



BODY BLOCKS

EMBRACE KIDS.

Building better body
image for early learners



Educator Workbook

Introduction

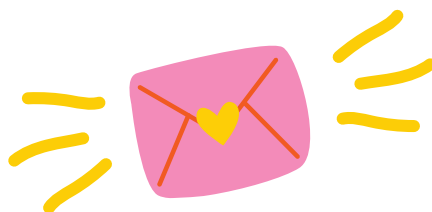
Body Blocks by Embrace Kids is a groundbreaking new program for early childhood educators that aims to prevent body image issues in young people by getting in early with messages of body appreciation.

It's the world's first publicly available, broadly disseminated body image program for early childhood educators, and empowers young children to develop positive relationships with food, movement and their bodies from the very beginning of their lives.

These engaging, evidence-based resources are based on research that has shown children aged 3-5 have already internalised ideas about bodies and appearance (Spiel, Paxton, Yager, 2013). By getting in early, we have the opportunity to build protective factors and reduce risk factors for the development of eating disorders and mental health issues later in life.

More information can be found at theembracehub.com

This workbook contains summaries and worksheets for each module, and checklists for action so you have everything you need to implement and complete the Body Blocks by Embrace Kids program, and create an Embrace Space at your centre.



Sign up for the **FREE**
Body Blocks program at
bodyimageresources.com



About Body Blocks

The scope of the problem

24%

of childcare professionals have seen body confidence issues in children aged 3-5 years old

(PACEY, 2016)

19%

of childcare professionals have seen children reject food because 'it will make them fat'

31%

of childcare professionals have heard a child label themselves as 'fat'

The aim of the Body Blocks by Embrace Kids Program:

- To raise awareness that it's never too early to start building a strong relationship with our bodies.
- To empower early childhood educators to be proactive in helping their students develop a positive lifelong relationship with food, movement and their bodies.
- To promote the vital role that educators (and parents) play in their child's development, including body image.
- To build protective factors and reduce risk factors for the development of body image issues and eating disorders later in life.
- To offer a practical, engaging approach to the prevention of body image issues from a child's earliest years.

Alignment with the AITSL Australian Professional Standards for Teachers (PACEY, 2016)



Australian Institute
for Teaching and
School Leadership
Limited

Standard 4:
Create and maintain
supportive and safe
learning environments

Standard 6: Engage in
professional learning

Focus Area 4.1:
Support student participation
Focus Area 4.4:
Maintain student safety

Focus Area 6.2:
Engage in professional learning and
improve practice
Focus Area 6.3: Engage with
colleagues and improve practice

Checklist for Action

Complete your Body Blocks Modules

- Module 1: Your body talk
- Module 2: Body talk and kids
- Module 3: Play time
- Module 4: Food talk
- Module 5: Meal time
- Module 6: Home time
- Module 7: Me time

- Play the Embrace Your Body Song in your classroom

- Read the Embrace Your Body Book in your classroom



- Put the Posters up in your Classroom
- Put up Posters in your Staff Room
- Include Body Blocks Key Messages in your parent newsletter or communications.



- Include the parent handout in in your parent newsletter or communications.
- Share about the Body Blocks program on your social media

Module 1: Your Body talk

Everyone has their own journey of the feelings you have had about your body. As you reflect on your own experiences- the comments you have heard, and the things you might have thought about- let's make sure that we don't role model and pass of and food or body baggage to the children in our care.

WATCH YOUR WORDS

BODIES

X **Avoid** saying negative things about your own body, or other people's appearance

✓ **Instead-** Reframe to talk about what you appreciate about what our bodies can do.

FOOD

X **Avoid** talking about restricting foods, dieting or changing what we eat to try to change our body shape, size, or weight.

✓ **Instead-** Talk about how you are listening to your body when it tells you that you are hungry or full, and talk about how good you feel when you eat nutritious foods.

MOVEMENT

X **Avoid** talking about movement as punishment.

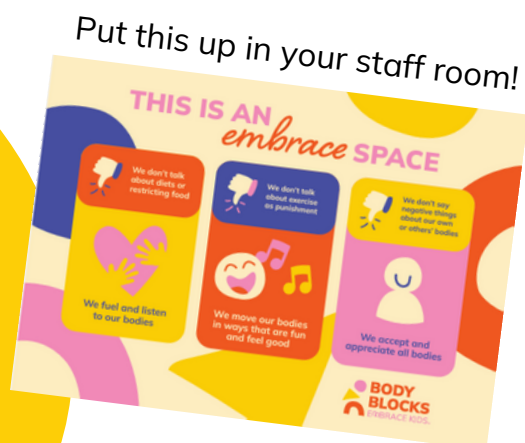
✓ **Instead-** talk about how good you feel after you get to move your body



For professional support in relation to body image and eating disorders, or to help a friend or colleague, contact the Butterfly Foundation Helpline on 1800 33 4673

Challenge time!

See if you and your colleagues can avoid talking about bodies, appearance, weight or diets for a day, a week or even a month.



Module 2: Kids and body talk

Helping children to engage in more positive body talk helps to build better body image from the beginning.

We can do this by:

1

ROLE MODELING

Remembering to talk about our own bodies, food, and movement in more positive ways, like we covered in Module 1

2

REFRAMING

When kids say something negative about their own bodies, try to reframe to respond with a focus on functionality, and talk about the wonderful things our bodies can do instead of what they look like.

3

COMPLIMENTING

Try to use non-appearance-based compliments with kids when you can.

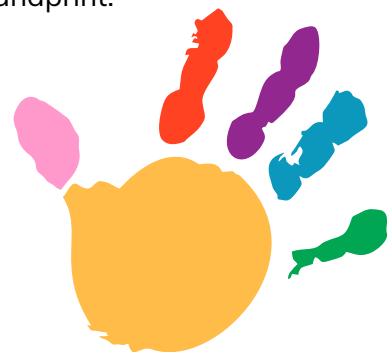
ACTIVITIES TO TRY

Embrace Your Body Dance Party

Use the “Embrace Your Body” song available in your Body Blocks pack to play a game of musical statues. See what shapes kids can make with their bodies and ask how they feel after dancing around the room...

Unique Strengths Handprint

Make a handprint using paint or crayons to trace around the child’s hand. Get them to tell you about all the things they’re good at and then write these along the “fingers” of the handprint.





Module 3: Play time

As early learning educators, you are the experts in play-based learning. Here is a quick guide to the ways you can encourage children to develop positive relationships with food and bodies in the best way- through play!



Play time: Food

When we're talking about food, we always want to be talking about how it will fuel us for play, that it helps us grow and gives us energy - not talking about how much sugar it might have in it, or connecting food to the shape and size of our bodies.

Let's avoid sorting into groups like 'healthy and unhealthy' or 'good and bad' foods as this sets kids up to feel bad about their bodies and what they eat. Instead, name foods by what they are, without judgement: 'chips, cake, strawberry.'

Play time: Dress ups

Here's where you can come in with the key message to celebrate the fact that we are all unique and different. Encourage children to get creative without worrying what others think.

Story time: Read the Embrace Your Body Book!

Check out the recording of 2023 Australian of the Year, Taryn Brumfitt reading her children's story book Embrace Your Body- it's in the Body Blocks toolkit! You can also purchase a copy of the book from the Body Image Movement shop.



Module 4: Food talk

1. Avoid Categories

So often food is labeled as “good” or “healthy”, or “bad” or “junk” food. But kids can be very concrete thinkers, and by calling foods “bad” they might think it means they can never eat that food. And when they do, they may feel bad or guilty.

Instead of categorising foods into ‘good’ and ‘bad’ or ‘healthy’ and ‘unhealthy’, you could categorise them as ‘breakfast’, ‘lunch’, and ‘dinner’ foods, sort by colour, or into groups of crunchy foods, soft foods, etc.

2. Focus on what food can do

Use your senses: I can hear the crunch, it smells good, I love all of the colours, it’s squishy or soft and of course- it tastes good too!

Food gives us energy, it helps our brains to focus, and helps us grow.

Activity Updates

Food collages



Food Bingo



Food I-Spy



Module 5: Mealtimes

Five easy ways to make the most of mealtimes.

Connect and chat - Ask kids to tell you about a special meal they've had and why it was so great, or tell a story about a mealtime you enjoyed recently - like fish and chips at the beach! Talk about why you enjoyed this - was it because you were with your family and friends, or because something funny happened? These stories are really important as they help kids learn to talk positively and with joy about their own experiences.

2) Focus on our senses - Encourage mealtimes to be a sensory experience by talking about the colour, texture and smell of different foods. Ask the kids to describe the food they're eating to the group.

3) Role model listening to our bodies - We want kids to keep their ability to listen and then act in response to their own body cues of hunger and fullness, rather than eating more just to please us.

4) Remember- "I provide, they decide" - Avoid pressuring or bribing children to "eat more" or have "just one more mouthful". Instead, think "I provide, they decide". This reinforces kids' ability to listen to their bodies instead of eating to please us.

5) Speak about all foods in a positive way - we don't need to panic about sugar or tell them not to eat something because it is 'unhealthy'.

Avoid any critiquing or judgement of lunchboxes



Module 6: Home Time

Parents and families play a very important role in the development of their child's relationship with food and bodies, just like you do. Here's how we can extend the key Body Blocks messages to the home environment.

1

Compliments- It's what's inside that counts

Remember to avoid appearance-based comments for kids, but we need to do this for their parents too.

2

Praise process over product

Complement progress, process, or personality traits instead of commenting on kids' appearance or on what they achieved.

3

Share the Body Blocks Key Messages

Include some of the Body Blocks key messages in your newsletter or email communications with parents and families, or print the handouts.



Module 7: Me time

Practicing self-compassion is important - it can help us foster a sense of acceptance for ourselves and our bodies. This allows us to break free from the cycle of self-criticism and comparison, and instead focus on our overall wellbeing and self-care.



Self Compassion Writing Challenge

Set a timer for 3 minutes

For the next 3 minutes, write a paragraph to yourself (as if you are addressing yourself) expressing kindness, compassion and understanding towards yourself regarding your weight, appearance and body shape. Focus on acceptance and appreciation of what your body does for you.

Be Kind

I am doing the best that I can



I accept myself as I am



More from Body Blocks

Watch the digital clip of
2023 Australian of the Year
Taryn Brumfitt reads her
book 'Embrace Your Body'



Dance to the
Embrace Your
Body song



Send out letter
to parents

Letter to Parents

Hi [Director's name],

As a parent, I'm really passionate about making sure [Child's name] develops a healthy and positive lifelong relationship with food, movement and their body. In fact, I think it's important for all young people - especially when you read concerning statistics like this:

- 24% of childcare professionals have seen body confidence issues in children aged 3-5 years old (PACEY, 2016)
- 31% of childcare professionals have heard a child label themselves as 'fat' (PACEY, 2016)
- 19% of childcare professionals have seen children reject food because 'it will make them fat' (PACEY, 2016)

Luckily, there is a solution! I've recently come across this great initiative from The Embrace Collective called Body Blocks by Embrace Kids. It's a FREE professional development program for early childhood educators to help them teach 0-8 year olds how to build a strong body image and positive ways of thinking about food, movement and their bodies.

Starting early with these lessons can make a huge difference in how our kids view themselves, and helps to improve protective factors and minimise risk factors for body image issues and eating disorders later in life.

I've attached a document here with some more information about Body Blocks by Embrace Kids. Would you be open to discussing the possibility of introducing this program to the team? I'm positive it would set [Centre name] apart as a place that not only educates our kids but also empowers them to grow and thrive.

Thanks so much for taking the time to consider this. Looking forward to making [Centre name] even more amazing!


Kind regards,
[Your name]



Certificate of
COMPLETION

BODY BLOCKS
ONLINE
PROFESSIONAL
LEARNING PROGRAM

Seven Modules, equivalent
to one hour of learning and
reflection 2024





The Body Blocks program modules are presented by Amelia Mosely. The script was developed by Dr Zali Yager and paediatric dietitian Dr Lyza Norton, based on the latest evidence, including the research that informed the Confident Body, Confident Child program led by Dr Laura Hart from The University of Melbourne. “I provide, they decide” is a concept from the Division of Responsibility model, originally developed by Ellyn Satter.

About The Embrace Collective

The Embrace Collective has a vision for a world where young people are empowered to grow and thrive, free from feelings of judgement and shame about their bodies. Through our suite of age-appropriate programs and resources, we can get in early to teach the message of body appreciation to young people; and educate their parents, educators and coaches to embed these positive messages in the environments where young people live, learn and play to minimise their lifetime risk of issues like eating disorders, depression and anxiety.

ABOUT TARYN BRUMFITT

Taryn Brumfitt is an award-winning filmmaker, bestselling author, internationally sought-after keynote speaker and the 2023 Australian of the Year. She is the co-Executive Director of The Embrace Collective and director of the inspiring documentaries EMBRACE and EMBRACE KIDS. Taryn is a fiercely passionate advocate for social change and her message has reached more than 200 million people around the world.

ABOUT DR ZALI YAGER

Dr Zali Yager is an internationally-recognised body image expert who has worked in research and academia for nearly 20 years. She is the co-Executive Director of The Embrace Collective and an Adjunct Associate Professor in the Institute for Health and Sport at Victoria University. Zali co-authored the Embrace Kids book with Taryn Brumfitt and was the body image expert advisor on the EMBRACE KIDS film.

CONNECT WITH US!



Instagram

[@theembracehub](https://www.instagram.com/theembracehub)



LinkedIn

[linkedin.com/company/the-embrace-collective](https://www.linkedin.com/company/the-embrace-collective)



Web

theembracehub.com

