



## HEALTHY WEIGHT

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With an Improving Understanding of MCH grant, FamilyVoices IMPACT works to develop ways to improve health and wellness for all children and families, and to encourage partnerships between families and professionals for children's good health.

[www.familyvoices.org](http://www.familyvoices.org) and [www.brightfuturesforfamilies.org](http://www.brightfuturesforfamilies.org).

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### Teens as Mentors for Healthy Weight

Younger children look up to teens as role models. We can use this fact to improve health behaviors. Teens can get through to younger children—even better than adults can.

A recent elementary school study put this idea to the test. Adult teachers presented the “Just For Kids” curriculum to one group of third and fourth graders in a traditional classroom setting. Teen mentors presented the same curriculum to a second group through one-on-one sessions in the school gym.

After 8 weeks of after school sessions, only the children mentored by the teens showed improvements in lifestyle behaviors, including physical activity and eating patterns, and health outcomes that included weight loss and lower blood pressure.

Lead author of the study, Lauren Smith, associate professor of nursing at Ohio State, commented: “... This study supports the idea that this mentoring approach is a better way to impact younger kids. ... I focused on diet and nutrition, but there's no reason this can't be used to address other health issues that a school identifies. In order for this to be successful, there has to be good training and good support for the teens. But the teens with the right help and support can make a big difference.”

To read more about this study, go to: <http://medicalxpress.com/news/2013-03-teen-healthier-choices-younger-children.html>

### Healthy Eating for a Healthy Weight: Tips from the Centers for Disease Control

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) offers these suggestions for a healthy eating plan for all families:

According to the Dietary Guidelines for Americans 2010, a healthy eating plan:

- Emphasizes fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and fat-free or low-fat milk and milk products
- Includes lean meats, poultry, fish, beans, eggs, and nuts
- Is low in saturated fats, trans fats, cholesterol, salt (sodium), and added sugars
- Stays within your daily calorie needs

Read more from the CDC about healthy eating—including ways to continue to eat the “comfort foods” we love in moderation at: [www.cdc.gov/healthyweight/healthy\\_eating/index.html](http://www.cdc.gov/healthyweight/healthy_eating/index.html)

