

# Healthy Development

Healthy bodies come in all shapes and sizes. The media portrays the “ideal” girl as thin and beautiful and the “ideal” boy as muscular, tall and good-looking. Children may compare themselves against these images and develop negative feelings about themselves and their bodies.

## Tips for Parents

- Model an appreciation and acceptance of your own body.
- Use positive body language — children readily pick up on negative comments about dieting, weight and being fat or thin.
- Promote size acceptance — everyone is shaped differently. Some people are short, tall, wide, narrow, stocky or lanky.
- Be selective about what your child watches on T.V. Avoid or discuss shows reinforcing stereotypical figures of men and women.
- Talk to your child about accepting and appreciating differences in themselves and others.

ALL 4 KIDS: HEALTHY, HAPPY,  
ACTIVE, FIT!

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## Resources:

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Katz, L. (1995). *How can we strengthen children's self-esteem?* ERIC Clearinghouse on Elementary and Early Childhood Education. Retrieved July 2008 from [http://www.kidsource.com/kidsource/content2/strengthen\\_children\\_self.html](http://www.kidsource.com/kidsource/content2/strengthen_children_self.html)

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**For additional information on the  
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Healthy, Happy, Active, Fit

Uniquely  
Me

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# Uniquely Me

Each child is unique in how he or she looks, acts and feels. Parents and caregivers can help children feel good about themselves as they grow and develop.

- Promote the early development of healthy habits (e.g., healthy diet, physical exercise, sufficient sleep).
- Give children encouragement and meaningful opportunities to grow and develop.

## START EARLY

Children who learn to make healthy choices at a young age are more likely to continue these habits throughout their lives.



Though we're different,  
We are all unique.  
Let's take care of our bodies  
and be proud.

*Lyrics from Ven Conmigo  
By Christy Eliaers*

## Helping Children Feel Good About Themselves

♥ A child's sense of self develops in phases.

- Infants begin to learn to trust others as adults love, comfort and care for them. This in turn helps infants learn to love and trust themselves.



- Toddlers are active explorers and need a safe environment and supportive caregivers as they learn about the world and develop independence.



- Preschoolers are busy acquiring new skills and developing a personal identity. They are learning who they are and what they can do.



You can help preschoolers to develop healthy self-esteem by:

♥ Allowing children to do tasks for themselves (e.g., dressing, serving themselves food, helping around the house).

♥ Giving children chances to make choices (e.g., meal planning, active family activities).

♥ Respecting children and giving them opportunities to express their thoughts and feelings.

♥ Being a positive role model and showing children “what to do.”



♥ Giving children quality time and attention.

♥ Helping children cope with disappointment. Give love and support during life's “ups and downs”

♥ Accepting children's feelings. “It's OK to feel angry. It is not OK to hit someone. Let's think of a better way to deal with your feelings.”

♥ Showing a positive attitude and appreciation for each child as a unique and special self!