

Healthy Children

June 2020 Parent Newsletter

Practical Ways to Build Positive Body Image

Body image is the thoughts, feelings, and reactions a person has toward their own body; this can be a tricky topic for parents. A young person's self-worth is highly shaped while their body, mind, and physical and emotional skills develop. For this reason, it is important to foster positive body image at a young age. The good news is there are many ways to support your child to promote positive body image.

Building positive body image:

- Highlight ways to take care of the whole body through healthy eating, active living, and positive mental health, rather than focus on body weight, size, or shape.
- Encourage balance and variety through eating patterns that support growth and health rather than diet strategies to promote weight loss or changes to body shape.
- Foster open discussion with your child about their body so they can better resist unhealthy pressures from media, society, and peers.

Be a positive role model:

- Speak well about your body;



be grateful for its qualities and capabilities. Talk about what your body can do, not about how it looks. Parents who do this teach their children to do the same.

- Show your child how you build physical activity into your daily routine. Introduce your child to some of the activities you enjoy and try some of the ones they enjoy too.
- Model a healthy relationship with food by eating well-balanced meals together as a family.
- Exemplify normal eating – normal eating is going to the table hungry and eating until you are satisfied. It means choosing healthy food most of the time, but not being so limiting that you miss out on enjoyable food.

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Talking to Your Child About Tobacco

Children who receive support and respect from adults have stronger self-esteem, better respect for their bodies, and greater willingness to engage in activities.

➤ For more information about body image, visit <http://www.teachbodyimage.com/images/pdfs/resourcesandresearch/Key-Messages.pdf>

<http://mediasmarts.ca/digital-media-literacy/media-issues/body-image>



Talking to Your Child About Tobacco

One of the most important jobs as a parent is to keep your children safe – steering them away from staircases as toddlers, teaching them to cross the street when they go to school and, as they grow, protecting them from tobacco use.

Tobacco addiction is a serious health problem today. Kids will feel pressure to try tobacco from youth to adulthood. You can make a difference by talking to them about tobacco.

It's important for parents to talk to their children early and often about the side effects of tobacco use. New studies tell us that when young people make it to 19 years old without smoking they're unlikely to start. Plan to talk about tobacco many times throughout your child's developing years, as soon as they begin to be curious, if not sooner.

Whenever you have time together, you can share your thoughts about tobacco. It doesn't have to be formal. If you use tobacco, studies tell us that by talking to your kids about your use and how hard it can be to quit, you can help prevent them from starting.



It's important to know what matters to them. Use this list to make your conversations personal:

Staying healthy: Tobacco smoke has about 7000 chemicals in it - at least 69 of them cause cancer.

Making your own decisions: Tobacco companies target young people to get them addicted for life.

Looking attractive: People who use tobacco often have yellow teeth, more wrinkles and bad breath.

Grades in school: Young people who use tobacco tend to have lower grades in school.

Playing sports: People who use tobacco have trouble breathing and slower reflexes.

Listen to what your child has to

say about using tobacco. Ask about the pressures they are facing or how tobacco is portrayed in movies and on television. Talk about what they could do if they were offered tobacco. Let them know they can tell you what is happening and you can help.



If you find out your child is using tobacco, don't panic. You aren't alone – we can help. Call AlbertaQuits at 1-866-710-7848 or visit www.albertaquits.ca