

Kids' body image shaped by parents, expert says

February 26 2014



Doctor offers tips for helping children develop healthy eating habits, self-image.

(HealthDay)—Parents play a crucial role in helping children develop a positive body image and healthy eating habits, an expert says.

"Sometimes we parents forgot how important our words, thoughts, and feelings are in the lives of our kids," Dr. Aaron Krasner, director of the adolescent transitional living program at Silver Hill Hospital in New Canaan, Conn., said in a news release.

"'We make the weather in our homes,' a wiser-than-me parent once told me," Krasner added. "I think it's true—especially when it comes to eating behaviors and [body image](#). As parents, we must be mindful of our own relationship with our bodies, how we eat, and the potential impact

on our kids."

He noted that 80 percent of 10-year-old children are afraid of being fat, according to the National Eating Disorders Association.

To mark National Eating Disorders Week (Feb. 23 to March 1), Krasner outlined the following ways that parents can help their children:

- Don't criticize yourself or others about weight or shape in front of youngsters.
- Don't make negative comments about food, such as "I can't eat potatoes because they're carbs." Instead, teach children the importance of good nutrition and exercise without mentioning weight.
- Praise children on their talents and achievements.
- Explain to youngsters that weight gain and changes in body shape are a natural part of the growing process.
- Talk to children about what they see in the media and remind them of things such as that only 5 percent of American women have the so-called "ideal" body type portrayed in ads.

"At the end of the day, parents are the most influential role models in a child's life, so be mindful of your words and actions. They may be listening when you least expect it," Krasner said.

More information: The U.S. Office on Women's Health has more about [body image](#).

Copyright © 2014 [HealthDay](#). All rights reserved.

Citation: Kids' body image shaped by parents, expert says (2014, February 26) retrieved 10 April 2024 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2014-02-kids-body-image-parents-expert.html>

This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.