



THE FOUNDATION OF HEALTHY BODY IMAGE: IT'S A' PARENT Changing Bodies

Help your child welcome the changes that will take place in their body as they grow.

Girls

Girls have confusing feelings about the body changes they are about to encounter. The cultural obsession with fat causes girls to dread the NORMAL, HEALTHY increases in body fat that accompany puberty. Rather than being excited about growing into "womanhood," many pre-teens dread this process.

Boys

While puberty means a welcome increase in muscle mass for boys, the media presents boys with a hyper-muscular body ideal. As a result, some boys feel inadequate and may turn to steroid abuse and/or compulsive weight-lifting. If your son is engaged in a sport involving weight limits or categories, extra monitoring is needed to see how they handle rules around food and weight restrictions.

Parents

- Discuss and prepare your child for the weight gain that accompanies puberty changes. (See "Becoming an Adult" handout for further information.)
- Celebrate puberty as a milestone in your child's development.
- Model a healthy acceptance of and love for your own body.
- Emphasize that value and worth are based on internal qualities rather than body size or athletic achievement.
- Help your children become media savvy so they can resist unhealthy media pressure.