

**Questions?**  
**Comments?**