

Chapter**10****Parent Letter and Activities**

Dear Parent or Guardian,

Your child's health class is currently studying body image—the way a person sees himself or herself. Some people, particularly teens, have a distorted body image. They may compare themselves with models or athletes and think that they are too fat or too thin. We will discuss appropriate weight and the factors that influence it. We will explore weight problems and healthful ways in which teens can reach or maintain their appropriate weight. Our studies will also include a lesson on eating disorders, such as anorexia nervosa, bulimia, and binge eating.

As we explore the various issues related to body image, your teen will consider some important questions, such as: *How do eating and physical activity habits affect weight? How can I maintain a healthy weight? Why do some people develop eating disorders? Where can a teen with an eating disorder get help?*

These questions are especially important during adolescence. During these years, teens establish eating and physical activity habits that can last throughout their lives. Answering these questions will help your teen develop a positive body image and maintain a healthy weight. You are a vital part of this process.

To support and extend our classroom work, please set aside some time during the next few weeks to complete one or more of the following activities with your teen:

- Discuss body image with your teen. If he or she is concerned about being overweight or underweight, check with your health care professional to see if a weight management program is needed.
- With your teen, create a list of fun ways to increase physical activity and help manage weight. For example, you might list activities such as bike riding, in-line skating, or playing tennis. Then participate in one of these activities together.
- Look through newspapers or magazines together, and identify advertisements for fad diets. Ask your teen why these diets are ineffective or unhealthful. Then discuss healthy ways to lose or gain weight.
- Make yourself available to discuss and answer questions your teen may have about eating disorders.

As always, feel free to engage in other activities you believe will encourage your teen to develop a positive body image and maintain a healthy weight. Thank you for supporting our classroom work. Please feel free to contact me.

Sincerely,

Health Teacher