

Here's help in raising young girls to have healthy body images

In a culture where appearance weighs heavily on public consciousness, parents are confronted with the challenge of raising children with healthy body images and robust self esteem. This is much easier said than done as evidenced by recent statistics:

— A study of American girls indicated that as many as 65 percent had formed ideas about dieting by age 5.

— A Swedish study found that 25 percent of young females had dieted by age 7 and were already estimating themselves to be larger than they re-

ally were.

— Harvard University researchers report that at least 50 percent of girls are significantly unhappy about the way they look by age 13.

— By age 17, only three out of 10 girls have not succumbed to dieting, according to the Harvard study.

— Boys and young men are not immune to the trend. Body dissatisfaction in men has nearly tripled over the last 30 years, according to Katharine Phillips, M.D., professor of psychiatry at Brown University Medical School in Providence, R.I.

So what's a parent to do? Experts offer the following tips (which may very well help boost your body image too!):

— Don't talk about your own weight or your child's. Instead steer your conversations toward the importance of regular physical activity and making healthy food choices.

— Work on building self esteem through accomplishments and recognizing personal talents. For example, help your child train for and complete a three-mile walk or run. Nurture their gifts in music, art or athlet-

ics. Encourage them to value what their bodies can do, as opposed to how they look, and revel in what makes them unique as individuals.

— Be a role model. Don't engage in any verbal "self-bashing" and lead by example when it comes to nutrition, regular exercise and eating appropriate portion sizes.

— Downplay media ideals. Remind your children that celebrities often achieve physical perfection through surgery and air brushing. Help them identify people in their own lives whom they admire and can emulate.

— Fight compartmentalizing — a tendency to focus on just one area of the body that is dissatisfying.

— Help your children to identify things they like about their bodies, such as pretty eyes, strong legs, a nice smile, etc.

Jazzercise CEO Judi Sheppard Missett says exercise is a wonderful way to boost body image because it shifts the focus from appearance to what the body can achieve. Regular workouts enhance mood and a general sense of well being as


well. So gather up your children and try the following Pilates exercise to improve core strength.

Because it targets "core" (abdominal and back) muscles, this exercise also improves posture, which makes you look and feel more confident. Many good Pilates videos and books are available and classes are springing up everywhere in health clubs, community centers, and dance studios.

Lie on your back on an exercise mat or other soft surface. Bend your knees and lift them off the floor one at a time. Pull them up toward your chest, then curl your upper body off the floor and hold onto your knees in a tuck position. Check to make sure your shoulders are relaxed and your tailbone is on the floor. Now place both hands on your left leg and straighten your right leg. Exhale and change legs, holding

onto your right knee and extending your left leg. Continue switching legs 10 to 20 times. Keep your hips stable, your tailbone on the floor, your abs pulled in, and your shoulders relaxed. Make sure you continue breathing throughout the exercise!

Jazzercise, created by Judi Sheppard Missett, is the world's leading dance-fitness program with more than 6,000 instructors teaching 20,000 classes weekly in the U.S. and around the globe. Since 1969, millions of people of all ages and fitness levels have reaped the benefits of this comprehensive program, designed to enhance cardiovascular endurance, strength, and flexibility. For more information on Jazzercise go to jazzercise.com or call 1(800) FIT-IS-IT or (760) 476-1750.



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Long term care advocates sought

Volunteer advocates and investigators are needed to serve as ombudsmen for residents of nursing homes, residential care facilities, assisted living facilities and adult foster care homes. The Office of the Long Term Care Ombudsman will train the volunteers on the aging process, communication skills, problem-solving skills, investigation and other ombudsman skills. The certification training will begin on Tuesday, March 20, in Portland.

As Certified Ombudsmen, the volunteers work to improve the quality of residents' lives, by identifying and investigating complaints and concerns on

behalf of the residents, then working with the facilities to make changes. The concerns ombudsmen address cover a broad range, and often include resident care, residents' rights, such as privacy, respect and dignity; and quality of life concerns such as appropriate activities and meals. "The volunteers make a tremendous difference in the lives of the residents," says Kathy Walter, Program Administrator, "They are well-prepared and effective."

For information about the program or to learn how to get involved, contact Kathy Walter at 1-800-522-2602.

Free presentation on Caregiving

Caring for Caregivers will be the topic of a Brown Bag (feel free to bring your lunch) session on Wednesday, March 7, at 11:30 a.m. and an Evening Chat discussion on Thursday, March 8, starting at 6:00 p.m.

Learn practical tips on how to maintain personal well-being while providing quality care for

a family member. Session is taught by instructors and master trainers for the periodic Powerful Tools for Caregivers Course.

The discussion will include topics such as goal-setting, problem-solving, tips for effective communication, and ways to reduce stress, guilt and anger.

These free sessions will be held at Tuality Health Education Center, 334 SE 8th Avenue, Hillsboro.

For more information, call 503-681-1700 or visit the website at www.tuality.org.

Daylight Savings time begins March 11

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