

Exploring

children's social-emotional wellness

a tipsheet for parents and caregivers



Capital District
Child Care Council

Healthy Lifestyles Lead to Healthy Bodies

We must know our own biases! Here are some guidelines for how to combat unreasonable weight standards and promote self-acceptance among children:

- Invoke the “no diet talk” rule. When children are around, avoid talking about dieting and any negative feelings you may have about your own size.
- Make exercise fun! Involve children in noncompetitive sports, physical games and dancing. This fosters confidence, and self-esteem, and helps children develop the “hunger to move.”
- Avoid labeling foods as “good” and “bad.” These categories may make children vulnerable to acting out emotional conflicts with food. Try using words like “healthy” or “nutritious.”
- Foster an environment of tolerance and diversity. Try to model attitudes for children by celebrating the fact that people come in all different shapes and sizes, and we are all unique.
- Support children in standing up for themselves. Create a policy of “no teasing” and reinforce children who use words to stand up for themselves. Also, offer positive reinforcement to children who stand up

for their peers who are getting teased.

- Provide alternative body images. Make sure your center is filled with realistic images of human diversity, not just Barbie and GI Joe. Take time to point out how “real people” look and how interesting and beautiful diversity can be.
- Be aware of your own bias. Focus on what the child needs, not on your own agenda.

**Celebrate
the fact that
people come
in all shapes
and sizes**

