

**Beyond prevention of eating disorders and obesity...**

## ***Promoting Health Instead of Size in Schools***

New! Fully updated Third Edition of the former Healthy Body Image curriculum

# **Healthy Bodies**

## **Teaching Kids What They Need to Know**

**Kathy Kater, LICSW**

**A Comprehensive Curriculum to Address Body Image, Eating, Fitness, and Weight Concerns in Today's Challenging Environment**

—Lessons target weight stigma and reduction of bullying

—Published in 2012 in association with the National Eating Disorder Association

“This powerful program teaches children the skills they need to manage food and weight successfully for the rest of their lives. The smiles and sense of confidence radiating from children who have had these lessons speak for themselves.”—Karin Kratina, PhD, RD, Nutrition Therapist, Author, Eating Disorder Recovery Center, University of Florida

"When I want to know how to talk to kids about their health and nutritional well-being, I read what Kathy has to say to them. Her words of wisdom resonate in today's chaotic food environment. Could it be as simple as she says? Yes, it can be. Kathy helps erase the fear and confusion around eating. At the same time, she promotes a positive body image and high self-esteem for all kids. She has seen the results of stigmatizing bodies that are too fat, too short, too skinny, too tall...and she celebrates the fact that human beings come in a wide variety of sizes and shapes. She has a lesson to teach...not just to teachers and kids, but to all of us." —Joanne Ikeda, MA, RD, Nutritionist Emeritus, University of CA, Berkeley

Scripted lessons for grades 4-6 are easily adaptable for any age and any venue.

**Fully grounded in research.**

***More information at [www.bodyimagehealth.org](http://www.bodyimagehealth.org)***

At a time when they should feel secure in their body's growth, too many children today learn to feel anxious about weight and shape and to make choices that contribute to the very problems they hope to avoid. The results diminish the self esteem and integrity of growing bodies and egos, as well as consuming attention and energy that should be available for other important developmental tasks. The compelling wish to be slim provides the seeds for a host of body image, eating, fitness, and weight concerns that are extremely difficult to reverse once established.

Rather than helping, studies have confirmed that weight stigma and body dissatisfaction lead to poorer eating and fitness choices, less physical activity, weight gain and diminished health. Yet public health campaigns to prevent higher weights continue to ignore the bigger picture: “Size prevention” initiatives add to weight stigma. Weight stigma encourages disdain of fatness directed toward oneself and others with any visible fatness, as well as fear of fatness among

average or low weight children. The worse children and teens feel about fatness and/or fear gaining weight, the less likely they are to make self-caring, health enhancing choices. Researchers at the Yale Rudd Center for Obesity and Health and elsewhere have issued a call for weight stigma reduction programs to promote positive eating and fitness habits without regard to size. Such programs are needed now, before more harm is done. The Healthy Bodies curriculum was developed in response to this call. Eleven engaging lessons teach children to:

maintain ▪

a caring, mindful connection to their bodies from the inside-out

▪

develop an identity based on who they are rather than how they look

▪

reject weight stigma and respect genetic diversity of body size and shape

▪

understand how appearance changes with puberty

▪

defend against unhealthy cultural pressures regarding looks, weight, food, and dieting

▪

choose positive role models that support their deeper values

▪

actively embrace health and vitality through positive eating and physical activity

▪

support each other in having a healthy body image, eating well, and staying fit

— “Most of all, I value how these lessons make students realize they’re all in this together when it comes to puberty. I think if more schools introduced Healthy Bodies at a young enough grade level, they would notice a sharp decrease in the body teasing that is so harmful. This curriculum encourages students to embrace diversity and look out for each other. It ties in so nicely with our anti-bullying unit, and it is an excellent starting point for any upper elementary or middle school health program.” —Amy Smith, Shanghai American School Health Teacher/ Department Head

“This curriculum should be required in every school and is a must for anyone in the field of disordered eating, weight control and body image.” —Carolyn Costin, Executive Director, Monte Nido Treatment Center, Author of *Your Dieting Daughter*

“The Healthy Body Image curriculum should be in the hands of every elementary school teacher in the United States. The revised edition has the potential to transform classrooms, and is the resource for any school that wants students to develop positive self- and body esteem, resist unhealthy messages regarding weight, shape, appearance, fitness, and food, and be equipped with the building blocks to a healthy lifestyle.” —Margo Maine, PhD, Author of *The Body Myth: The Pressure on Adult Women to Be Perfect*, *Father Hunger: Fathers, Daughters and the Pursuit of Thinness*, and *Body Wars: Making Peace With Women’s Bodies*

Earlier editions of this curriculum were recommended by the USDH Office of Women's Health in its BodyWise information packet for educators, and lessons are being taught in schools across the country. Those who have enjoyed teaching the original HBI lessons will find these newly revised lessons to be familiar but improved by recommendations of educators and updated empirical data. As before, lessons are carefully planned, engaging, age appropriate, cross-curricular, and based on widely recognized, evidence-based prevention principles.

**Student responses to Healthy Bodies:**

- "I learned to feel good about who I am and not worry about what I look like."
- "We learned about reaching puberty and loving ourselves for who we are."
- "No one is the same, and there's no such thing as a perfect weight."
- "I learned that I should not believe every advertisement. They are very often misleading [sic]."
- "You can't really change how you look. Just eat a lot of good food and don't watch so much TV and your family genes [sic] will tell your body how to turn out right for you."
- "I learned to never judge someone by their looks alone."
- "I learned it is best to work at finding who I am and then being myself rather than trying to copy everyone else."

**Teacher responses to Healthy Bodies:**

- "Everyday the kids asked if they got to have health. That has never happened with a health unit."
- "It was amazing to see how the kids opened up in the discussions. I think they became more interested in learning about healthy choices for health's sake, versus just to get a slimmer look."
- "I questioned the need for this until I overheard two of my (fourth grade) girls talking about feeling fat."
- I'm really impressed with the way this curriculum reaches the boys in my classes. When they take the packets home to go over with their parents, it truly does help alleviate some of their tension.
- Lessons provoke wonderful, engaging discussions that the children love. This is a fantastic curriculum, and I'm grateful to have it."
- "My own life would have been very different if I had (these lessons) in the fourth grade."