

Championing Best Health: A Primary Care Series on Pediatric Obesity

Starting the Conversation: Talking About Weight with Kids and Families

Dr. Stasia Hadjiyannakis & Dr. Laurie Clark

Key Messages:

- Recognize that obesity is complex, chronic & relapsing and requires long-term support.
- Consider patient and family preferences, values, and the social context in which they live.
- Use person-first language - Neutral terms are preferred - “body weight, higher body weight, body size” rather than “obese” or “morbidly obese” Use the language and terms the family uses, unless those terms could cause harm.
- Take a non-judgmental, non-stigmatizing approach
- Recognize power imbalances and enter the conversation with humility and open curiosity.
- Be aware of weight bias and stigma not only in society as a whole, but also in yourself
- Use a collaborative approach - create individualized treatment plans with your patient/families and consider access to resources in the community. Discuss expectations
- Complete a comprehensive assessment using [WHO Growth Charts for Canada](#), [4Ms framework](#), [EOSS-P](#), and the [5As of Pediatric Weight Management](#)

Starting the conversation:

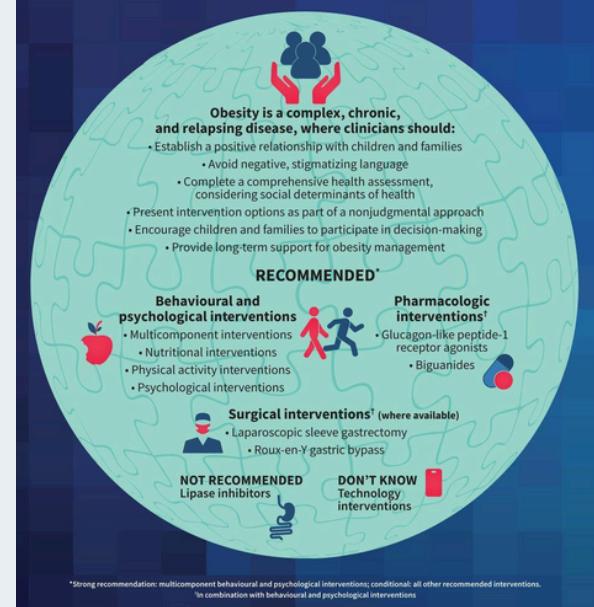
- Reflect on your practice and ask yourself “How would a person in a larger body experience the space? What changes could I make to improve the space? Do I think someone can be healthy living in a larger body?”
- ASK for permission to discuss weight: Weight is a sensitive issue. Many parents may be embarrassed or fear blame and stigma, so “asking” is an important first step. If you don’t know your patient/family well, you may wish to talk to the parent(s) alone first
- When ASKING:
 - Do you have any concerns about your/your child’s weight?
 - What are your concerns about your/your child’s weight?
 - How does your/your child’s weight impact you/them?
 - Does your body weight or size make anything physically more difficult for you?
 - Does how you feel about your body weight impact your comfort or confidence in social situations or hold you back from trying things you might be interested in?
 - What do you think would be different in your life if your body weight/size was different?
 - What do you like about your body? Any advantages to your body shape/size?
 - Have you ever experienced bullying or received negative comments related home; at school; online)

Resources:

- [Weight related conversation resources](#) - practical, evidence-based resources to support parents and healthcare providers - developed by led by Dr. Amy McPherson at Holland Bloorview Kids Rehabilitation Hospital
- [Talking about weight: Guidance for GPs and Healthcare Professionals](#) - EASO
- [Clinical Practice Guidelines for Pediatric Obesity](#) - Obesity Canada

Managing pediatric obesity:

a clinical practice guideline



Geoff D.C. Ball et al. CMAJ 2025;197:E372-E389

Holland Bloorview
Kids Rehabilitation Hospital



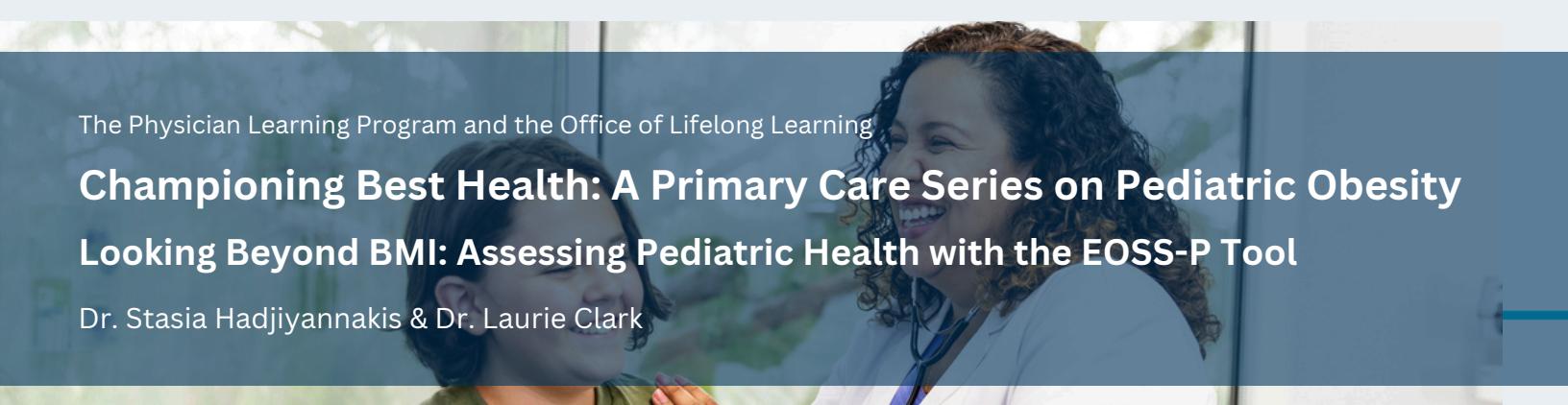
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Looking Beyond BMI: Assessing Pediatric Health with the EOSS-P Tool

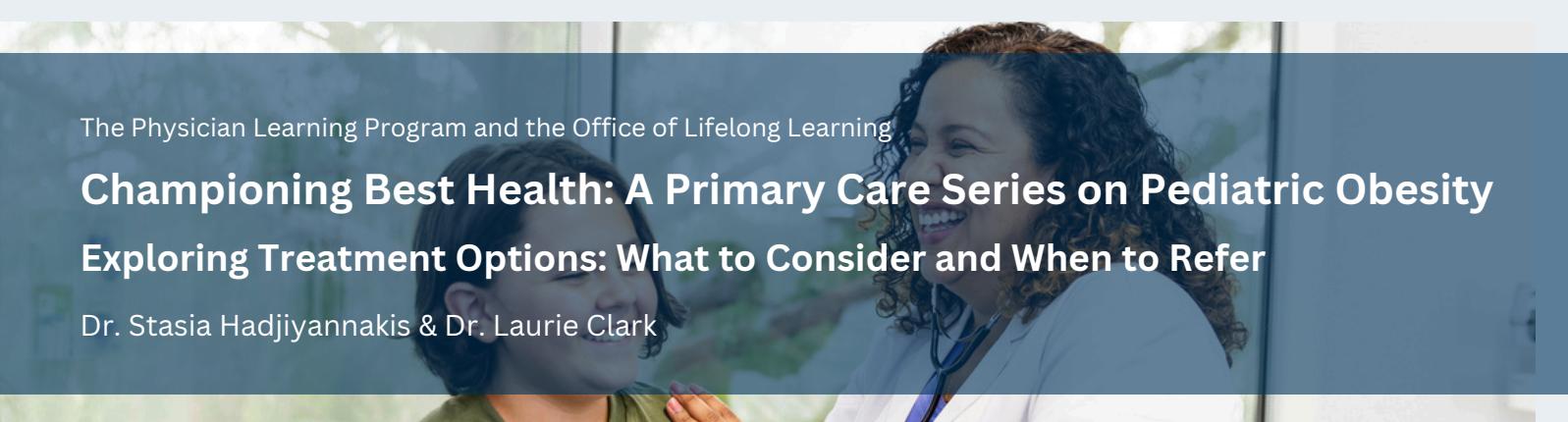
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Exploring Treatment Options: What to Consider and When to Refer

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Consider using [**MyL3Plan**](#), a free online tool developed by the Office of Lifelong Learning (L3) that can be used to meet and support the 3 activities/action plans required by the PPIP-CPSA and earn up to 36 Mainpro+ certified credits. by completing the following cycles:

- Practice-driven quality improvement using objective data (CQI)
- Personal Development (PD)
- Standards of Practice Quality Improvement (SOP).

[**Learn more here!**](#)

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When Care Gets Stuck: Strategies for Overcoming Roadblocks

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