Abstract: Bodily self-recognition is one aspect of our ability to distinguish between self and others and is central to effective socialization. Here we explored the influence of emotional body postures on bodily self-processing in typically developing (TD) as well as in high-functioning ASD children. Method: Subjects' bodies were photographed while expressing endogenously- (self-generated, Experiment 1) or exogenously-driven body emotions (imitated upon request, Experiment 2). Postures conveying positive (happiness), negative (fearful) and neutral valences were used. These pictures served as stimuli in a visual matching-to-sample task with self and others' body-images. Results: A similar self-versus-others advantage was found in TD and in ASD children, since participants were faster with stimuli representing their own than others' body. This "self-advantage" was modulated by self-expressed emotional body postures being present with pictures of happy and neutral, but not fearful body images. This modulation was stronger when emotional postures were endogenously rather than exogenously driven. Moreover, faster responses were observed for others' fearful rather than happy or neutral body images in both groups. Conclusions: The bodily self-advantage is a low-level function present in typically developing (TD) and in high-functioning ASD children. Body postures, especially when they are endogenously generated, modulate the self and others' body processing. The advantage for processing others' fearful, comparing to others' happy and neutral, body postures may have played a crucial evolutionary role for species survival. © 2011 American Psychological Association.

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