

# Healthy Weight for Kids: Discussion Points



## Questions to ask Parents

- Do you have regular planned meals and snacks on most days?
- Does your family eat meals together regularly?
- Does your child drink more than 4-6 oz of juice each day?
- How many times per week does your child drink sweetened drinks such as soda and fruit drinks?
- How many hours each day does your child watch television and or play video games?
- Do you give your child certain foods as a reward or restrict foods as a punishment?
- How do you feel about your child's weight?
- Are you familiar with the food guide pyramid and approximate serving size and amount of servings your child needs from each group?

## Risk Factors for Childhood Overweight

- Weight of biological mother
- Children with two obese parents
- Parenting style (high degree of control leads to problems)
- Amount of TV watching
- Skipping meals
- Poor eating habits (eating while watching TV, excessive juice or soda)
- Inactive lifestyles

Parents and children each have a role in developing a healthy feeding relationship!

Parents	Child
Plan for positives – expect success	Choose to eat
Prepare and put food on the table	Choose what to eat from food that is offered
Provide support as your child develops eating habits	Choose how much to eat

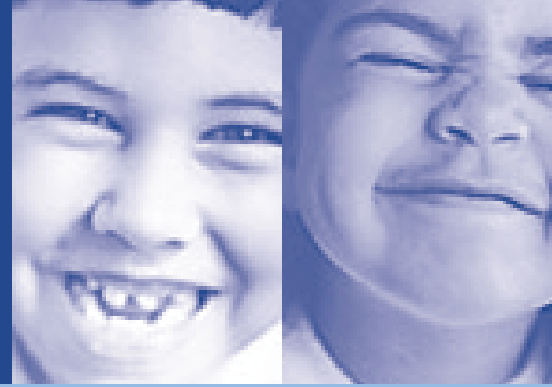
Children can regulate their own calorie intake. Help parents let children regulate naturally by allowing children to eat when they are hungry and stop when they are full. Parents need to offer a variety of healthful foods at regular meal and snack times, avoid “food handouts,” and try not to reward or punish with certain foods.

Adapted from Stress-Free Feeding, Children's Healthcare of Atlanta ([www.choa.org](http://www.choa.org))



# Treating the Overweight\* Child

\*Overweight – not obesity – is the preferred terminology.



## Screen

BMI and growth charts can be found at [www.cdc.gov/growthcharts/](http://www.cdc.gov/growthcharts/)

BMI 85-94% indicates risk of overweight – screen for other risk factors

BMI  $\geq$  95% indicates overweight and need for in-depth medical assessment

If child falls into one or more categories outlined below, consider for referral to a Registered Dietitian and/or counselor for further assessment, counseling or medical nutrition therapy:

- If  $\geq$  95% for weight-for-length for kids less than age 2
- If  $\geq$  95% BMI for age/sex for kids greater than age 2
- If child increases a percentile (or more) above his/her established weight for age pattern
- If weight exceeds height by more than two percentiles

## Evaluate

Assess family readiness for change by asking:

- How concerned are you about your child's weight?
- Do you believe weight maintenance is possible?
- What practices (eating and activity) are you willing to change?

Assess eating habits (see questions on other side); ask family to describe a typical day. A Registered Dietitian can obtain a complete diet history to identify issues and help find solutions.

Assess physical activity habits to uncover energy expenditure opportunities, explore organized sports, school-based activities, and daily living activities (such as walking to school).

## Treat

- Intervention should begin early and involve family and caregivers in treatment program.
- Educate family about possible medical complications.
- Treatment focus needs to be on permanent change and family should learn how to monitor eating and activity habits – emphasize small gradual changes.
- Restricting calories can lead to stunted growth; adversely impact bone density; result in begging, sneaking, stealing food; cause a child to become preoccupied with food and overeat whenever food is not restricted; and may lead to an eating disorder.

### Parent Messages:

- Focus on family – not the child.
- Love and accept your child.
- Enjoy regular meals together.
- Get the whole family moving.
- Offer healthy foods and snacks.

### Recommendations for weight goals\*

Age 2-7 years	BMI 85-94%	Weight maintenance
	BMI $\geq$ 95%	If no complications, weight maintenance If medical complications, weight loss
Age > 7 years	BMI 85-94%	If no complications, weight maintenance If medical complications, weight loss
	BMI $\geq$ 95%	Weight loss



Healthy Weight for Kids

Made possible by the AMERICAN DIETETIC ASSOCIATION FOUNDATION from a generous grant provided by MEAD JOHNSON & CO.