

Assessment

Weight Bias

Research shows that weight bias has significant impacts on an overweight or obese person's psychological and physical health, including children. Weight bias may lead to depression, low self-esteem, bad eating behaviors, and body image. It also may cause children to resist exercise and weight management strategies.

To help avoid possible weight bias when interacting with children and their parents, providers should follow these guidelines:

- *Words to avoid:* obese, obesity, fat, fatness, heavy, heaviness, large, morbidly obese, extremely obese, chubby, and excess fat.
- *Acceptable words:* weight, unhealthy weight, excess weight, high body mass index (BMI), at-risk, and weight issue.
- Ask parents and children which term(s) they prefer when discussing weight.
- Be mindful of body language and verbal tone.
Avoid jokes and insensitive comments related to weight.