"YOU CAN'T BE WHAT YOU CAN'T SEE"

#1 REMEMBER, YOU ARE STILL NUMBER ONE

#2 TEACH RADICAL ACCEPTANCE

#3 FOCUS ON THE POSITIVE

#4 VALUE HEALTH OVER BEAUTY

#5 SEEK OUT POSITIVE MEDIA MESSAGES

#BuildConfidence
therepresentationproject.org
Dear Parents and Caregivers,

We, at The Representation Project, want to celebrate and inspire all of you amazing parents and caregivers. We want you to know, despite the pervasiveness of media, you still hold the number one spot when it comes to building your children’s body confidence and self-esteem. That’s why we are providing information and tips to support you in helping your children #BuildConfidence!

In fact, new research shows that parents, caregivers, and media’s influence on body image and confidence starts younger than we’d thought. Even from 0-10 years old, children are hearing and applying to themselves harmful messages about what bodies should look like. Boys are learning that they should have a “six-pack” and girls are learning that they should be underweight.

To support concerned parents and caregivers, we partnered with moms, leaders, experts, and market researchers TWTW Companies to bring you the most effective strategies, talking tips, and resources on body confidence. Our goal is to raise awareness and provide information on healthy self-esteem and positive body image so that you will have the resources you need to help your children #BuildConfidence!

Thank you for all you’re doing to support your children and contribute to a healthier culture and world.

Onwards,

Jennifer Siebel Newsom
# Five TIPS

**#1 REMEMBER, YOU ARE STILL NUMBER ONE**
As parents and caregivers, you might feel discouraged by the strong influence of the media and your children’s peers. You should know that research demonstrates that you still hold the number one spot! Your children trust you. They rely on you for information and assurance. Even when it might feel like they aren’t listening, they want your advice. Continue to provide that much needed guidance and support on healthy self-esteem and positive body image.

**#2 TEACH RADICAL ACCEPTANCE**
It is important to embrace imperfections and radically accept yourself. As you model this behavior, your children will follow your lead. Remind them that their differences make them unique and interesting. And don’t forget to continue to celebrate your own uniqueness and radically accept yourself!

**#3 FOCUS ON THE POSITIVE**
When you talk about your children’s achievements concentrate on positive behaviors that are sometimes overlooked. For example, talk about how much you appreciate their creativity, thoughtfulness, or support for siblings and friends. By validating positive behaviors, you’ll help your children internalize positive self-concepts.

**#4 VALUE HEALTH OVER BEAUTY**
One way to continually support your children’s confidence is to focus on ways to be healthier. Instead of praising how your children look, celebrate the healthy things they do. For example, you could tell your children how great it is that they learned to ride a bicycle, walked or ran the mile, or ate a healthy snack or meal.

**#5 SEEK OUT POSITIVE MEDIA MESSAGES**
When every princess and prince is thin and beautiful and every witch and warlock is overweight and unattractive, this makes a big impression. Be intentional about what you and your children watch. Try to guide your children toward positive media messages by actively seeking out movies, games, TV shows, and music that support physical health, as well as showcase role models that model self-acceptance. When you watch something that portrays stereotypes about beauty, explain what you think of this and how these messages might limit your children.

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**Note:** These tips contain information to help children develop positive body confidence, but they do not contain advice on dealing with eating disorders. Experts recommend that if you have any reason to believe that your child is becoming obsessed with dieting or is binge eating and purging, talk to your doctor immediately.
A MIGHTY GIRL
www.amightygirl.com
A Mighty Girl is the world’s largest collection of books, toys, and movies for smart, confident, and courageous girls.

BLACK GIRLS RUN!
www.blackgirlsrun.com
Black Girls Run! tackles the growing obesity epidemic in the African-American community and provides encouragement and resources to both new and veteran runners.

GIRLS INC.
www.girlsinc.org
Girls Inc. inspires all girls to be strong, smart, and bold, providing more than 138,000 girls across the U.S. and Canada with life-changing experiences and real solutions to the unique issues girls face.

GIRLS ON THE RUN
www.girlsontherun.org
Girls on the Run inspires girls to be joyful, healthy, and confident using a fun, experience-based curriculum which creatively integrates running.

GIRL SCOUTS OF THE USA
www.girlsscouts.org
Girl Scouts of the USA builds girls of courage, confidence, and character, who make the world a better place.

NATIONAL EATING DISORDERS ASSOCIATION (NEDA)
www.nationaleatingdisorders.org
The National Eating Disorders Association (NEDA) is the leading 501 (c)(3) non-profit organization in the United States advocating on behalf of and supporting individuals and families affected by eating disorders.

NYC GIRLS PROJECT: IMAGIRL CAMPAIGN
www.nyc.gov/html/girls
New York City is the first city in the nation to tackle the issue of girls’ self-esteem and body image. The city launched a self-esteem initiative to help girls believe their value comes from their character, skills, and attributes – not appearance.

PBS RAISING GIRLS
www.pbs.org/parents/parenting/raising-girls
PBS Raising Girls is a parent’s guide on raising powerful girls.

PBS RAISING BOYS
www.pbs.org/parents/raisingboys
PBS Raising Boys is a parent’s guide on raising and understanding boys.

SPARK MOVEMENT
www.sparksummit.com
The Spark movement is made up of engaged, passionate girls and young women who are building their own solutions and leading a movement against the sexualization, objectification, and violence against women present in the media.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES:

WANT TO DO MORE?
Talk to your loved ones about how media’s limiting stereotypes influence children’s self-concepts. Download our Conversation Starters or place the Miss Representation and The Mask You Live In curricula in your local school.

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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

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

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.

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.

Boys have issues with body image too.

Boys’ own body concerns and risky behaviors can go unnoticed, and their role in supporting healthy attitudes among girls is vital.

Pay attention to your son, too
- Listen for negative body talk.
- Look for dramatic weight loss or gain.
- Check the messages from coaches, peers, and online forums about weight, exercise, and muscle-building.

Unrealistic, sexualized, and stereotypical images and messages about bodies and gender are rampant on the media your kid consumes.

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.

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

Immunize your child
- Choose quality media with diverse characters.
- Question assumptions about appearance.
- Challenge stereotypes about gender, body types, abilities.

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.

Methodology: For this report, we conducted a review of the published research literature on body image in relation to various types of media, among children and teens. We also included relevant research among young adults, and related topics such as gender roles and sexualization. We also scanned popular culture for exemplars and trends on this topic and developed case studies or examples as pointers for intervention. For more details on methods, studies reviewed, and key findings, see the full report at www.commonsensemedia.org/research/children-teens-media-and-body-image.