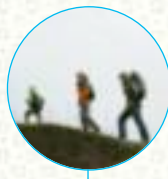


5

Activities that help kids appreciate themselves from head to foot.

FROM LEFT, TIM MACKAY; ISTOCKPHOTO (2); TIM MACKAY



ways to ... foster a healthy body image

MAKE FAMILY CONNECTIONS

Look through photo albums with your kids to find features they've inherited from other family members, such as Grandma's curly hair or Aunt Cathy's smile. "Talk about talents and 'internal' characteristics they share as well," like an uncle's sense of humor or a cousin's artistic abilities, advises Adrienne Ressler, a body-image specialist in Coconut Creek, Florida.

EXERCISE TOGETHER

A good way to get kids thinking about what their bodies can do, rather than how they look, is to make time each week for a family activity — hiking, biking, playing a round of tag — that focuses on fitness and fun. Then reinforce the experience with a gratitude game (see "Practice Gratitude," right).

PRACTICE GRATITUDE

Research shows that grateful people are happier overall. To help kids appreciate their bodies, Adrienne Ressler suggests they play a gratitude game. Write the names of body parts on index cards. Players take turns picking a card and saying something nice: "Thank you, feet, for helping me hike to the waterfall." "Thanks, ears, for letting me listen to my MP3 player."

TEACH KIDS TO BE MEDIA-SAVVY

"Counter media images of impossibly 'perfect' people by talking with your kids about the media, how it's used, and how unrealistic it can be," says Dr. Stacey Nye, a therapist in Elm Grove, Wisconsin. For a real-world example, check out "Secrets of a Magazine Cover Model: Revealed!" at pbskids.org/dontbuyit (click on "Your Entertainment").

STAY POSITIVE

"Avoid disparaging comments and allow yourself an occasional compliment in front of your kids," says Dr. Nye. After all, they're soaking up everything you say — including what you say about your body. 🦩

