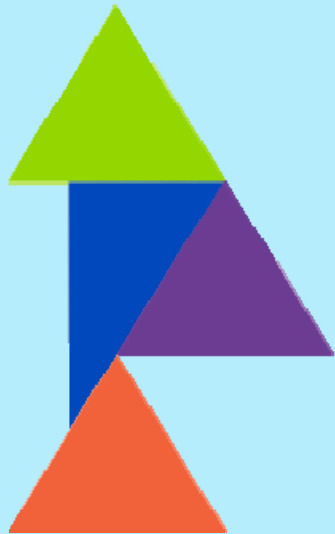


Promoting Health and Well-Being Instead of Size in Children and Teens

Teaching Kids to **STAY CONNECTED TO, and
♥ CARE FOR ♥** —Not Compare—Their Bodies



Kathy Kater, LICSW

www.BodyImageHealth.org

Campaign to “give America a hug” during it’s
bizarre campaign season.

#tellamericaitsgreat (The Garden – Toronto)

Kind Canadians remind America it's already great



LET'S TELL
AMERICA
IT'S GREAT

Conflict of interest disclosure:

Kathy Kater receives royalties from sale of the curriculum guide, *Healthy Bodies: Teaching Kids What They Need to Know*.

This book will be mentioned briefly as the source of the model that is presented in this presentation.

Promoting Health and Well-Being Instead of Size in Children and Teens

Teaching Kids to **STAY CONNECTED TO, and
♥ CARE FOR ♥** —Not Compare—Their Bodies



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THE GROWING SIZE of WEIGHT STIGMA

Weight stigma up 66% in the past decade. (Puhl 2009)

- **Weight stigma is more pervasive and intense than racism, sexism, and other forms of bias. It is one of the few legal forms of discrimination that remain in America, and there is substantial evidence of weight discrimination across multiple domains of living, including health care, employment, education, and media.** (Brochu, 2011)
- **Children as young as three years describe overweight children as “mean,” “stupid,” “lazy,” and “ugly.”** (Cramer, 1998)
- **Obese children are 1.6 times as likely to be bullied as children who are not overweight.**(Lemeng, 2010)

RESULT: *“Fat is the new ugly on the playground”*

**- Katia Hetter, Special to CNN
Fri March 16, 2012**



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Body Dissatisfaction (BD) is Inversely Related to Healthy Behaviors and Stable Weights

- “BD does not serve as a motivator for engaging in health enhancing behaviors, but rather it *predicts the use of behaviors that lead to poor and disordered eating, diminished health, and weight gain (not loss).*” (Neumark-Sztainer, et al, 2006)
- **BD is associated with binge eating and other eating disordered behaviors, lower levels of physical activity and weight gain over time.** (van den Berg, et al, 2007)

Evidence from the ED literature shows an emphasis on weight control can promote disordered eating behaviors.
(Dánielsdóttir, et al, 2009)

Internalized Weight Stigma (IWS) is Inversely Related to Healthy Behaviors and Stable Weight

More frequent exposure to messages reinforcing weight bias was related to greater IWS. 78% of participants coped with IWS by eating more low-nutrient food and avoiding exercise. Physicians and family members were the most frequent sources of weight bias reported.

(Puhl, 2010)

“Not only does weight stigmatization impose psychological and social harm, but it fails as an incentive for improving health behaviors and may instead reinforce obesity.”

(Goldberg, et al, 2013)

Weight Stigma is Harmful in Every Way

- *It is the stigmatizing experience, not the weight itself, contributing to adverse psychological outcomes such as BED*
(Griffiths, et. al, 2006)
- “Not only does weight stigmatization impose psychological and social harm, but it fails as an incentive for improving health behaviors and may instead reinforce obesity.”
(Goldberg, et al, 2013)
- “If stigmatizing fat people worked, it would have done so by now. It is actually difficult to imagine how obesity could be stigmatized more than it already is.” 91% of overweight and obese individuals said yes to whether they knew that “many people look down upon those excessively overweight or obese...” and 88% said they were not pleased with the way they looked. (Tomiyaama, et al, 2012)

CONCLUSION:

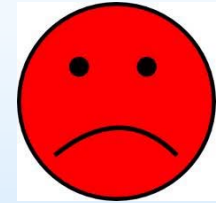
Body dissatisfaction and weight stigma are not effective motivators for health enhancing behaviors.

“Studies increasingly show that youth routinely cope with feeling bad about their weight by trying to lose weight in harmful ways (fasting, diet pills, vomiting, and chronic dieting) leading to binge eating and avoidance of physical activity - all unhealthy behaviors that can actually impede weight loss and reinforce weight gain.”

(Philadelphia Media Network, Sept 25, 2012, reporting on the call from Yale’s Rudd Center for Food Policy and Obesity for weight-stigma reduction programs in schools)

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Fear and hatred of fatness are not helpful; they are demoralizing.



1. "You cannot solve problems with the same thinking that created them."
2. "Peace cannot be achieved by hatred, but by love alone." (Einstein)



Why would this be different for children when it comes to taking care of their bodies?



Success outcomes comparing self-criticism and self-compassion as motivators:

“Unlike self criticism, which asks if you’re good enough, self-compassion asks what’s good for you... Self compassion taps into our inner desire to be healthy and happy. If we care about ourselves, we’ll do what we need to do in order to learn and grow. We’ll *want* to change unhelpful patterns of behavior. Valuing ourselves in a deep way makes us want to make choices that lead to well-being in the long term.”

(Kristen Neff, 2011)

Rather than “how to prevent obesity,” ask:

- How can we teach children and adults to **CARE FOR**—instead of compare—their bodies—regardless of size and shape?

Rather than weight loss, promote:

- **Self-caring, realistic, health-enhancing behaviors, the same for everyone,** regardless of size and shape.

Rather than fewer fat kids, the goal is:

- **A well-fed, fit population of diverse-sized people.**

Teaching Kids the TRUTH About Body Size, Shape, and Weight



What if we challenged and transformed today's unrealistic, harmful, socially-constructed fabrications about weight?

**A culture is formed by the stories
its children are told.**

4 Toxic Myths shape most beliefs about weight



Model for Promoting Health Instead of Size

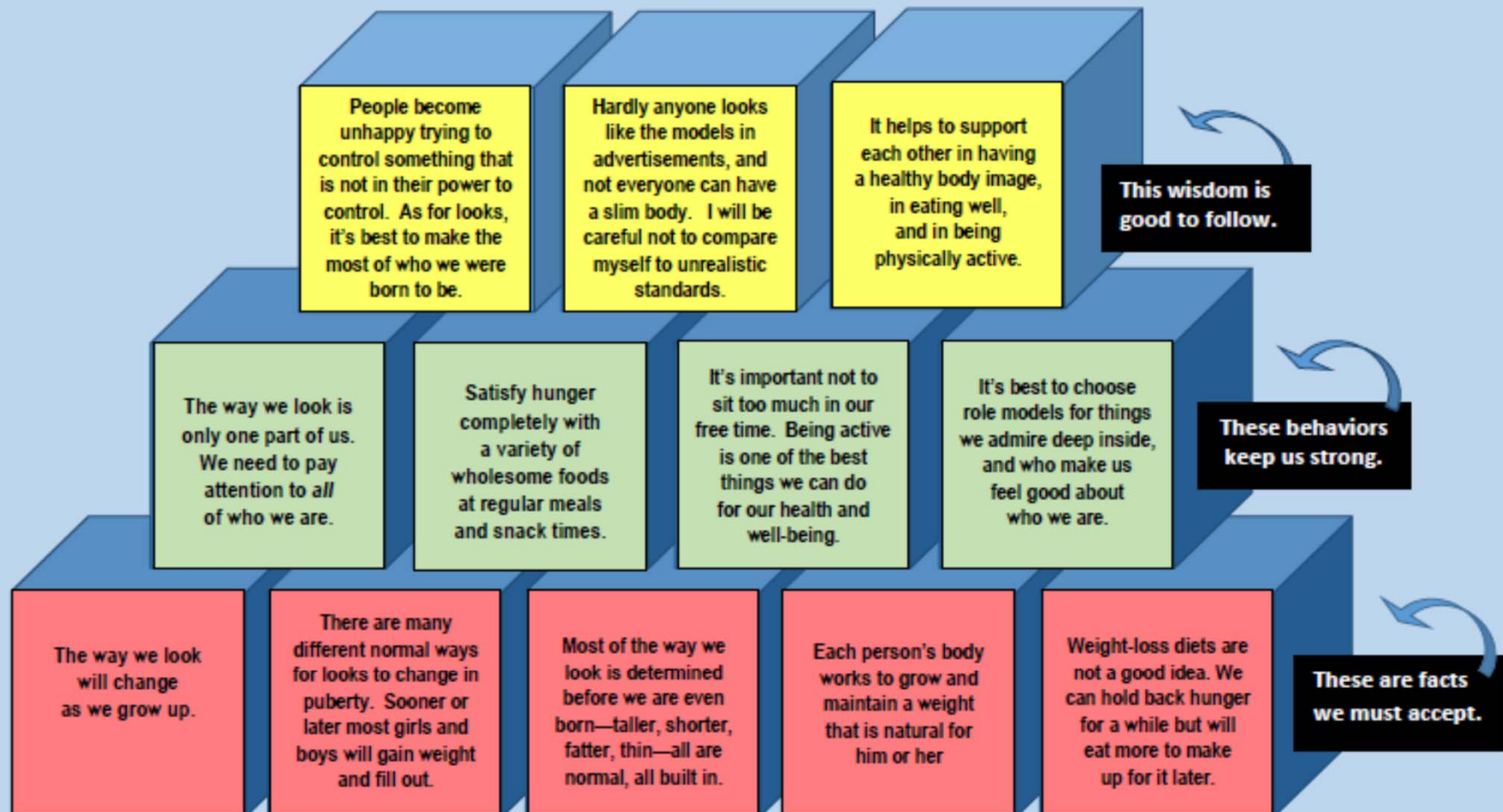
A New Model for Promoting Health Instead of Size

(Kater, KJ); From the *Healthy Bodies: Teaching Kids What They Need to Know* curriculum. (3rd Edition 2012, 2nd Edition 2004, 1st Edition, 1998)

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Conceptual Building Blocks	Foundation	Outcome	GOAL
<p>BIOLOGICAL FACTS: Developmental change is inevitable.</p> <p>Weight gain is normal during puberty and other developmental stages of live. Fat does not by itself define "overweight."</p> <p>The greatest determinant for weight is genetic. Eating and fitness habits play a part and absolutely effect health, but genes strictly limit the degree to which weight can be "controlled" through healthy means.</p> <p>Restricted eating for weight loss or control (dieting) has predictable long term consequences that are <i>counterproductive</i> to sustainable weight loss, interfere with normal hunger regulation, and are likely to result in weight <i>gain</i> over time.</p>	<p>Recognize and respect basic biology; understand what is <i>not</i> in our control regarding size, shape, weight, and hunger.</p>	<p>Accept the innate body: "This is the body I was born to have."</p>	<p>Healthy Body Image</p> <p>Prevention of Poor and Disordered Eating</p>
<p>WHAT TO DO:</p> <p>Balance attention to <i>all</i> aspects of identity. Looks/weight are only one part.</p> <p>Satisfy hunger regularly with a good variety of wholesome food in a predictable and reliable manner.</p> <p>Satisfy the bodies need for enjoyable, vigorous, physical activity every day..</p> <p>Choose role models that reflect a realistic standard of diverse sizes and shapes.</p>	<p>Emphasize what <i>can</i> be influenced or chosen.</p>	<p>Enjoy eating for health, energy, and hunger satisfaction. Create a physically active lifestyle for fitness, endurance, fun, relaxation, and stress relief.</p>	
<p>SEEK OUT:</p> <p>Historical perspective on today's unrealistic body image and weight-related attitudes.</p> <p>Critical thinking skills in regard to media and other messages that negatively affect body image attitudes and eating behaviors.</p> <p>Support in resisting unhealthy norms about weight, dieting, low nutrient food choices, and a too-sedentary lifestyle.</p>	<p>Develop social and cultural resiliency.</p>	<p>Develop autonomy, self esteem, confidence, and the ability for critical thinking.</p>	

Building Blocks for Healthy Body Esteem



4 Toxic myths and their evidence based antidotes

MYTH #1: There's a "right" size to be. Everyone should strive to meet the prescribed standard for the "thin ideal" for appearance or a "normal" BMI for health.

CHALLENGE: Kids need help to recognize and resist pressures to objectify, compare, and judge their bodies

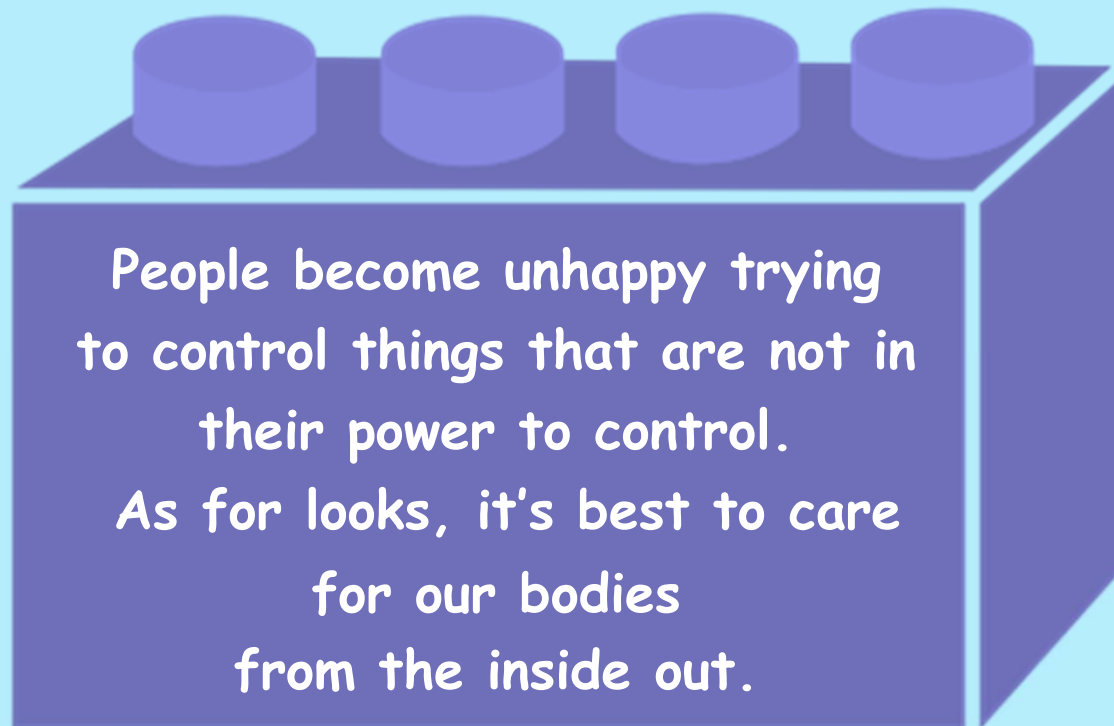
TRUTH: All bodies are good. For health and happiness, we must stay connected to and care for the body in which we are born.

TEACH:

- Historical perspective on "right/wrong" body messaging
- Media literacy about messages promoting body comparisons
- An identity based on ALL aspects of who we are
- Instead of *"Am I good enough?"* ask *"What's good for me?"*

HEALTHY BODY BUILDING BLOCK

Historical Perspective on the Development of Negative Body Images in Western Culture



To be happy, it helps to understand what is and is not in your power to control. You may hear that you should try to have the “right” body size and weight, but bodies are born to be **DIFFERENT**. There is no “right” size to be. Eat well, stay active, and love the body that is right for you.

*Always **CARE FOR** and **TAKE GOOD CARE OF** your body.*

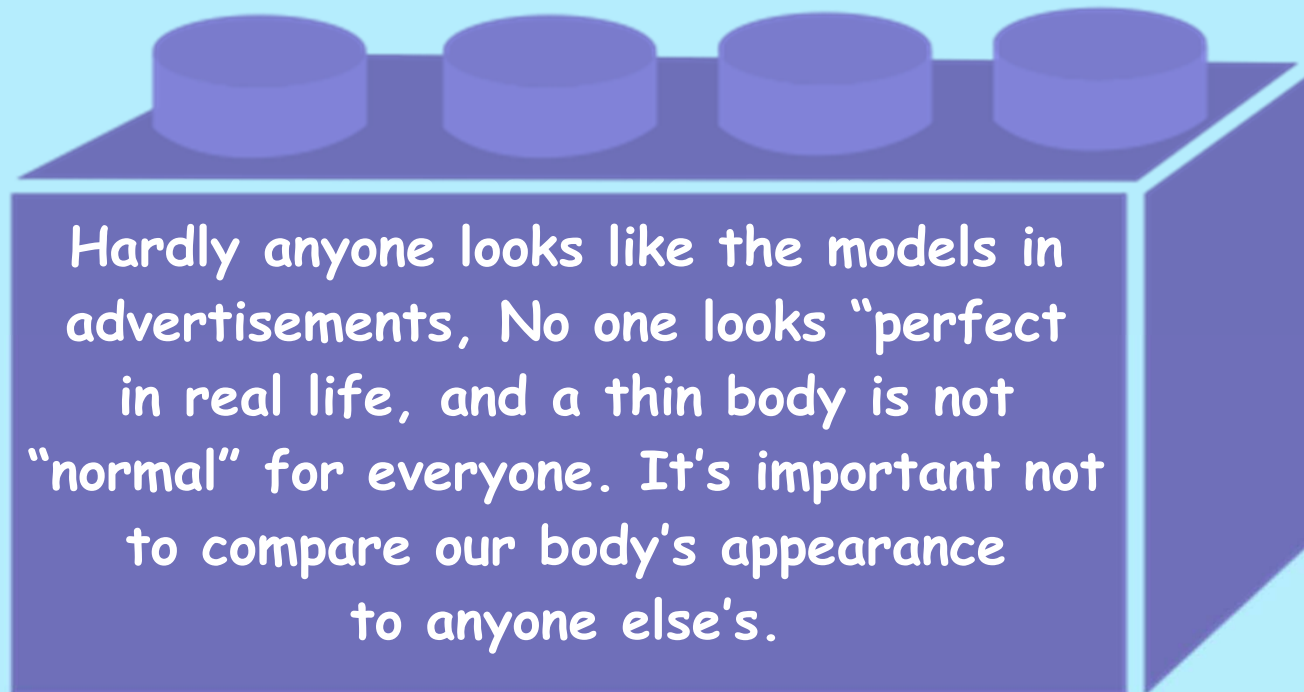
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Desired student attitudes:

- I can make choices about how I take care of myself, but I cannot control everything about the result.
- Looks affect first impressions, but what is most important often cannot be seen with the eye.
- I do not need to be slim, buff, “beautiful,” or “handsome” to be attractive.
- I accept who I am.

HEALTHY BODY BUILDING BLOCK

Sold on Looks! The Influence of Mass Media



You can admire how someone looks without comparing yourself to them. Whether your body is shorter, taller, fatter, or thinner, be sure to **appreciate** and care for the body size and shape you were born to have.

*Always **CARE FOR** and **TAKE GOOD CARE OF** your body.*

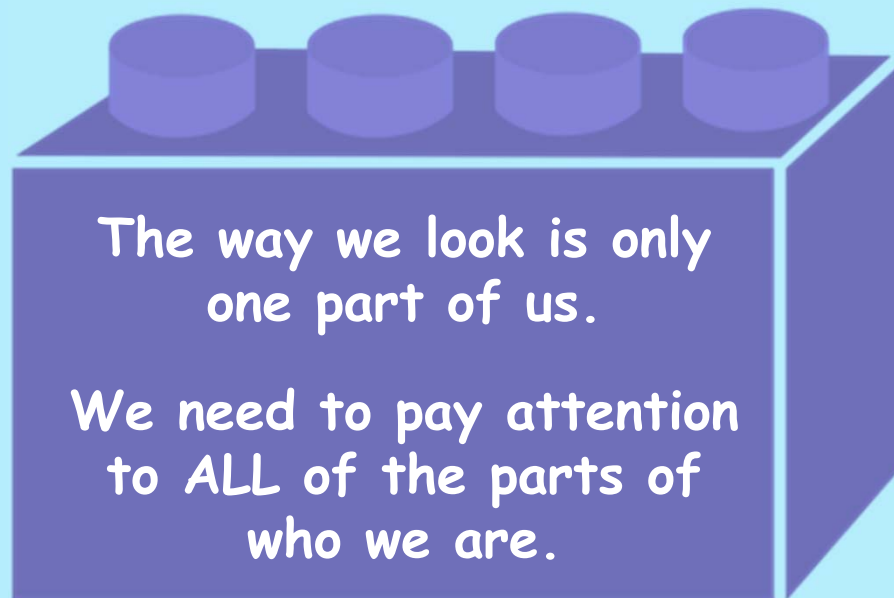
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Desired student attitudes:

- A “normal” BMI is not realistic or “normal” for everybody.
- If an advertisement makes me feel bad, I’ll remember this is part of the plan to make me buy their product.
- I care about my appearance, but what matters most is who I am on the inside.
- I will think carefully before I let media messages affect how I feel or think.
- I can enjoy pictures of beautiful people and still feel good about myself.
- It helps to remember that even movie stars feel insecure when they compare themselves to their computer altered images.

HEALTHY BODY BUILDING BLOCK

Identity and Competency: More Than How We Look



Some things were part of you when you were born, and they will always be a part of you. Some things you can change if you want to. **It's good to know the difference.** Either way, there is a **LOT** about you that is **AWESOME!!!** Your worth does not depend on how you look.

Always CARE FOR and TAKE GOOD CARE OF your body.

Desired student attitudes:

- I have a lot to offer.
- I can do a lot of things.
- My worth does not depend on my looks. How I look is only one small part of who I am.
- There are some things about me that I can change or improve if I want to.
- There are some things I was born with, and they will always be part of me.
- Beauty is only skin deep.
- I am someone who is worth getting to know.

4 Toxic myths and their evidence based antidotes

MYTH #2: *Anyone can be slim if they work at it.*

CHALLENGE: To reduce weight stigma, kids need to know the facts about body size differences. It's wrong to make assumptions about lifestyle based on weight.

TRUTH: Biological diversity regarding size, weight, and shape is a scientific fact.

TEACH:

- The normal, visible, developmental body changes in puberty, including the normal addition of fat.
- The science regarding genetic predisposition for size and shape.
- The limits to “weight control” through healthy means.

The Role of Genetics

- **“Studies suggest that the genetic contribution to BMI may be about 70%. ...studies yield remarkably consistent results.”**

(NIH Clinical Guidelines on the Identification, Evaluation, and Treatment of Overweight and Obesity in Adults)

- **“Body mass index is a highly heritable human trait. Despite legitimate concerns about the environmental forces responsible for recent changes in its prevalence, this fact has not altered.”**

(O’Rahilly, S. 2006)

- **43% of females have the ‘Heritable’ propensity to achieve thinness** (Suisman, et al, 2012)

The Role of Genetics

“Genetic studies have shown that the particular set of weight-regulating genes a person has is by far the most important factor in determining how much that person will weigh. .. It's even greater than that for many conditions that people accept as having a genetic basis, including heart disease, breast cancer, and schizophrenia.

“The commonly held belief that obese individuals can ameliorate their condition by simply deciding to eat less and exercise more is at odds with compelling scientific evidence indicating that the propensity to obesity is, to a significant extent, genetically determined.” (Friedman, J.M., 2004)

Microbiome (gut bacteria)

Studies have found there are differences in the microbiomes in lean and obese people (and in lean and obese mice).

One group of sterile *mice* were given the microbes of obese *people*. The other got microbes from lean people. The mice with obese people's microbes gained more weight from the same food.

“Results indicate that the obese microbiome has an increased capacity to harvest energy from the diet. These results identify the gut microbiota as an additional contributing factor to the pathophysiology of obesity.”

Gut brain interaction is “not you at all.” Bacteria (bugs) in the gut directly stimulates the brain. (Turnbaugh, P., 2006)

The Impact of Social Determinants of Health (SDH)

1. Income

2. Education

3. Job Security

**4. Employment and
Working Conditions**

**5. Early Childhood
Development**

6. Food Insecurity

7. Housing

**8. Social Exclusion and
Marginalization**

9. Social Safety Network

10. Health Services

11. Aboriginal Status

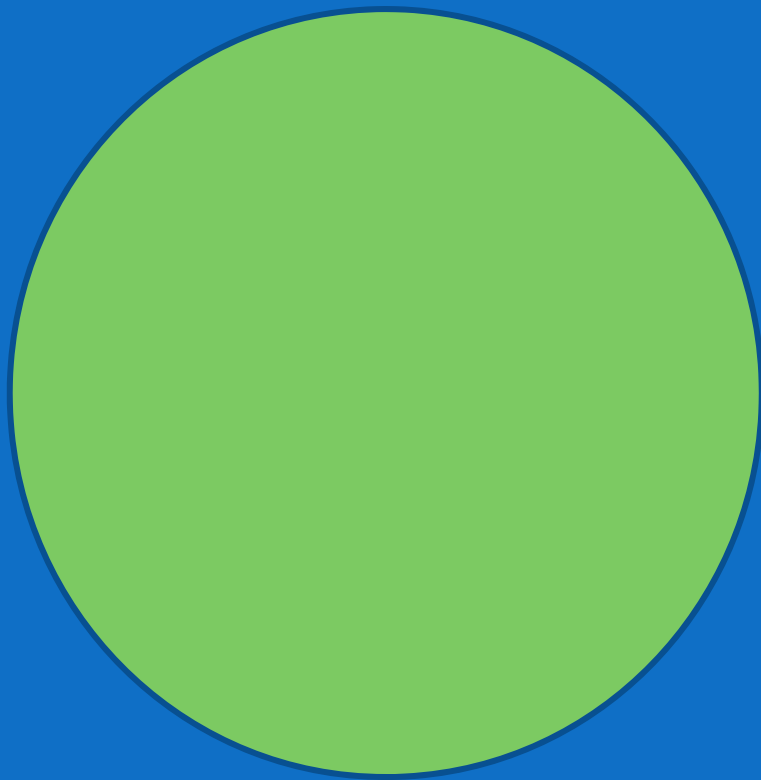
12. Gender

13. Race

14. Disability

Social Determinants of Health: The Canadian Facts (2010)

What can you tell from looking at a fat child (or adult)?



-  What they eat
-  How much they exercise
-  How healthy they are
-  That they have an eating disorder
-  That they are fat

HEALTHY BODY BUILDING BLOCK #1

Growth and Change in Appearance



Whether your body is short, tall, fat, or thin—be sure to get enough of the nutritious food, physical activity, and sleep your body needs to grow and be well.

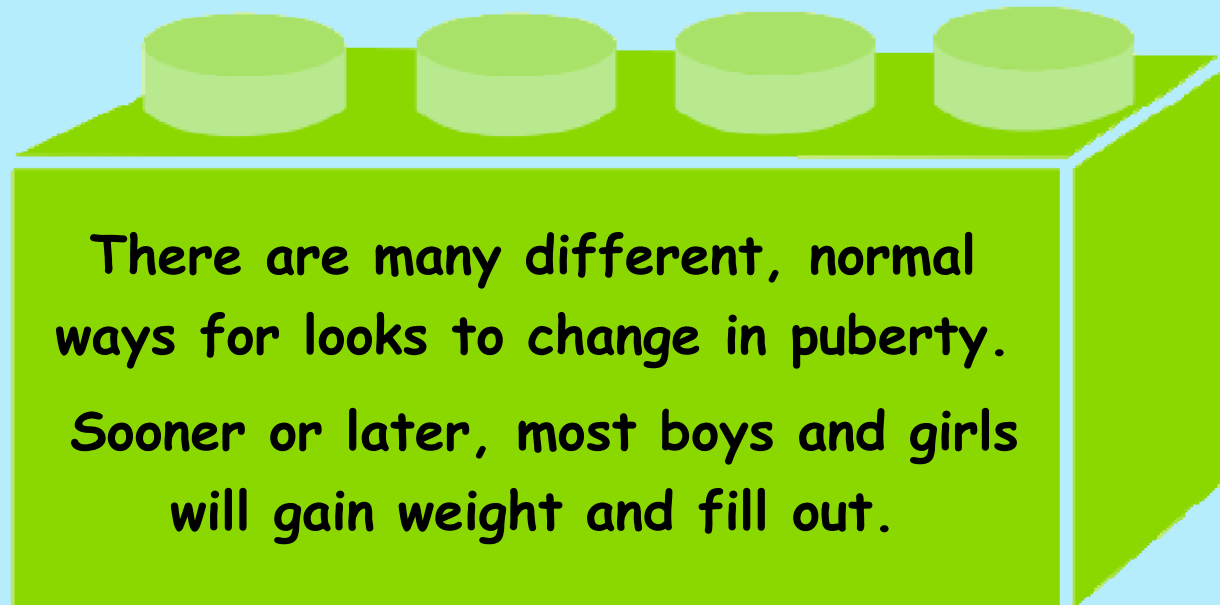
Always **CARE FOR** *and* **TAKE GOOD CARE OF** *your body.*

Desired student attitudes:

- It helps to know other kids will be changing in many of the same ways as me.
- I can look forward to getting bigger and filling out as I grow up.
- I hope *all* girls/boys can feel OK about how their bodies are growing.
- Teasing someone who is growing faster or slower is hurtful behavior.
- Standing up for someone who is being teased is the right thing to do.

HEALTHY BODY BUILDING BLOCK #2

External Body Changes in Puberty



When your body changes from a child into an adult, you will want to understand what's happening. For a while the way you look may be very different than how you will end up. It's good if you can **relax**, **care** for your body, and **watch** as it turns out just right for you!

*Always **CARE FOR** and **TAKE GOOD CARE OF** your body.*

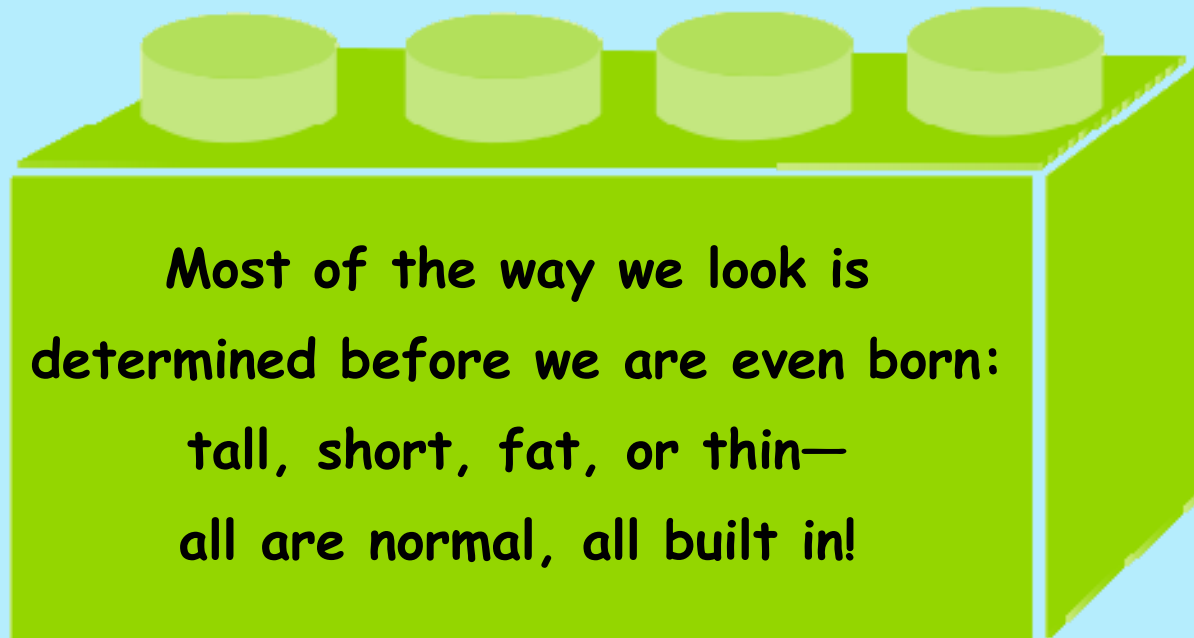
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Student attitudes will be:

- I feel comfortable with the way my body is changing and growing.
- It helps to talk with people I can trust about how my body shape will change as I grow up.
- People cannot control when and how their body is set to change and grow.
- All people are naturally fatter, thinner, or in-between.
- To say someone is fatter or thinner is a way to describe, not judge, them.
- It is normal to gain body fat during puberty.

HEALTHY BODY BUILDING BLOCK #3

Genetic Influence for Body Size and Shape



All bodies are born to be fatter, thinner, or in between. People sometimes **FORCE** their bodies to gain or lose weight, but this is *not* what nature intended. If you eat well and stay active, nature will reveal the size and shape that's right for YOU.

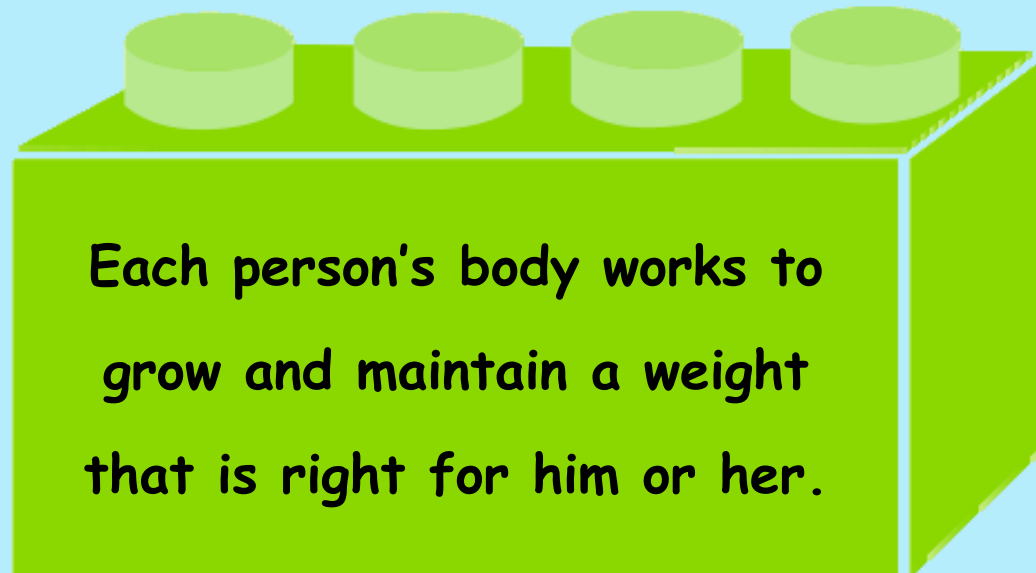
Always **CARE FOR** *and* **TAKE GOOD CARE OF** *your body.*

Desired student attitudes:

- Most of the way I look was wired into me before I was born.
- We may prefer a different way to look, but we have to accept who we're born to be.
- I accept myself for who I am.
- Eating and exercise habits may influence our weight, but this will be limited by our genetic make-up.
- If I eat well and stay fit and strong, I can be confident my size and shape are right for me.

HEALTHY BODY BUILDING BLOCK #4

Internal Weight Regulation



People can sometimes **FORCE** their bodies to weigh more or less than nature intended, but not without tuning out their body's needs. Whether your body is meant to be fatter, thinner, or in between, it's best if you eat well, stay active, and accept the size and shape that results.

Always **CARE FOR** *and* **TAKE GOOD CARE OF** *your body.*

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Desired student attitudes:

- Since I learned about metabolism and other built-in differences, I understand why some people are naturally fatter or thinner.
- My normal, healthy body size could be fatter or thinner.
- You cannot assume how people eat or how fit they are based on how fat or thin they are.
- Judgments based on a person's size are not right.
- People can FORCE their bodies to weight more or less than nature intended, but this requires risky eating or exercise habits.
- Hunger feels the same to people who are fat or thin.
- I accept myself for who I am.

4 Toxic myths and their evidence based antidotes

MYTH #3: “Dieting” (eating for the purpose of weight loss) is an effective, long term strategy.

CHALLENGE: Kids need help to be clear about the expected and predictable results of restricting food intake.

TRUTH: “Dieting” is not an effective weight loss strategy. Long term results include disconnection from innate hunger regulation, poor and disordered eating habits, diminished health, and weight gain over time. It is also a primary trigger for eating disorders in those who are vulnerable.

TEACH:

- Hunger is an internally regulated drive that demands satisfaction. It’s like a caged lion, looking for a way out. When it succeeds it eats everything in sight. Better to feed hunger what it needs to keep it satisfied.

Diet Outcomes

A review of over 40 studies shows that 95% of weight lost through dieting is regained. **“Between 1/3 to 2/3 of dieters regain more weight than they lose.”**

(Mann, Traci, et al, 2007)

“Paradoxically, adolescent girls with elevated scores on dieting scales are at increased risk for future onset of obesity... These findings...converge with results... indicating that dieting predicts weight gain in adulthood.”
(Associations were not due to dieters being heavier to begin with.)

(Stice, E., et al, 2005)

Diet Outcomes

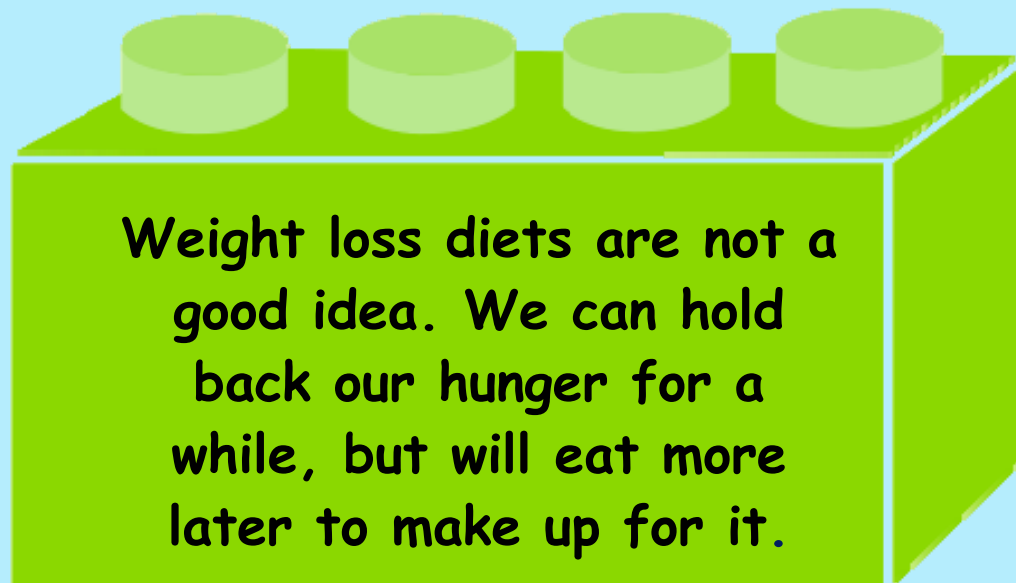
“Children whose parents encouraged them to diet were at nearly twice the odds of being overweight five years later than non-dieters.”

These associations were not due to dieters being heavier to begin with.”

(Neumark-Sztainer, et al, 2008)

HEALTHY BODY BUILDING BLOCK #5

Hunger and Eating: What is and is Not in our Control.



Eating less than you need to satisfy hunger may cause weight loss at first, but this is like *caging a LION*. When the lion gets free, it will want to eat everything in sight! Better to always eat enough nutritious food to satisfy your body's needs (AND your inner lion).

Always **CARE FOR** *and* **TAKE GOOD CARE OF** *your body.*

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Desired student attitudes:

- You can lose weight by “dieting” for a while, but you will be fighting against nature the whole time.
- If I am tempted to go on a diet to lose weight, I will think twice. Eating less than what is needed to satisfy hunger is like **caging a LION**. When the lion gets free, it will want to eat everything in sight, and the weight will come back! Better to always eat enough of the nutritious foods my body needs to be satisfied.
- A good way to avoid overeating is to always **eat enough** of what my body needs.

4 Toxic myths and their evidence based antidotes

MYTH #4: Healthy choices just for health's sake are not worthwhile.

CHALLENGE: When slimness reigns supreme, the value of health in its own right is diminished. If good eating and fitness choices don't result in a slim(*mer*) physique, many think, "Why bother?" Demoralization and complacency increase.

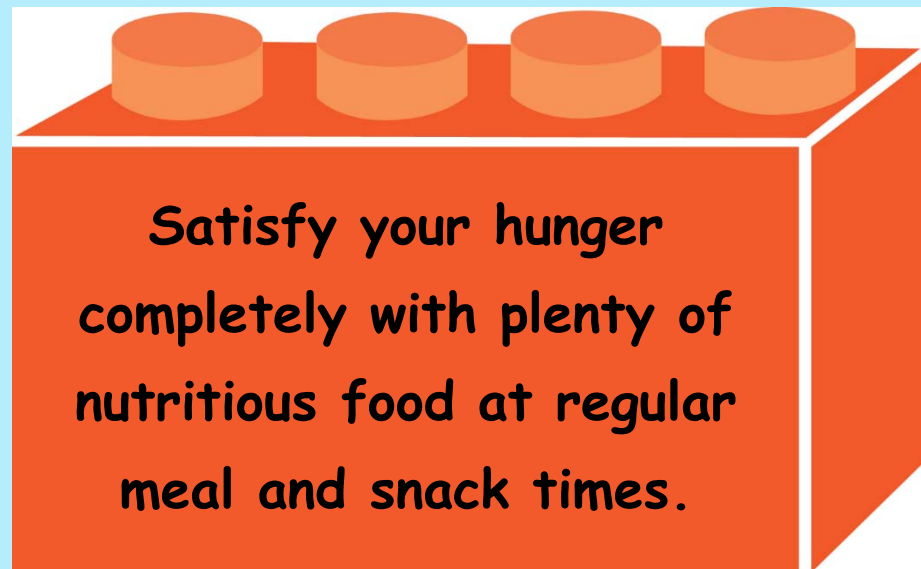
TRUTH: Actively valuing health is critical for well-being, regardless of size. This priority increases motivation to **CARE FOR** and **TAKE CARE OF** our bodies.

TEACH KIDS TO VALUE AND SUPPORT HEALTH BY:

- Eating well
- Enjoying embodied movement
- Accepting the sizes and shapes that result
- Choosing role models that help them feel good about who they are.

HEALTHY BODY BUILDING BLOCK

How to Eat: Caring for our Bodies with Mindful Eating



Different foods have **different** qualities with **different** purposes. Satisfy MOST of your hunger with foods your body needs —not because you “should,” but because you care about and WANT to take care of yourself. Enjoy “just for fun” foods, knowing that most of what you eat is nutritious.

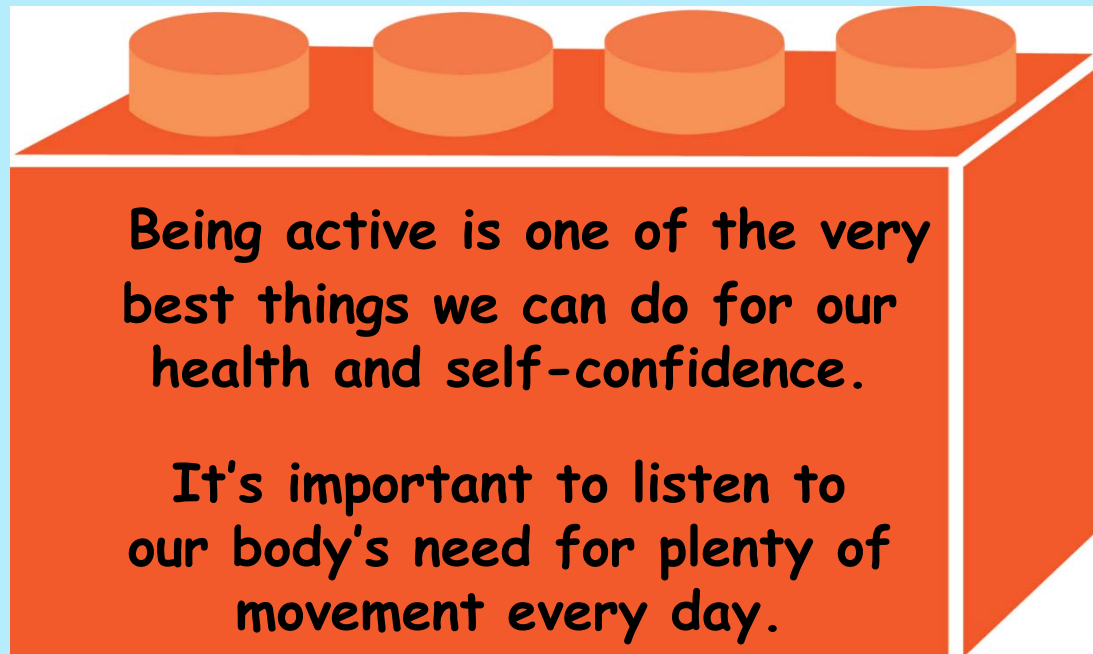
Always CARE FOR and TAKE GOOD CARE OF your body.

Desired student attitudes:

- All foods can be “good,” including “just for fun” foods. But I know that **different** foods have **different** qualities that serve **different** purposes.
- I like to satisfy **MOST** of my hunger with food my body **needs**—not because I “should,” but because I care about my body and I **WANT** to feed it well.
- Only I can know when I am hungry and when I am full.
- I hope grown-ups will provide me with a variety of good tasting, nutritious food to choose from.
- I like to imagine where my food comes from in nature.
- I know some of the tactics of food advertisements.
- I eat well and am active (see Lesson 9), so I am confident my weight is right for me.

HEALTHY BODY BUILDING BLOCK

Embodied! Caring for our Bodies with Mindful Movement



Try to listen to your body's need to be active every day—not because you “should,” but because you care about your body—and you WANT to keep it strong! Be sure to find the kind of movement your body enjoys. It's not the same for everyone!

Always CARE FOR and TAKE GOOD CARE OF your body.

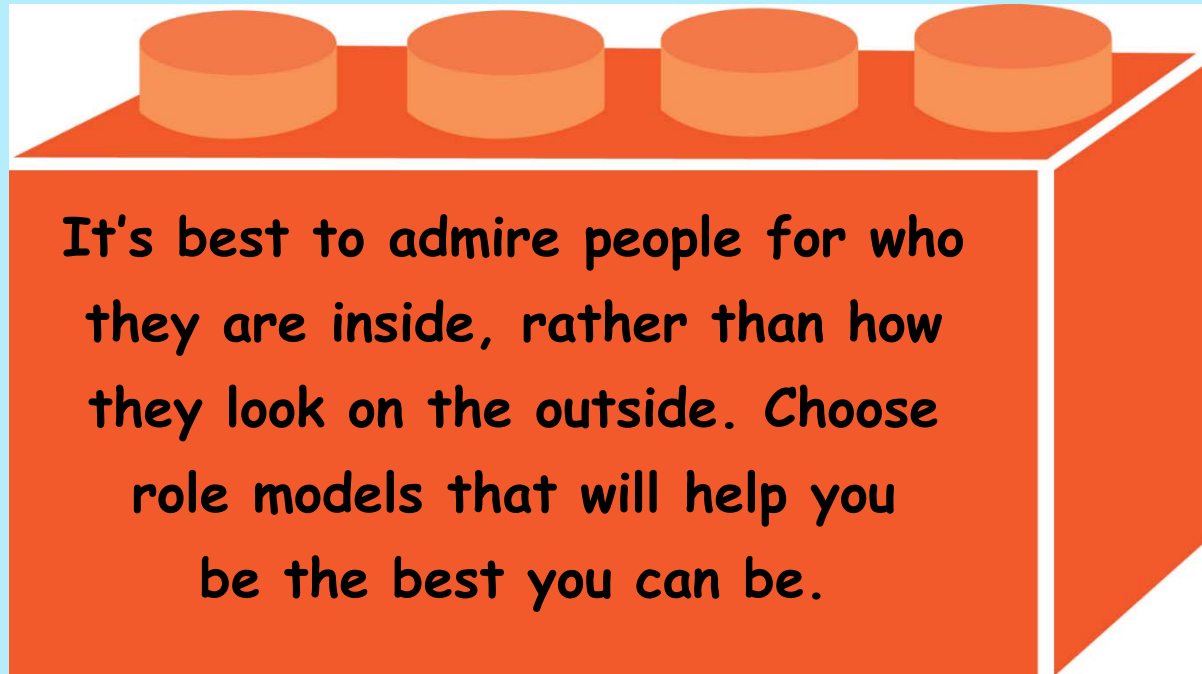
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Desired student attitudes:

- I try to be active every day—not because I “should,” but because I CARE about my body—and I WANT to keep it strong!
- TV and quiet games are fun, but too much of these can use up all the time that I want to use for more active play.
- Its very good if you can get your heart pumping most days.
- My body can do a lot of things.
- I am active and eat well, so I am confident of my weight, my strength, and my stamina.

HEALTHY BODY BUILDING BLOCK

Compared to Whom? Selecting a Standard for Choosing Positive Role Models



You can admire how someone looks without comparing yourself to them. Whether your body is shorter, taller, fatter, or thinner, be sure to appreciate and care for the body size and shape you were born to have.

Always **CARE FOR** *and* **TAKE GOOD CARE OF** *your body.*

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**What if the swan
had stayed with
the ducks?**

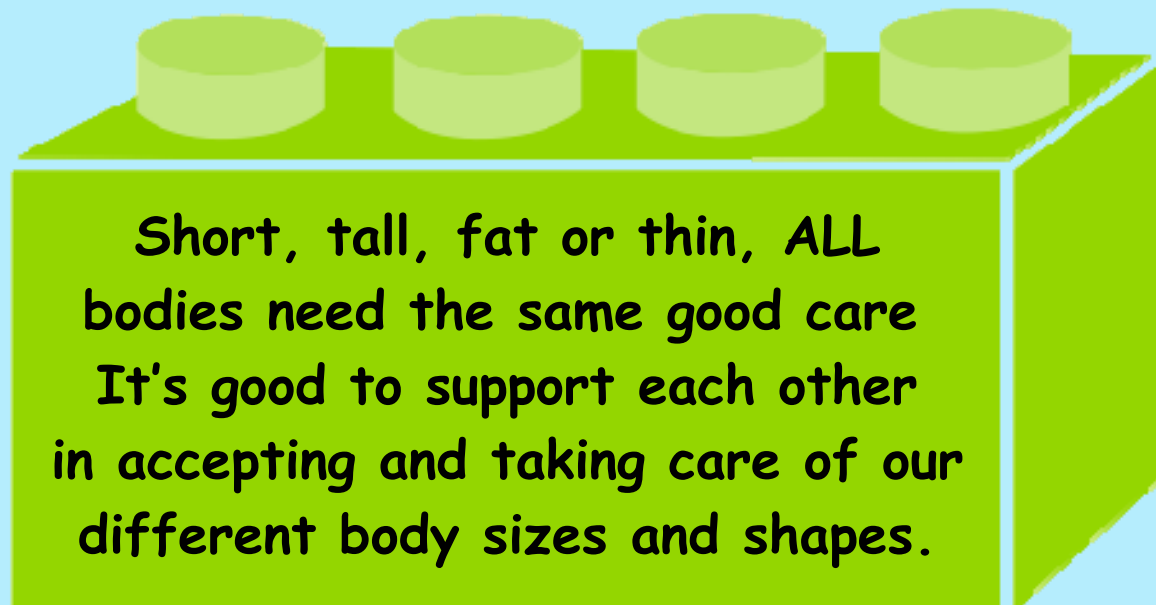
**What standards
will you
aspire to meet?**

Desired student attitudes:

- My idea of what's cool and someone else's idea may be different.
- I can stay true to what I like and who I am, even if others don't think it's cool.
- People are different. This doesn't mean they are better or worse.
- You have to be who you are on the inside, even if others don't understand.
- If I feel bad when I compare myself to someone, I've probably chosen the wrong role model.
- I will look for friends with whom I feel good.

HEALTHY BODY BUILDING BLOCK 12

Connection to Self in Community with Others.



Finding and eating enough nutritious food and getting enough physical activity every day may be hard to do. Look for others who will support you in this, and try to be a *self-caring role model* yourself!

Always **CARE FOR** and **TAKE GOOD CARE OF** your body.

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Transforming Stigmatizing Approaches to Weight

CAMPAIGN BANNER:

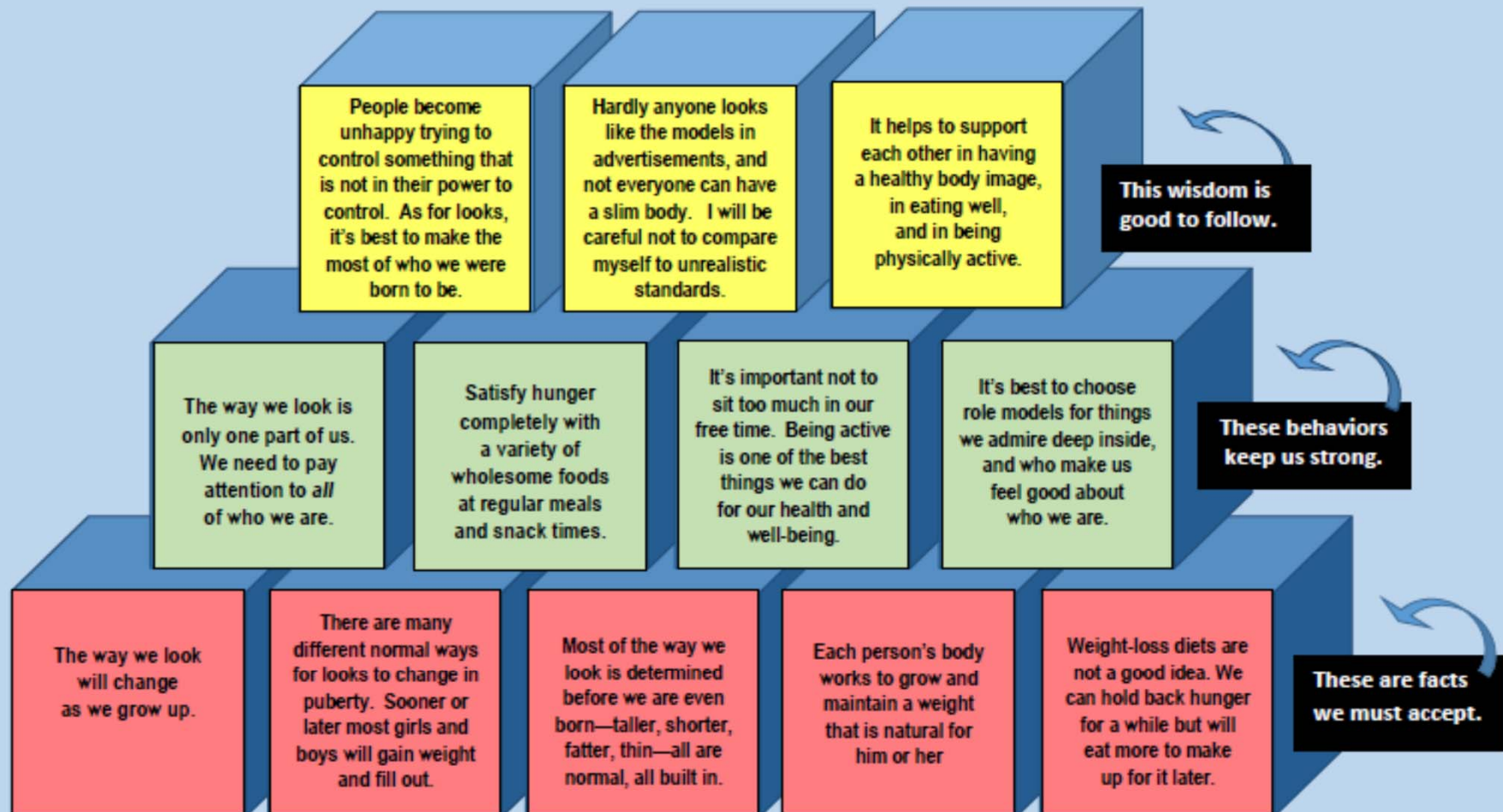
~~Prevent Obesity~~

CAMPAIGN
BANNER:

*Care for and Take
Care of Your Body*

- Eat well—*mindfully satisfy hunger* with wholesome foods most of the time
- Stay active—enjoy *embodied movement* most days
- Manage stress—respond to your need to engage and disengage
- Accept the size and shape that results

Building Blocks for Healthy Body Esteem



Presentation Learning Objectives:

Participants will:

- **Recognize how the goal of “weight management” has resulted in a situation in which children are systematically taught to compare, judge, disconnect from and become aversive to their bodies, putting them at high risk for body image, eating, fitness and weight concerns.**
- **Become motivated to reframe and transform their concerns about “weight control” into concerns about educating, supporting, and motivating kids to eat well, stay fit, manage stress, and remain self-accepting of and connected to their diverse sized bodies.**
- **Be prepared with a model, conversation starters and some of the language needed to engage with kids and their families in ways that are effective in motivating choices that enhance health and overall well-being.**

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