
"She said I could eat a DONUT!!"

Last week we were fortunate to bring in Susan Clarahan, LD, CEDRD who spoke Monday evening to adults and then Tuesday with the students about **Positive Body Image & Food Wisdom**. There was a lot that was shared and the kids said "SHE SAID I COULD EAT A DONUT!" "I AM FINE THE WAY I AM!"

And they are right. Here's some background...

Laying the groundwork for positive body image begins young. Keeping it simple.

Instrument vs. Ornament

"Having a positive body image isn't believing your body looks good; it is believing your body is good, regardless of how it looks. It isn't thinking you are beautiful; it is knowing you are more than beautiful. **It is understanding that your body is an instrument for your use, not an ornament to be admired.** - Lindsay Kite, PhD.

Fuel vs. food

By viewing food, as not good not bad, but fuel to make our bodies run effective & efficient. This removes any labeling and helps us think and listen to what our bodies need to give us fuel for our "instrument" to do what we want to do. If you forgot to eat breakfast but running out of energy – and you grab a donut in the lounge. It will fuel you for a while but then might be sleepy. Ask yourself – how did it make you feel? Perhaps quick energy but not a long-term strategy to be alert and sharp. Make a different choice next time. Changing our perspective to "fuel" takes out the labels and focuses on what our bodies need vs. want.

Here is a conversation starter... ask your kids about NUDGE, PUSH and PANIC.

Puberty Stats

- Age Range 8yr & 18years old
- Average of 5 year span
- Gain 50% of your adult weight during this time.
- Girls gain an average of 35+ pounds & boys gain an average 50+ pounds
- Usually gain weight first, then height

We all come in different shapes and sizes. 80% is genetic. We are all unique - and therefore - not 'one size fits all' on any level... body, religion, academics, etc. *All bodies are good bodies.*

Susan donated to the school's library "[NO WEIGH! A Teen's Guide To Positive Body Image, Food, And Emotional Wisdom.](#)" By Signe Darpinian, Wendy Sterling, Shelley Aggarwal for anyone to check out.

There are website links on the PTO webpage if you wish to know more about positive body image, intuitive eating and/or eating disorders. Have a questions? Feel free to reach out to sue@mypracticalnutrition.com



10 ways to build a better self image.

- be balanced** | Be good to your body by getting enough sleep, eating nutritious foods and being physically active. Avoid smoking, drugs and other unhealthy behaviors.
- be positive** | Focus on all the amazing things your body can do, not how it looks. Appreciate your ability to run, dance, play or create.
- be diverse** | Recognize that people naturally come in different shapes and sizes – embrace what makes you unique.
- be STYLISH** | Wear clothes that fit your body type and make you look and feel good – no matter what your size.
- be PROUD** | Make a list of your positive qualities that aren't related to your body or appearance. We are all so much more than what we look like on the outside.
- be inspired** | Think about the people you admire. Have they impacted your life because of what they look like or because of what they've accomplished?
- be ACCEPTING** | Challenge negative thoughts about your body. Try to be less judgmental and learn to talk more positively about yourself.
- be SPECIAL** | Take time to pamper yourself. Try a yoga class, get a massage or facial, or take a relaxing bubble bath – you deserve it!
- be savvy** | Read books and magazines with positive messages that make you feel good about yourself. Ditch anything that makes you feel inadequate.
- be kind** | Avoid body-bashing in social settings. Instead, focus conversations on the positive traits of yourself and others.

Eating Disorders and Children

With so many mixed messages about what to eat, how to exercise, the "obesity crisis", celebrity culture and social media, many children are feeling confused and pressured... Up to 80% of US 10 year old girls have already been on a diet. Research suggests 20–25 per cent of children affected by eating disorders are boys and there also may be a link between childhood obesity and the development of an [eating disorder as an adolescent](#) or adult.

Regardless of age, eating disorders are about underlying emotions, not food. Changes in behavior with food could signal that a child is experiencing emotional, social or developmental issues such as depression, teasing, bullying or abuse. Often the eating disorder develops as a way for a child to feel in control over what's happening in their life.

Preventative measures

Children are influenced by parents and teachers, who play an important role in modelling healthy and balanced attitudes towards food, exercise and body image.

Some important guidelines for parents and teachers include:

- Allow your child to eat when they are hungry and stop when they are full - don't force them to eat everything on their plate
- Model acceptance of different body shapes and sizes, including your own
- Don't criticize or tease children about their appearance, or make comparisons to another child's appearance
- Encourage sport and regular exercise to foster their body confidence. Model a healthy lifestyle yourself by participating in regular exercise for enjoyment and fitness
- Reassure your child that it is normal and healthy to gain weight at the onset of puberty and throughout adolescence
- Help children develop a critical awareness of the images and messages they receive from television, magazines, the internet and social media
- Try not to label foods as 'good' or 'bad' as this may lead to feelings of guilt and shame when 'bad' foods are eaten
- Avoid using food as bribes, punishment or rewards
- Encourage children to celebrate diversity, and not place too much value on physical appearance as a measure of value
- Accept that children are likely to have different eating habits from adults –they may require food more frequently during the day or go through periods of liking or disliking particular foods
- Children learn by example - don't skip meals, participate in fad diets or enforce diets upon children
- Encourage your child to express their feelings freely and encourage open communication in the home.
- If you are concerned about a child restricting food groups or portion sizes, consult your GP.

<https://www.eatingdisorders.org.au/eating-disorders/eating-disorders-children-teens-and-older-adults/eating-disorders-a-children>