



Helping Parents Reverse Childhood Obesity While Instilling Positive Self-Concept

Sarah Spencer, TWU SN
Laura Kubin, PhD, RN, CPN, CHES

Background

- 12.5 million obese children in U.S. [4]
- 1 in 3 children are overweight [2]
- Consequences of obesity and overweight[3]
 - High blood pressure
 - Heart disease
 - Type 2 diabetes
 - Asthma
 - Joint and muscle pain
 - Heartburn
 - Depression
- 10.6% of students reported they had not eaten for > 24 hours in order to lose weight or prevent gaining weight [5]
- 4.0% of students had vomited or taken laxatives to help lose weight or to help reduce weight gain [6]



- Emphasis on body weight drives parents to focus on the scale and to push their children toward the proper size
 - Weight is not always a good indicator of health
 - Weighing can cause stress and emotional turmoil on children [7]
 - Weighing can lead to low self-esteem
 - Weighing can lead to extreme eating disorders

Purpose of Project

- Create a brochure to teach parents how to help preadolescent children lead a healthier lifestyle
- Principles of writing to low health literacy levels including:
 - Using plain language
 - Providing white space
 - Focusing on action,
 - Written at a 7th grade level
- Shift the focus from weight to overall health
- Serve as a guide for parents on how to focus on the child's strengths and other indicators of health besides weight and body characteristics
- Increase self-esteem of the child trying to become healthier

Implications for Healthcare Providers and Educators

- This project provides a supplement that can reach more disciplines in far-reaching areas.
- Through collaborative reinforcement of parent education we can help decrease the number of health issues related to childhood obesity.
- Multidisciplinary coaching can curb the unsafe and detrimental practices associated with extreme weight loss and the focus on weight.
- Brochure can be distributed to parents at doctor's visits, health fairs, or at schools

Focus on Getting Healthy: Teaching Points for Parents

- Follow MyPlate recommendations such as: [9], [10]
 - Make half your plate fruits and vegetables
 - Make half of your grains whole grains
 - Switch to skim or 1% milk
 - For more information visit <http://www.choosemyplate.gov>
- Teach your children about healthy snacks: apples, bananas, carrots, grapes, etc., and let them see if they can pick a healthy snack
- Let your children plan dinner once a week. Help them figure out if they have the food groups they need
- Encourage your children to exercise at least 60 minutes every day [1]
- **LEAD BY EXAMPLE!** Let your child see you getting healthy
- Children should not watch more than 2 hours of television a day [8]
- Avoid unhealthy snacks such as candy, sweets, etc.
- Make it a family goal to get healthier



Promote a Positive Self-Concept

- Encourage your children to accept themselves as a person.
- Tell your child what you think makes them a great person like being:
 - Smart
 - Funny
 - A good listener
- Do not criticize your child for their appearance.
- Do not use words like:
 - Fat
 - Chubby
 - Large
 - Thick
- Tell your child their body is beautiful
- Praise your child for things that are not physical
- Point out your child's strengths



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