

weigh in

Weigh In: Talking to Your Children About Weight and Health

STOP Obesity Alliance recently partnered with the Philadelphia Health Initiative, a multi-sector stakeholder obesity and diabetes prevention initiative, to launch a new toolkit for local leaders to host small group discussions with parents to help them talk to their kids about weight and health. Even though overweight and obesity affects 1 in every 3 children, most parents are uncomfortable answering a child's questions about weight, not knowing what to say, how to say it, or where to go for help.

Getting Started: Tools for Community Action

Meeting Facilitators Toolkit: The materials in this discussion toolkit are based on "Weigh In: Talking to Your Children About Weight and Health," a free, on-line conversation guide that was created by STOP Obesity Alliance and the Alliance for a Healthier Generation. The toolkit provides everything an organizer would need to host a small group discussion with parents on how to talk with kids about weight and health.

Whether you are a school, community group, business, health care provider/health system, insurer or governmental official or agency, there are all kinds of ways you and your organization could **Weigh In** to improve the health of our city's families. All the materials you will need to prepare for a meeting are available in the discussion toolkit, which you can get online, anytime and for free, at www.WeighInOnObesity.org.

Schools and Community Groups: Invite parents in your community to attend a group discussion at your site on how to talk with their children about weight and health. This could be a great addition to a regular business meeting of your parent/teacher organization or other event.

Businesses: Host a "Lunch and Learn" or other educational session for employees who happen to be parents interested in learning how to talk with their children about weight and health.

Faith-Based Organizations: A monthly potluck dinner, Bible study, or parental support group is a great avenue to prepare caregivers to share important health information with their children and to address questions their children might ask. Anyone in your organization, from volunteers to faith-based community leaders, can direct the conversation.

Health Care Provider or Health System: Organize a session at your office, clinic or on your campus for parents who want to learn how to talk with their children about weight and health.

Insurer: An insurer plays multiple roles in the community and could leverage the **Weigh In** discussion toolkit in multiple ways. First, as an employer, you could host a "Lunch and Learn" or other educational session for employees who happen to be parents interested in learning how to talk with their children about weight and health. Secondly, as an insurer, you could make the **Weigh In** guide itself available for your members as part of your health and wellness resources. The guide is free and could be linked to from your member portal site.

Governmental Official or Agency: A public Town Hall session or Community Forum could be a great opportunity to use the **Weigh In** discussion toolkit and help local constituents learn how to talk with their children about weight and health, and any professional on your staff can lead a meeting.

Getting Started: Spreading the Word about Weigh In

One of the best ways to help us help others is by spreading the word about **Weigh In**. You can:

- Distribute the **Weigh In** materials to families, patients, employees, members and other individuals throughout your community or organization.
- Include information about **Weigh In** in your current activities and resources. Whether it's highlighting or presenting the materials at your next staff meeting, conference or health fair, or placing an article about it in your employee, organization or community newsletter, it's easy to do.

Additionally, if your organization has access to social media or other communication channels, below are some potential ways to communicate about **Weigh In**. You can tailor the social media communications as needed:

- **Suggested Facebook Post:** Struggling to find ways to talk to kids about weight & health? Learn more about a new conversation guide that helps discuss these tough topics in compassionate and productive ways. Find the guide here: www.WeighInOnObesity.org
- **Potential Tweets for Twitter:** [@STOPObesity](https://twitter.com/STOPObesity) 's [#WeighInGuide](https://twitter.com/STOPObesity) advises parents on constructive ways to talk to kids about weight+health <http://bit.ly/S3kMYr>; Check out [@STOPObesity](https://twitter.com/STOPObesity) & [@HealthierGen](https://twitter.com/HealthierGen)'s secrets to a successful talk about weight with your kids [#WeighInGuide](https://twitter.com/STOPObesity) <http://bit.ly/S3kMYrs>
- **Copy for Newsletters:** "[Weigh In: Talking to Your Children About Weight and Health](http://www.stopobesityalliance.org/ebook/weighin)" is an online guide created to offer practical advice for parents struggling with how to discuss weight and health with their children. This research-based resource was created and reviewed by experts from a cross-section of fields including pediatrics, obesity research and psychology. Rather than focusing on finding the root of obesity or laying blame, the guide offers practical information for how to responsibly and compassionately respond to the real-world scenarios.
- **Post to Your Website:** You can post the **Weigh In** materials to your website by adding the hyperlink, www.weighinonobesity.org. If you'd like to link directly to the e-guides, you can use: <http://www.stopobesityalliance.org/ebook/weighin> for the English version and <http://www.stopobesityalliance.org/ebook-spanish/weighin> for the Spanish.
 - Please include the following copyright information with the guides: "*Copyright © 2013 – STOP Obesity Alliance and Alliance for a Healthier Generation*".

If you'd like to further commit to raising awareness and addressing obesity, email obesity@gwu.edu to learn about more about the STOP Obesity Alliance.