At the Doctor's Office

Rudd Roots Parents

Parent Fact & Action Sheet

Weight bias in health care can involve doctors, nurses, psychologists, dietitians, medical students, and even professionals specializing in obesity. They may have negative beliefs about patients with overweight and obesity and express bias through:

- Disrespectful comments and jokes
- Insensitive language like "chubby" or "fat"
- Blaming parents or kids
- Not having appropriately sized equipment
- Attributing unrelated conditions to weight
- Refusing or being reluctant to provide certain services or procedures

This has many consequences that affect both parents and kids. Research shows that when patients feel stigmatized about their weight by health providers, that they may:

- Avoid future medical appointments
- Feel upset and embarrassed
- Be less motivated to make healthy behavior changes

In one study, more than two of every three (69%) people with overweight reported experiencing weight bias by doctors.[1]

Act! *3 things* YOU can do RIGHT NOW *as parent advocates.*

Prepare both your child and yourself to talk about weight with the doctor.
→ See *Talking with the Doctor*, *Be Informed and Assertive*, and *For Kids & Teens* handouts

Identify how you and/or your child felt after meeting with the doctor. Was the discussion positive and productive, or were there aspects that felt stigmatizing?
→ See *Addressing Weight Bias* handout

Share resources about weight bias with your health care providers.
→ See *For Doctor: Positive Offices*, *For Doctor: Talking to Parents*, *For Doctor: Assess the Office*, and *Weight Bias Myths & Facts* handouts

[1] Puhl RM, Brownell KD. Confronting and coping with weight stigma: An investigation of overweight and obese individuals. Obesity. 2006;14(10):1802-1815