

- Body weight

TIPS TO HELP AN OVERWEIGHT CHILD ADOPT HEALTHIER BEHAVIOUR

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Clinical psychologist Dr Quratulain Zaidi at MindnLife in Hong Kong says it is important to use the right language – “and framing it so the focus is on being healthy rather than losing weight or going on a diet”.

Hone in on nutritious meals and an active lifestyle. Leave “weight” out of the picture and frame healthy eating changes for the whole family. That way you’re not singling out one person.

Aim to show confidence in your own body image and watch the words that you use, Zaidi says. Avoid talking about other people’s appearance and their bodies.

When you go grocery shopping, let children help you choose healthy fruit and vegetables and encourage them to read nutrition labels. It will prove to be a useful education and make grocery shopping more interesting for them.

Psychologist Naina Suri says it’s imperative for parents to remember that children are sensitive to feedback, so it’s important to keep their self-esteem intact when bringing up a “touchy” subject like weight.

The primary focus and goal should be to talk to your child about what it means to be healthy, not about their weight.

Reduce your child’s screen time, Suri urges. Spending too much time on digital devices results in physical inactivity, leading to weight gain. This also affects the child’s mood. It can also trigger sleep issues: not getting enough sleep can increase food cravings, leading to overeating.

To avoid this situation, keep meal times exclusively tech-free, switch off devices 45 minutes to an hour before bedtime, avoid keeping any devices next to the child’s bed and encourage them to leave their screens outside their room while they are sleeping.