

Raising healthy kids – talking with parents and whānau about healthy weight

Do apologise if they are upset that no one has raised this with them before *"I'm sorry we haven't talked with you about this before"*

Do ask if they are surprised by what you have said about their child's weight

Do find a word to use that is not obese, try other phrases such as *not a healthy weight, too heavy for their age, or overweight*. Listen to what whānau say and use their words

Do ask what they already know, are doing, or believe

Do ask about the child's sleep - this may be something new and important that parents and whānau can work on - you will need to adjust this discussion if the whānau is living in an overcrowded, damp house

Do provide a positive handover to the nurse - say how important this is for the child's health, say the nurse has been trained to have this conversation and say you are really interested in talking to the nurse later to find out what they decided to do and how they get on

Do provide a positive referral to Active Families and similar programmes - recommend the programme and explain the benefits, where it is held and so on

Do acknowledge that making changes can be very hard

Do acknowledge small changes as they all add up

Do acknowledge that they are trying hard

Do encourage them to reduce or stop drinking fizzy drinks as a family/whānau

Do focus on the child growing into their weight (not being put on a diet)

Do explain what you are doing when you fill in the growth chart

Do acknowledge what parents and whānau believe and then talk about their child's weight (e.g. if they think their child has big bones you might say *"Yes you are right your daughter does have big bones which make her taller than a lot of children her age- that is good- however she also weighs more than most children her age."*)

Do follow up (this is a long term condition) by recording unhealthy weight in notes and mark for follow up

Do persist - you are the advocate for that child and whānau

Do make them aware that change will need to happen at a whānau level

Do talk about not using the word 'fat' by explaining this word has been used to make people feel bad. It is better to use words such as *too heavy* or *not a healthy weight*

Do help them anticipate next steps – and have some small achievable goals that you will be following with them, say they can contact you, that this change may take some time, and the effort is worth it

Do explain that there are different BMI charts for children and adults and these can't be compared. A child's BMI of 19 can seem very low to a parent whose BMI is 40 plus.