



What Your Child Learns About Their Body Starts With You

10 Everyday Ways to Build Confidence, Self-Worth, and Body Acceptance

A Parent Resource from Shoshana Ort, LCSW



WHY THIS MATTERS

Children begin forming beliefs about their bodies at a very young age. The comments they hear, the messages they observe, and the way adults talk about food, weight, and appearance all help shape how they see themselves.

The goal isn't to raise children who love every aspect of their appearance every day. The goal is to help children understand that their value extends far beyond what they look like.



10 EVERYDAY WAYS TO BUILD BODY CONFIDENCE



1 Speak Kindly About Your Own Body

Children are always listening. The way you speak about yourself often becomes the way they learn to speak about themselves.

Try This: Replace criticism with appreciation for what your body allows you to do.



2 Focus on What Bodies Can Do

Bodies are for living, learning, connecting, moving, creating, and experiencing the world.

Try This: Celebrate strength, effort, kindness, and resilience rather than appearance.



3 Avoid Labeling Foods as "Good" or "Bad"

Food carries enough emotional weight without attaching morality to it.

Try This: Talk about foods in terms of nourishment, energy, enjoyment, and balance.



4 Praise Character More Than Appearance

While compliments about appearance can feel good, children need to know they are valued for much more.

Try This: Comment on kindness, determination, creativity, courage, humor, and empathy.



5 Teach Respect for Body Diversity

Bodies naturally come in different shapes, sizes, abilities, and appearances.

Try This: Help children understand that differences are normal and valuable.



6 Challenge Diet Culture Messages

Children absorb messages about thinness, beauty, and worth from an early age.

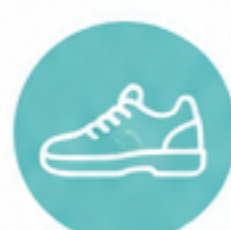
Try This: Encourage critical thinking when discussing advertisements and social media.



7 Avoid Weight-Based Comments

Even seemingly positive comments about weight can send powerful messages.

Try This: Focus on health, feelings, and experiences rather than numbers on a scale.



8 Encourage Movement for Joy

Exercise shouldn't feel like punishment.

Try This: Help children find activities they genuinely enjoy.



9 Model Self-Compassion

Children learn how to respond to mistakes by watching the adults around them.

Try This: Speak to yourself with the same kindness you would offer a friend.



10 Create a Safe Space for Conversations

Children benefit from knowing they can talk openly about appearance, friendships, confidence, and self-esteem.

Try This: Listen with curiosity before offering solutions.



PARENT REFLECTION

- ♥ What messages about bodies did you hear growing up?

- ♥ What messages do you hope your child carries into adulthood?

- ♥ One change I can make this week:



A NOTE FROM SHOSHANA

As a therapist, I have seen how deeply body image can impact confidence, relationships, self-worth, and emotional well-being. The good news is that children don't need perfect parents. They simply need caring adults who are willing to model compassion, curiosity, and acceptance.

Small moments matter. Small conversations matter. And the messages children receive today can become the foundation for a healthier relationship with themselves tomorrow.



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