

# MENTAL HEALTH MEMO

FEBRUARY 2023 | SELF-ESTEEM & BODY IMAGE



## SELF-ESTEEM MATTERS

Adolescence is a formative and confusing time in a person's life. Kids are heavily influenced by their peers and the images they see in media. As children and teens grow and their bodies begin to change, it is normal for them to occasionally lack confidence or struggle with feeling good about themselves. It is important to nurture a child's self-image and perception of their body. Positive self-esteem can start developing when kids feel safe, loved, and accepted for who they are.

### WHAT IT AFFECTS

When children feel good about themselves, they are more likely to try new things, and have the ability to cope with mistakes. Self-esteem helps kids do better in school, at home, and in their relationships. It is also important for kids to feel comfortable in their own skin, regardless of society's beauty standards. Low self-esteem or poor body image can lead to more serious mental and physical health concerns.



### HOW YOU CAN HELP BUILD YOUR KID'S SELF-ESTEEM & POSITIVE BODY IMAGE

#### DO:

- Praise your children
  - Focus on their strengths and accomplishments
- Be a good role model
  - Be mindful of how you talk about yourself in front of them
- Help them learn to do things
  - Show them how to do it, and allow them to fail
- Talk about media messages
- Encourage them to try new things
- Teach them positive self-talk
  - Try daily affirmations
- Educate yourself
  - Appearance ≠ Health

#### DON'T:

- Make comments about their body
- Use harsh criticism or body shame
- Expect perfection
- Use food or exercise as punishment
- Put your child on a diet

