



# Post Adoption Resource Center Newsletter Oakland & Macomb County

## Promoting Healthy Body Image in Teens

Teenagers are particularly vulnerable to body image issues due to hormonal changes, peer pressure and the influence of media. Teens are constantly bombarded with images of what they “should” look like which can lead to unrealistic expectations and negative self-talk. The number of filters, alterations and unhealthy practices teens are exposed to have only multiplied and reinforce the stereotype that all teens should look a certain way or be a certain size.

Teens who have negative thoughts about their bodies may lead to worsening self-esteem, distorted body images, and eating and mood disorders for teens. It's crucial for parents to understand the impact of these influences and provide a supportive environment at home.

### Foster open communication

Creating a safe space for open conversation is essential. It's important to encourage your teen to share their thoughts and feelings about their body without fear of criticism.

Listen actively, ask direct questions that require more than a yes or no response and validate their emotions. Let your teen know that it's okay to have insecurities and assure them that having moments of self-doubt is a normal part of growing up.

Acknowledge and validate rather than shut down the conversation when your teen is telling you how they feel. If a teen heard a hurtful thing about their body, parents have the impulse to jump in and say, “That’s not true”. Don’t swoop in with specific advice but instead you might say, “I’m sorry they/you feel that way. I don’t see you that way. How can I help?”

Keep in mind that you can’t fix some of the challenges your teen is facing and dismissing concerns could cause your teen to stop communicating.



**Orchards  
Children's  
Services**

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*For more information on the Post Adoption Resource Center please contact us at  
**313-530-9746***

*Or visit our website at  
**PARC-orchards.org***



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# Promoting Healthy Body Image in Teens (continued)

## **Promote healthy habits**

Emphasize the importance of a balanced diet, regular physical activity and getting enough sleep. Rather than focusing on appearance, parents can frame these habits as ways to feel strong, energetic and healthy.

Parents can encourage fruit and vegetables starting early on and limit the amount of sugary beverages and processed snacks in the house. Also try to prioritize homemade meals and lunches, and help teens find movements they enjoy, such as sports, dance, walking or exercise.

Be mindful that how you speak about your own diet can influence your child's feelings about food. If there are going to be changes in how you're eating, talk to your child about why. Talk about how you're fueling your body according to what it needs but point out that your teen doesn't have that particular need. At their age, their body is still growing and changing.

## **Be a positive role model**

Your behavior and attitudes towards your own body can significantly influence your teen. Demonstrate self-acceptance and avoid negative comments about your own appearance.

Kids are extremely observant of how parents eat and behave. If a parent is constantly talking about going on a diet or going to the gym to lose weight, the child will hear that. If you're engaging in more physical activity, don't talk about it in terms of weight. Talk about how bodies need to be active. We want to serve as role models for our children and encourage a strong and healthy body.

## **Limit social media influence**

Social media is interwoven into a teen's social life, and it can be positive for finding community, so it's not as simple as saying, "Don't look at it" but encourage breaks from social media and discuss the unrealistic portrayals often seen online. Help your teen understand that many images are edited and do not represent real life. Help them understand there may be a difference between what is reality and what's portrayed online.

Help your kid think critically about the media they consume. If an influencer is talking about what they eat in a day, ask your child what makes that person an expert. They should have some curiosity about who is behind these accounts.

Spend time each week looking at social media with your teen. Talk about the content on their feed in an open-ended way. Ask what they think of certain images or why they follow certain accounts. Point out that people don't post photos when they're sad and alone, they post pictures when they're out and having fun. Directly confront some of the images that can make a teen feel bad.

## **When to seek professional help**

If you notice dramatic weight loss or weight gain, if there are marked changes in how the child is eating, or if body image issues escalate to the point of affecting your teen's mental health, consider seeking help from a professional. The child's pediatrician or primary care provider is a good place to start and it might also be appropriate to engage a therapist for a teen with weight concerns..

## **Advice to teens**

Remind your child that beauty does not need to be a specific size or shape.

*\*Information expanded from: Atrium Health Levine Children's, UNC Health*

## PARC in the Community

PARC sends a huge **THANK YOU** to the **Jockey Being Family** program that continues to support our family activities. Check out their website at: [creatingafamily.org](http://creatingafamily.org) to register for many free trainings and sign up to receive their newsletter.



**JOCKEY  
BEING FAMILY.**

PARC continues to hold the Macomb and Southfield parent supports group on a monthly basis. Over the summer, the Southfield support group was moved to the park so families could enjoy some fresh air!



Over the summer some of our children enjoyed different summer camps and made many new friends.

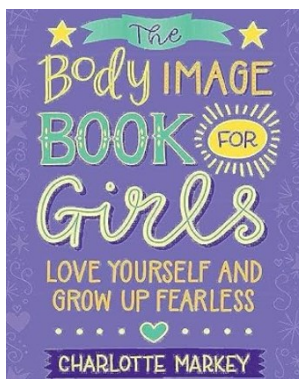
Families have been busy getting their kiddos prepared for their back to school routines. Several families received backpacks and school supplies from Orchards/Jockey Being back-to-school event to make things a little easier. We enjoyed helping

everyone get back into the school spirit with a DJ, face painter, bounce houses, and of course food!

PARC has several things in the works for the upcoming months, be sure to keep an eye out. As always, if you have any ideas or suggestions, please feel free to reach out!



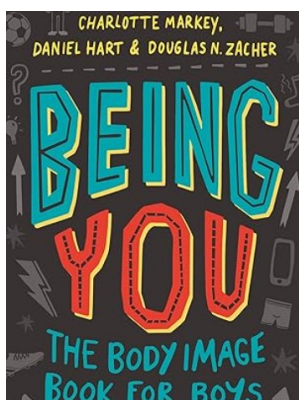
## Suggested Read



***The Body Image Book for Girls: Love Yourself and Grow Up Fearless***

**Author: Charlotte Markey**

Body image expert and psychology professor Dr Charlotte Markey helps girls aged 9-15 to understand, accept, and appreciate their bodies. She provides all the facts on puberty, mental health, self-care, why diets are bad news, dealing with social media, and everything in-between. Girls will find answers to questions they always wanted to ask, the truth behind many body image myths, and real-life stories from girls who share their own experiences.



***Nurturing Adoptions: Creating Resilience after Neglect and Trauma***

**Author: Charlotte Markey, Daniel Hart, Douglas Zacher**

What can we tell our boys to help them feel happy and confident simply being themselves. Being You has the answers. It's an easy to read, evidence based guide to developing a positive body image for boys aged 12+. It covers all the facts on puberty, diet, exercise, self care, mental health, social media. everything in between. Boys will find answers to the questions most on their mind, the truth behind many diet and exercise myths. real life stories from other boys. Armed with this book, they will understand that muscles don't make a man it's enough simply being you.

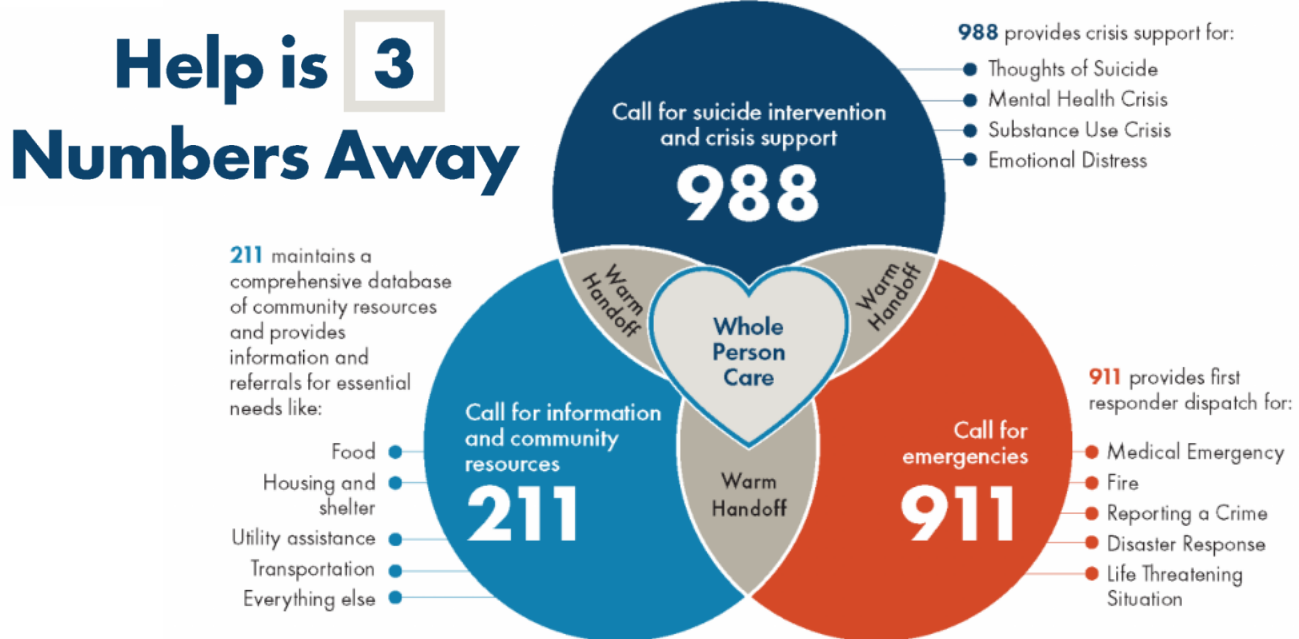
## Valuable Resources

### 2024-2025 Calendar of Virtual Statewide Learning Opportunities

Michigan Alliance for Families provides free workshops for families of children with disabilities, youth with disabilities, and those who support them. If you need accommodations, please let us know at least two weeks before the event.

Register at [www.michiganallianceforfamilies.org/upcoming-events/](http://www.michiganallianceforfamilies.org/upcoming-events/)

Questions? Contact us at [info@michiganallianceforfamilies.org](mailto:info@michiganallianceforfamilies.org).



## Upcoming Meetings, Trainings & Events

### ADOPTIVE PARENT SUPPORT GROUP

**When:** 2nd Tuesday of the month    **Time:** 6:00 - 7:30 PM

**Where:** 24901 Northwestern Hwy, Suite 500, Southfield, MI 48075

**Facilitator:** Betsy Thomas

\*Dinner and childcare will be provided



### MACOMB COUNTY PARENT SUPPORT GROUP

**When:** Last Wednesday of the month    **Time:** 6:00 - 7:30 p.m

**Where:** New Life Presbyterian Church  
11300 19 Mile Rd., Sterling Heights, MI 48314

**Facilitator:** Mikki Boury

\*Dinner and childcare will be provided



★ Please keep an eye out for updates via email and social media! Connect with PARC at:

**Website:** [parc-orchards.org](http://parc-orchards.org)

**Facebook:** [www.facebook.com/OCSPostAdoptionResourceCenter](http://www.facebook.com/OCSPostAdoptionResourceCenter)

**Email:** [parcoocs@orchards.org](mailto:parcoocs@orchards.org)