

Survey: Nearly 7 in 10 parents believe social media image editing apps and filters have a negative influence on children

May 23 2023



Credit: Pixabay/CC0 Public Domain

With children more plugged in to social media than ever before, a wave of new image editing apps and filters along with trends related to

appearance have parents concerned about damage to body image.

According to a new national survey conducted online by The Harris Poll on behalf of The On Our Sleeves Movement For Children's Mental Health, 69% of parents of [children](#) younger than 18 think social media image editing apps and filters have a [negative influence](#) on their child(ren)'s body image. In addition, 65% of parents agree that social media trends related to appearance—like diet or exercise—have a negative influence on their child(ren)'s body image.

On Our Sleeves encourages parents and caregivers to check in regularly and have conversations with their children about the importance of body positivity. Open and honest dialogue can be critical to understanding how a child feels about their body, which can be exacerbated by external factors like media consumption.

Dr. Erin McTiernan, an On Our Sleeves contributor and pediatric psychologist at Nationwide Children's Hospital, said it's important to talk to kids about food and their bodies, and suggests asking questions to build self-esteem such as, "What are some things you like about yourself?" When your child starts to join [social media platforms](#), she said it's important to pay attention to the content they're consuming and how it's impacting them.

"A child's feelings about their body can affect their [mental health](#)," said McTiernan. "We know that social media can affect everything from purchasing choices to perception of beauty, and unfortunately children are the most vulnerable to unrealistic body image expectations set by these platforms. Children on social media can be exposed to thousands of messages every day about how to look, what to do, and who to be."

Conversations about body image can be challenging, even for confident parents. That's why On Our Sleeves offers parents resources with

information and helpful tips about body image and food, as well as a variety of conversation starters that can help open and maintain a dialogue with children.

These resources can help reframe conversations about food and bodies in a way that eases communication and lessens damage. For instance, experts suggest instead of labeling foods as "good" or "bad," take a more neutral stance and encourage adding foods from a variety of food groups to create balanced, nourishing meals. "

Tips for parents include:

- Focusing on overall health, not weight.
- Modeling positive [body image](#).
- Recognizing your child's positive traits or qualities that don't have to do with their appearance.

The balance between allowing children to explore social media while avoiding potentially dangerous aspects, such as harmful "trends" or messages, can be difficult. Through On Our Sleeves, [parents](#) can work to build trusting relationships that allow their children to reap the benefits of [social media](#) while minimizing the risk of negative outcomes.

Provided by Nationwide Children's Hospital

Citation: Survey: Nearly 7 in 10 parents believe social media image editing apps and filters have a negative influence on children (2023, May 23) retrieved 25 April 2024 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2023-05-survey-parents-social-media-image.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.