



PARENTS

WAYS TO COMBAT WEIGHT BIAS



Challenge your personal assumptions about body weight


- Do you make assumptions based on weight about a person's character, intelligence, or lifestyle behaviors?
 - What are your views about the causes of weight gain? How might these views affect your attitudes about people with high body weight?
 - What are common stereotypes about persons with high body weight? Do you believe these to be true or false? What are your reasons for this? Can you think of examples that challenge common stereotypes?
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Communicate with sensitive and appropriate language

Avoid making negative comments about your own or other people's weight in front of your child, such as "These pants make me look fat", or "That person is too fat to be wearing that". Be careful not to express negative associations with having high body weight (e.g., like being lazy), and instead of using words like "fat", use more sensitive words like "high body weight".

Intervene to reduce weight-based teasing and victimization

Be on the look-out for peer harassment, teasing, or victimization if your child has a high body weight. Youth of higher weight are often teased at school and through social media. But remember, this can also happen at home with other family members. Talk to your child about these issues and find ways to intervene, offer support, and help your child cope.



Provide your child with examples of role models with high body weight

Children rarely see examples of positive role models who aren't thin. Help your child learn that many individuals with high body weight are successful and accomplish important goals. Find examples of people who challenge common weight-based stereotypes, and share these with your child.

Increase your understanding about the causes of weight gain

Many people wrongly assume that people have a high body weight because they are lazy. It's important to recognize that this perception is false, and to understand that body weight can be influenced by a variety of genetic, biological, environmental, and behavioral factors.



Emphasize the importance of health over thinness

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Increase awareness of weight bias and respect body diversity

Try to promote awareness of weight bias in your child's school. Talk to your child's teachers or the school principal to express your concerns about this problem and to educate others. We all come in different shapes and sizes, so it's important that schools respect body diversity.