

# Parent Talk

**\*\*formerly known as the Weekly Chatter**

## Self esteem, self worth, and body image

**Low self-esteem, specifically poor body image, is associated with increased tobacco and alcohol use, according to recent [research](#) (1).**

Self-esteem refers to a person's measure of self-worth and is directly related to a person's body image, or perceptions of their physical appearance. **When children think poorly of themselves, their abilities and their bodies, they are more likely to feel depressed** which can lead to unhealthy coping like drug and alcohol use, delinquency and promiscuous sexual behavior.

**Parents are the best people to promote positive self-esteem and body image in a child's life.**



(2)

### Tips for supporting positive self-esteem and body image in children

**Compliment their physical features (in a healthy, non-sexual way) and never criticize their looks.**

- Tell your daughter that she's beautiful and your son that he is handsome. A child who has heard their parents call them beautiful will be **less likely to fall head over heels in love or become sexually active with a person just because that person thinks he or she is attractive.**
- **Even overweight children are beautiful.** When dealing with weight problems in the home, encouragement is always better than criticism and [research](#) (3) shows that **fat shaming doesn't help kids lose weight** and can increase the likelihood and severity of obesity in adulthood.



**Foster close relationships with each of your children.** Listen to them, play with them and give them your undivided attention when you can. [Research](#) (4) shows, **kids who feel close to, supported and loved by their parents tend to have high self-esteem.** Read the ACPeds blog post, [The Importance of Close Parent-Child Relationships](#) (5) for more information.



**Limit access to the media, including television, secular music and the internet.** Excessive exposure to screens (television, tablets, smartphones, computers, and video game consoles), especially at early ages, is **associated with lower self-esteem** in kids, [research](#) (6) shows.



**Teach your children healthy eating habits, encourage and support physical activity, and ensure that your kids get adequate rest on a regular basis.** Healthy children look good because they feel good and focus more on health than physical appearance.

For more information on fostering healthy habits in kids, view the ACPeds webpage [Lead Your Child to Good Health](#) (7).

## Sex differences in teen depression

**Teen girls are more than twice as likely as boys to experience depression according to a recent [study](#) (8).**

While some research speculates this difference has to do with sex differences in the brain, other [research](#) (9) suggests environmental factors may also play a role.

(10)

## TEEN DEPRESSION IS...

<b>AN ILLNESS</b> Marked by a chemical imbalance that impacts moods, thoughts and behaviors. 	<b>COMMON</b> <b>15-20%</b> of teens will develop depression before adulthood.	<b>SERIOUS</b> Depression is the <b>#1</b> risk factor for suicide.	<b>TREATABLE</b> Treatment for depression can include talk therapy or a combination of talk therapy and medication. 
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(So what can parents do to decrease the likelihood that their daughters (and sons) will develop depression?

- Make sure to equally encourage daughters (and sons) to spend as much time as possible outside in physical activity. Though [studies](#) (11) show that **physical activity and spending time in nature can help ward off depression**, [research](#) (12) suggests that girls are generally less likely to receive encouragement from parents to spend time outdoors and participate in athletic activities.
- Once again, limit access to the media, including television, secular music and the internet. [Research](#) (13) shows that **sexualized images of girls and young women in advertising, merchandising and media is harmful** to girls' self-image and healthy development.
- Monitor your daughter's (and son's) internet use, especially in relation to dating. [Research](#) (14) shows that **girls are more likely to experience severe emotional consequences from digital dating abuse**.

### Practice Good Mental Health

 Eat three nutritious meals per day.	 Do the things and surround yourself with the people that bring you happiness.	 Get 8 to 10 hours of sleep per night.
 Avoid harmful substances.	 Get 2½ hours of exercise per week.	

- Get to know your daughter's (and son's) friends and practice being a positive influence to them as well. Peer pressure can have negative effects on a child's

mental health [studies](#) (15) show, especially when **friends pressure each other to participate in unhealthy behaviors** like drug use and sexual activity.

- [Encourage your daughters \(and sons\) to practice sexual abstinence.](#) [Research](#) (16) shows that **sexually active teens are more likely to suffer from depression and experience suicidal thoughts.**
- [Teach your daughters \(and sons\) the importance of staying away from drugs and alcohol.](#) [Research](#) (17) shows that **drug and alcohol use, especially marijuana, can lead to depression in youth.**

**Most importantly, research shows that feelings of family connected can ward off child and adolescent depression.**



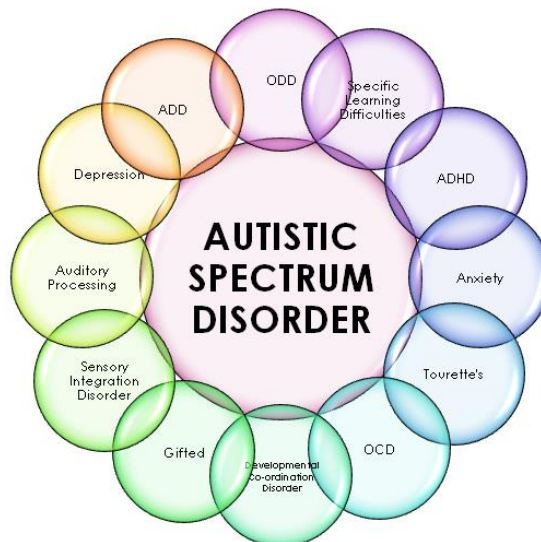
For more information, visit the ACPeds webpage, [Family: the Best Medicine](#) (18).

## What is Autism?

#WeeklyBlogPost

**Families that have a child with autism know that there is often a lack of understanding from others on what autism really is.**

Children with autism grow, learn, and have individual interests like other children, but they think in a different way.



***For information on understanding Autism and supporting children and families of children with Autism,***

**[CLICK HERE](#) (20)**  
**and [please, leave a comment!](#)**

***We love to hear from our readers and hope to receive your feedback!***

Check [ACPeds.org/Blog](#) each Monday for a new post. Click [here](#) (21) to subscribe.



*Don't hesitate to contact us with your questions and comments. We look forward to hearing from you*

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- 1 <http://munews.missouri.edu/news-releases/2017/0621-perceptions-about-body-image-linked-to-increased-alcohol-tobacco-use-for-teens/>
- 2 <https://s-media-cache-ak0.pinimg.com/736x/bf/ce/25/bfce2533360a3eb31db797d15b4114a7--low-self-confidence-build-confidence.jpg>
- 3 [http://www.uconnruddcenter.org/files/Pdfs/Experiences-of-weight-teasing-in-adolescence-and-weight-related-outcomes-in-adulthood-A-15-year-longitudinal-study\\_2017\\_Preventive-Medicine.pdf](http://www.uconnruddcenter.org/files/Pdfs/Experiences-of-weight-teasing-in-adolescence-and-weight-related-outcomes-in-adulthood-A-15-year-longitudinal-study_2017_Preventive-Medicine.pdf)
- 4 <https://www.acpeds.org/the-importance-of-close-parent-child-relationships>
- 5 <https://www.acpeds.org/the-importance-of-close-parent-child-relationships>
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- 8 <https://blog.frontiersin.org/2017/07/18/frontiers-in-psychiatry-depression-affects-the-brains-of-males-and-females-differently/>
- 9 <http://www.medicalnewstoday.com/articles/318329.php>
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