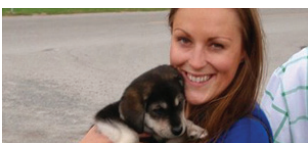




Healthy, active kids
How parents can motivate their kids



Overcoming obstacles
A young woman's journey with hearing loss

**MEDIA
PLANET**

September 2012

CHILDREN'S WELLNESS

3

FACTS

ABOUT SPEECH
AND HEARING

BE THE ROLE MODEL YOUR CHILD NEEDS YOU TO BE

Help shape your children's sense of self-worth

During this time of back to school, students are faced with many obstacles; motivation during classes, activity levels for sports, getting a healthy and balanced diet, as well as the pressures from their peers.

Leading by example

Active living, healthy eating, and adequate sleep are the cornerstones of healthy living. With current awareness about the importance of a healthy lifestyle, parents may struggle with how to encourage healthy eating and physical activity without cultivating an unhealthy weight obsession. It is important to create environments supportive of healthy food choices and activities at home, school, and other community locations where families gather. A supportive environment nurtures the minds and bodies of youth and includes a social environment free of weight bias or weight stigma.

Emotional & Physical Stress

Students who are bullied because of their weight may experience negative consequences to their physical and emotional health: social isolation, anxiety, poor body image, unhealthy eating (possibly eating disorders). Overweight students who are bullied may perform more poorly in school and may skip school to avoid being teased about their weight.

Breaking the Bias

Weight bias may occur when people believe that being overweight is a

person's fault. However, being overweight is caused by many factors that one cannot always control. Your food choices and physical activity affect your weight to a certain degree, while genetics and environmental also have a large influence.

Conforming to Media

The 2008 McCreary Adolescent Health Survey found that in BC, 51% of healthy weight females were trying to lose weight, and 31% of healthy weight males were trying to gain weight to move towards being more muscular or fit. Rather than feeling pressured to change their bodies to conform to an ideal weight or shape, youth need supportive environments where they are valued for their strengths and attributes.

What parents and schools can do to reduce weight bias:

1. Eat well and be active—no matter what size or shape you are.
2. Help children and youth accept size diversity. Be comfortable with your own body and talk about how you are able to work, play, and enjoy life no matter what you look like.
3. Focus on health rather than weight. By combining healthy eating with enjoyable physical activity, one's body weight often will settle at the weight



Helen Yeung
MHSC, RD, Community Dietitian in North Vancouver, Vancouver Coastal Health

MY BEST TIPS

- 1 Address weight-based bullying in anti-bullying programs at school. Just as it is not acceptable to be teased because of race, gender, or religion, it is wrong to discriminate based on weight or body size.
- 2 Resist media messages about what is the "ideal" look. Help your children set goals that are not related to physical appearance, and are set as case by case basis.
- 3 Rather than talking about the calories burned while exercising, talk about how physical activities make you feel better, stronger, happier, and other positive benefits not related

that nature intended.

4. Don't diet! Rather than counting calories in food, talk about how you are savouring a food while eating mindfully.

5. Be a good role model. Children will pick up on the attitudes and behaviours of those around them.

Healthy lunches for kids

Back to school is the start of exciting new experiences for our children. Take advantage of all that enthusiasm to add a healthier twist to school lunches. Check out our tips - low sodium doesn't mean bland and boring!

Make it whole and lower in sodium

Buy whole grain bread with no more than 15% DV for sodium. You can find this information on the Nutrition Facts table on food packages.

Make it simple

Instead of buying the high-sodium deli meats, buy the ones that are lower in sodium, or have been roasted without sodium, or choose fresh, unseasoned meats such as chicken breast or roast beef and cook them yourself. Before cooking, rub your meat with a little olive oil mixed with chopped fresh or dried herbs and spices. Tasty and easy.

Make it fresh

Talk to your children about what veggies they like. Slip some into their lunch boxes — veggies like dark green lettuce, thinly sliced radishes, grape tomatoes or baby carrots. Your kids can add some to his or her sandwich for flavour and texture, and nibble on the rest. Bonus: Adding veggies just before eating means no soggy sandwich complaints.

Make it interesting

Instead of using condiments for added zing — these are often high in sodium — include a quick and easy homemade dipping sauce. Try plain yogurt stirred with lemon juice and a little honey. It's made in seconds, and is a great dip for the veggies! For a bone-building drink, add a container of milk.

Make it balanced

Adding foods from each of the four food groups in every lunch helps ensure your children get the full range of nutrients they need to grow up strong and healthy.

SOURCE: WWW.HEALTHYCANADIANS.GC.CA/EATWELL

HELEN YEUNG

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CHALLENGES

FACT

1

A MILD HEARING LOSS CAN CAUSE A CHILD TO MISS AS MUCH AS 50% OF CLASSROOM DISCUSSION



Question: With videogames, reality TV and Facebook — it’s no wonder kids aren’t active anymore. So what can parents do to change this?

Answer: It’s as simple as starting them young and participating in activities with your kids.

Empowering kids through sport!

Physical literacy is important for the development of your children, which ultimately results in setting them up for a full and active life.

Kids aren’t moving as much these days; compared to 30 years ago. The average child has lost 2000 steps a day from their physicality, which can be credited to the amount of time they spend indoors or being driven places. Obesity is now the top health problem among today’s school aged children. Some physical activity experts are hoping for changes, by advocating the way children and their families incorporate physical literacy into everyday life. Drew Mitchell, as the manager of ViaSport, he’s seen a huge shift over the years in how physicality is incorporated into a child’s every day life. Mitchell refers to the Seven Stages of Sport, a reference for children’s physical development. In Stage 2, the Fundamental Stage, children between the ages of six and nine are in their prime to develop their physical literacy skills that lay down the fundamental skills for the rest of their lives. His concern is that children are less likely to deve-

lop these skills organically as a result of changing times. “Most kids don’t walk to school,” Mitchell explains. “You think about the number of independent decisions made by that child if they were walking to school: Looking across the road, looking for cars, talking to people. Now that independent thinking is gone. And you wonder why kids are more dependant, longer.” Additionally, we live in a much different era than the days when parents let their kids play freely outdoors. “In my generation we left in the morning and came back when someone called us to dinner. We were playing in our neighbourhood, climbing trees,” Mitchell says. “We now have a child population that’s much more inactive, and much less healthy because of that.” “If we’re not letting it happen organically, we have to at the very least make sure they’re getting organized activity done.” Mitchell says it’s challenging because of the lack of physical education in elementary schools in BC, which is profoundly detrimental to the organic development of physicality. “We blame the computer, we blame

the TV but these are just places kids have landed because they can’t do activity,” he says. Mitchell encourages families to do simple things like go for a nightly walk, visit a local recreational centre and get involved in after-school activities. The key is to start young, so that physicality becomes second-nature to them. “If kids are allowed to be active when they’re young, there’s a much greater chance they’re going to be active



DREW MITCHELL
Manager, Technical and Performance Services ViaSport

for life,” Mitchell says. “The research is pretty clear that when kids are asked, “Would you rather be active or would you rather be playing your online game?” The vast majority stated very clearly they would rather be active.” Claudia Sjöberg echoes this sentiment. As the president of Atlantis Programs and Pedalheads Swimming and Biking Programs, she’s seen first-hand what physicality can do for children when introduced at a young age. “My main goal is to help them to discover joy in activities,” she says. “People can experience that through their lifetime. We want to encourage the passion and joy in participating in activity.” She says when the children are taught to ride a bike, they learn basic skill development, while building confidence and a sense of self. “They also have a really enjoyable time so they’re motivated to do it again,” she says. “We try to develop them so they enjoy sport so that it’s a lifelong activity.”

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WE RECOMMEND



School bullying
the importance of self-esteem and communicating with your children.

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“That bully needs help just as much as the bullied do.”

Tough being a kid **p. 09**
The importance of afterschool programs and mentorship to build self-esteem.

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Strengthening skill sets to boost self-confidence

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NEWS



FACT
2
TWO OUT OF EVERY 10 CHILDREN HAVE SOME TYPE OF SPEECH OR HEARING DISORDER

Supervised environments and peer mentorship can help curb bullying

It's tough to be a kid

The role of afterschool programs and peer mentorship play a valuable role in curbing bullying. “Everything we do at a Boys and Girls Club is designed to give them the support that they need, get help if they need it and build skills to navigate challenges in life which includes bullying,” says Carolyn Tuckwell – President and CEO of the Boys and Girls Clubs of South



ROSS ELLIS
President, Love Our Children USA,
STOMP Out Bullying
PHOTO: SUSAN BOWLUS

Coast BC. “It’s all about giving kids a place to be when they aren’t at home or at school.” You’d be hard pressed to find someone who hasn’t experienced bullying at least once in their adolescence. It can take many forms, from cyber bullying to name calling in the school yard. No matter how it looks, bullying can have a profoundly negative impact on a child’s social behavior. “It starts a cycle for them - when they don’t feel safe, it can cause them to withdraw or become distracted,” adds Tuckwell. The end result can be poor grades, shyness or on the other end of the spectrum, serious depression and suicide. Ross Ellis, Founder and CEO of STOMP Out Bullying, says it’s not as simple as a parent trying to get a bully arrested or kicked out of school. “A bully has learned this from someone, they’re obviously having a problem as well,” says Ellis. “That bully needs help just as much as the bullied does.” The middle years are a formative part of a young person’s life where independence is vital to their growth. According to Tuckwell, afterschool programs function as a way to foster

independence in young people. “We know they do that best in a supervised environment,” adds Tuckwell. “The environment we create in our club, to them feels like they’re just hanging out but there’s gentle supervision there.” Activities offered like sports, help with homework and even just hanging out with other kids in the programs can help build esteem and prevent the likelihood of that kid becoming a bully or being bullied. “You can’t underestimate the importance of kids feeling successful in any one place in their life and how that impacts other parts of their lives,” says Tuckwell. She also points to the confidence young people can gain from building relationships with the young volunteers that work with them in the programs. “It’s knowing what to do and that you’re not alone, there’s confidence in that,” adds Tuckwell. “Making sure that they know that the right thing to do is ask for help if they’re being bullied.” Ellis says debunking the myth of “tattling” is another major step in preventing bullying pointing to the help chat line her organization has which has helped 4000 kids and save 61 lives since it started last June.



CAROLYN TUCKWELL
CEO, Boys and Girls Club,
South Coast BC
PHOTO: DOMINIC SCHAEFER

“They want to talk privately, they don’t necessarily want to talk in front of everyone else,” adds Ellis. She points out that the term bullying is used very loosely and kids can work out their problems, but they need that little push. “Parents and after school programs can help kids to know what to do in those situations,” add Tuckwell.

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WEIGHT BIAS BULLYING

Why do people bully about weight?

➔ People are more likely to make mean comments about weight if they believe that being overweight is a person’s fault. In reality, being overweight is caused by a lot of factors - like genetics, human biology, and our environment. It’s not just about “personal choice.” Body weight is very complex and being blamed for being overweight only creates more weight stigma. Bullying someone or making them feel bad about themselves for their weight or personal appearance never has a positive outcome. In fact, recent studies have found that weight bullying can even make physical health worse by causing people to adopt unhealthy eating patterns and avoid physical activity.

What are the consequences of being teased about weight?

➔ When people are bullied and teased about their weight, it’s common to feel down and ashamed. Sometimes this leads to feelings of depression, low self-esteem, and poor body image. It can make people want to avoid being around others, or withdraw from their usual activities. If you notice your child is withdrawn, try communicating with them or suggest talking to a teacher, or another adult who can offer support and guidance.

What can you tell your children to do if bullying occurs at school?

- It’s better not to fight back or retaliate. Bullies want to get a reaction out of you. If you stay calm, ignore them, and remove yourself from the situation, it will become boring for them and they will be more likely to leave you alone in the future.
- Project confidence! If you look unsure of yourself, you are more of a target. Hold your head up high and stand tall.
- Stay close to a friend. You are less likely to be a target if you are with another person.
- Help someone else who is being bullied. You’re not only doing the right thing, but you might make a good friend in the process.

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INSPIRATION

A personal story about a young woman diagnosed with a hearing impairment at an early age, and how her attitude towards this obstacle eventually changed.

Overcome obstacles and enhance your life

When Emma Houston was diagnosed with a hearing loss at the age of three; she couldn't have asked for a stronger support system. Her mother Melanie, worked for the BC Association of Speech Language Pathologists and Audiologists, and was very familiar with how to nurture and support her daughter's impairment.

"My mother was very on top of me, academically, with reading, writing communication skills, and my speech," she says. "I was really lucky because she was hyper-sensitive or hyper-alert to everything. I didn't really have to think about it or be concerned with anything."



And though her mother knew exactly what to do when it came to academic development, the two weren't on the same page when it came to accepting Emma's disability.

Melanie wanted her daughter to embrace and celebrate it. When the 24-year-old was still in elementary school, her mother bought her banana clips to attach to her hearing aid, with a t-shirt that said "I can't hear you, I have bananas in my ears."

"I was mortified," Emma remembers. Eventually, Melanie accepted that Emma was going to deal with her hearing impairment in her own way.

"The last thing I wanted to do was draw attention to it," Emma says. "She began to understand that."

Emma found that the best way to deal with her disability in the classroom was to simply sit in the front row, where she could hear clearly.

These days, Emma works as a veterinary technician. She accepts her hearing condition and is no longer ashamed.

"It's not something people should be embarrassed about," she says. "My attitude has shifted."

FACT

3

AN ESTIMATED 3 OF EVERY 1,000 BABIES ARE BORN WITH HEARING LOSS. WITH OTHERS SUFFERING HEARING LOSS THROUGH THEIR SCHOOL YEARS

NEWBORN HEARING SCREENING

- 1 Newborn screening tests consist of two stages the first stage consisting of OAE (Otoacoustic Emission) tests. A sound is sent into the ear and a response sound is recorded in the ear canal. If no response is recorded the child is referred for further tests.
- 2 The next stage test is an ABR (Auditory Brainstem Response), which is an electrical response generated at the brainstem when an auditory signal is presented to the ear. This test allows specific threshold information to be recorded. This helps identify hearing loss and degree of loss.
- 3 The goal is that every newborn is screened before she or he leaves the hospital, or at the very latest by the time the infant is 3 months. The sooner the better in terms of identification of loss. The goal is 3 months for identification, 6 months for intervention.

- 4 The first 3 years are critical for speech and language development and any interruption can cause delay and in some cases permanent harm to language acquisition. Generally, hearing loss is medically treatable. It can also be sensorineural, meaning the loss occurs in the inner ear or the auditory nerve. This loss is more detrimental to language development, particularly if no remediation is undertaken. If your child is diagnosed, the first step is to visit with an audiologist to get information and help to determine the next step in terms of remediation.

BRENT CLAYSON
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Strengthening skills and learning differently

When a student is struggling with learning; it can often be an unsettling situation for parents and the child. However, the key to empowering a child with learning disabilities and strengthening their skill set; is to target the reason they struggle as early as possible.

Sandra Heusel works at the Eaton Arrowsmith School, a private school for students with learning disabilities. She says a student's literacy skills are a key indicator in determining their abilities. The earlier you're able to identify the reason why a child would be struggling with reading, the more helpful it will be for the student's outcome.

"This is why we feel it's so important to be able to get down to the neurological level [to determine] which area of the



brain is responsible for reading difficulties," she says. "[We do this to] strengthen and target those areas of the brain so students have the capacity to pick up the code of language, identify sight words to comprehend what they're reading, and to go from there."

In her experience working with children who have learning disabilities, Heusel has seen a high number of students go on to experience anxiety and depression. This is one reason why it's key to target the problems early on, preferably by Grade 3.

"When we're able to target, remediate and strengthen the areas that are weaker, their self-confidence and self-esteem comes up right away," she says.

Supporting a student with learning

disabilities is absolutely essential in order to put them on the right path.

"It has nothing to do with the child or adult's intelligence, it all has to do with which area of the brain is relatively weaker and therefore isn't able to grasp the new concepts or information that's coming to them," Heusel explains. "To know which way the student works best, it's really important to let the teacher know so they can work as a team."

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PRESENTS

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