

Good essay about focus on body image dissatisfaction among children and intervent...

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Issues of Body image and acceptance

Acceptance is one of the factors contributing to an individual's self-esteem, confidence levels and social development. In the advent of the growing culture of sedentary life and eating fast and refined foods, there have been major concerns on issues of body weight (obesity) and image, particularly among children and the adolescents. An individual's perception of their body image, shape and weight affect acceptance, which in turn affect self-esteem, confidence and social development (interactions with peers). An individual's perception of their body shape and weight is dependent on factors such as parental and peer influence, media influence and societal expectations. Dissatisfaction with one's body has been shown to have several negative consequences such as eating disorders, low self-esteem, destructive social behaviors in a bid to fit in, and antisocial disorders for fear of being ridiculed among others .

Body shape/ image among children and adolescent

There has been an increase in the number of young children and adolescents dissatisfied with their bodies all over the world. Some researchers have found that children as young as seven years are dissatisfied with their body shape/image. More females than males are dissatisfied with their body shapes/image. Up to 74% of the women surveyed in Australia were dissatisfied with their shape or image. A report by The Butterfly Foundation indicated that 35% of women were dissatisfied with their body image while only 24% men were dissatisfied.

There are several intervention measures available to help parents and

professionals to help children and adolescents deal with the issues associated with body image perceptions. Some of the strategies that parents can rely upon include but are not limited to the following

Having a good relationship with the child/adolescent

An open and good relationship with the child/adolescent creates a conducive environment for the parents to advise the child/adolescent and for the child/adolescent to openly relay their fears, feelings and thoughts without fear of retribution. The parents can help their children feel comfortable with and accept their shape even as they work on it. The support of parents is a vital tool in the social development of children as parents encourage the children to interact with others without feeling inferior and hence dispel the negative body perceptions that isolate children from their peers.

Educational Interventions

Parents could also enroll the child into some educational program that can dispel the myths about body shape and image. There is a lot of misinformation coming children's way from the media, their friends and the society in general about body shape and image. Educational programs not only help demystified but also help children to develop healthy eating habits and to understand the role of exercise in improving the body shape. This is crucial because without the right information children/adolescents can plunge into eating disorders and other destructive behaviors such as smocking in an attempt to lose weight. In choosing the right education program, the parent should ensure that it has a holistic approach towards the problem rather than merely emphasizing on the results.

Other ways in which parents can help children/adolescents to manage their body image issues include ensuring the children exercise and take the right portions of foods.

References

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