In the Media

Rudd Roots Parents

Teach Kids about Weight Bias

A valuable skill for children in today's media-driven world is the knowledge to resist harmful media influences that reinforce negative attitudes and prejudice towards people with overweight. You can help them to see the difference between an appropriate versus stereotypical portrayal of persons with overweight in the media content that they see, hear, and read.

What kids see…

on television and in advertisements, photographs,…

Here are some examples of appropriate visuals:

Engaged in diverse activities, roles, careers, and lifestyle behaviors.

Depicted in a neutral manner, free of additional characteristics that might otherwise perpetuate weight-based stereotypes

Portrayed in professional clothing and a well-kept appearance:

What do you notice?
These images challenge weight-based stereotypes that are common in our culture. Seeing "appropriate visuals" help children understand that people with overweight can be physically active, engaged in school, and successful in their jobs.

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Here are some examples of <u>inappropriate</u> visuals:

Unnecessary emphasis on excess weight or that isolate obese person's body parts (such as stomach or buttocks) including pictures that are only show a person from the neck down

Show persons with overweight in scantily clad clothing or looking disheveled

Show persons with overweight engaged in stereotypical behaviors such as eating junk food, being sedentary

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What kids hear or read…

in music, books, or social networking webpages,….

Examples of **neutral** terminology:	Examples of terminology that can **reinforce stigma:**
Body weight	Fat
Body mass index (BMI)	Chubby
Unhealthy weight	Morbidly obese

The media is thought to promote weight bias by presenting thinner "ideal" body types and under-representation and stereotyping of characters with overweight or obesity[1,2]

Always consider the following:

- ➤ *Does the visual imply or reinforce negative stereotypes?*
- ➤ *Does the image portray an obese person in a respectful manner?*
- ➤ *Can another visual convey the same message and eliminate possible bias?*
- ➤ *What is the news value of the particular visual?*
- ➤ *Who might be offended, and why?*
- ➤ *Is there any missing information from the photograph?*
- ➤ *What are the possible consequences of publicly using this visual?*

[1]Greenberg BS, Eastin M, Hofschire L, Lachlan K, Brownell KD: Portrayals of overweight and obese individuals on commercial television. *Am J Public Health* 2003;93:1342–1348.
[2]Himes S, Thompson, JK: Fat stigmatization in television shows and movies: a content analysis. *Obesity* 2007;15:712–718.