

Our Kids Deserve Weight-Inclusive Care

How to advocate for your child at the doctor's office *and* in life

The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) has published some disheartening guidelines around extreme weight loss measures for kids and teens. Eating Recovery Center and Pathlight Mood & Anxiety Center (ERC Pathlight) strongly oppose these guidelines – and we're here to answer your questions and help you advocate for your child.

What's at Stake?



As currently written, we expect the AAP's guidelines to cause harm and put young people at risk of developing or worsening eating disorders, disordered eating and other mental and physical health issues.

– Anne Marie O'Melia, MS, MD, FAAP
Chief Medical and Chief Clinical Officer at Eating Recovery Center

MORE THAN HALF of elementary school-aged girls are already **concerned about their weight.**¹



By the time kids turn **7 years old**, **1 IN 4** has already tried **DIETING.**¹



Adolescents on **MODERATE DIETS**

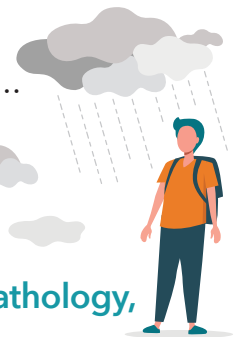
ARE **5X MORE LIKELY** to develop an eating disorder

and adolescents on **EXTREME DIETS**

ARE **18X MORE LIKELY** to develop an eating disorder, than those who are not.²

WEIGHT STIGMA is a significant **risk factor** for...

- depression,
- low self-esteem,
- eating disorder pathology,
- and body dissatisfaction.^{3, 4}



We've made great progress when it comes to weight inclusivity in health care, but there's still work to do. ERC Pathlight is committed to practicing weight-inclusive care, evolving our treatment practices as we go. Together we can take action to make sure our kids get the support they deserve.

Scan the QR code to sign the petition.

1. Common Sense Media, 2015. | 2. Golden, N. H., Schneider, M., & Wood, C. (2016). Preventing obesity and eating disorders in adolescents. *Pediatrics*, 138(3). doi:10.1542/peds.2016-1649 | 3. Andreyeva, T., Puhl, R. M., & Brownell, K. D. (2008). Changes in perceived weight discrimination among Americans, 1995-1996 through 2004-2006. *Obesity*, 16(5), 1129-1134. doi:10.1038/oby.2008.35 | 4. Chen, C., & Gonzales, L. (2022). Understanding weight stigma in eating disorder treatment: Development and initial validation of a treatment-based stigma scale. *Journal of Health Psychology*, 27(13),3028-3045. doi: 10.1177/13591053221079177

We're Here to Help: Tips to Address Weight Stigma in Your Child's Life

Health is not defined by weight and body size. A variety of factors influence a person's health, from genetics to environmental and social factors, like what neighborhood someone grows up in and their ability to access quality health care. Weight stigma can make us focus on body shape and size in conversations about health. Weight-inclusive care treats the whole person and targets multiple pieces of the puzzle, acknowledging that no one piece makes someone "healthy" or "unhealthy."

When you're at the doctor's office...

The first step toward advocating for weight-inclusive care is speaking up for your child and setting clear boundaries. Here are a few expert-approved tips for your child's next health care visit.

- "Please do not weigh my child unless it's medically necessary, and do not discuss weight or body shape in front of my child."
- "When discussing my child's weight with me privately, please keep the conversation focused on habits, such as eating a variety of foods and finding fun ways to move our bodies, and health markers, such as lab results and exam findings – not body size or shape."
- "I want to help my child foster a positive relationship with food and their body, so I am not open to discussing diets or other restrictive eating recommendations."
- "Please ask about our family's routines with food and movement before making any related recommendations, and don't discuss this in front of my child."
- "I want my child to know that health is not defined by weight and body size. I'd love for us to partner on this and appreciate any support you can provide."

When you're among friends, family or strangers...

Keep this response in your back pocket for the next time someone comments on your child's weight (or even your own):

- "We don't focus on weight and body shape in our family, so I'd appreciate it if you didn't make comments like that."

Terms to Know

Weight Stigma

Stereotypical beliefs or acts based on a person's weight, focused on shame, body hatred and judgment. Also known as "weight bias."

Anti-fat Bias

Weight stigma targeted at people in larger bodies.

Weight-Inclusive Care

A health care framework where practitioners focus on health rather than weight loss, and actively denounce weight stigma within their practice. (This is the gold standard.)