

YOUR KIDS ARE LISTENING

What you say and do has a big impact on how your child feels about food and physical activity, and can also affect your child's self-esteem. You are the most important role model for your young child.

Children form attitudes at an early age. Much of what they learn before age six will stay with them for the rest of their lives. Remember to:

- *Emphasize what's special and unique about your child, yourself and others.*
- *Avoid criticizing your body, your child's body or the bodies of other people.*
- *Let your child decide how much to eat. You decide what food to offer and when and where to eat.*
- *Never use food as a reward or punishment.*
- *Set limits on your child's TV, computer and video game time and go outside to play together instead.*
- *Praise your child's actions, behaviours and abilities often.*

SOME THINGS TO KEEP IN MIND

- *Active parents have active children. Instead of just watching your child play, join in.*
- *Teach your child that body images used by the media are not realistic. Healthy bodies come in many shapes and sizes.*
- *Focus on what your daughter does well, not her body shape. Research shows that fathers play an important role in how their daughters see themselves.*
- *Children learn healthy habits from their parents. When it comes to healthy eating, physical activity and self-esteem, be a positive role model for your young child.*

Being a parent isn't always easy. If you find you could use a little help, contact us.

**Call Toronto Health Connection at 416-338-7600
or visit www.toronto.ca/health**



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