



## common sense

# Children, Teens, Media, and Body Image

Our review of dozens of research studies on body image reveals its importance to kids' healthy development and the influential power of media — and parents — to shape attitudes and behaviors, beginning when kids are very young.

## Many kids are dissatisfied with their bodies, and society's body appearance ideals are highly unrealistic.

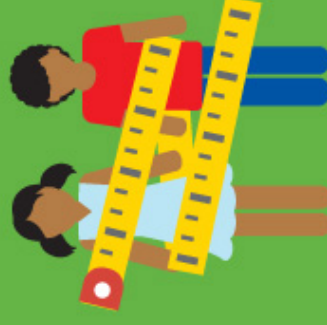
Body image is really important for self-esteem, which is crucial to a young person's development, and disorders linked to poor body image can result in serious mental and physical health issues.

### Get involved

- Tune into kids' lives (ask about friends, school, and feelings).
- Nurture a positive self-image.
- Step in when kids need support



Children as young as 5 express dissatisfaction with their bodies.



More than half of girls and 1/3 of boys as young as 6 to 8 feel their ideal body is thinner than their current body size.

## Body image concerns start earlier than you think; even preschoolers learn that society judges people by how they look.

Ideas and habits formed young last a lifetime.

### Start early

- Emphasize health not weight.
- Teach appreciation for all types of people.
- Focus on talents and strengths.

## You are your child's first teacher.

You have a lot of power to shape their attitudes, values, and behavior.

### Ban "fat talk"

- Say why you appreciate your own body.
  - Watch your comments about other people's bodies and appearance.
  - Be active and eat well for health, not size.
- 5- to 8-year-olds who think their moms are dissatisfied with their bodies are more likely to feel dissatisfied with their own bodies.

