

As a healthcare professional getting ready to have a conversation on about health behaviours and weight, there are some key considerations to keep in mind. Use this “do’s and don’ts” checklist to help you start the conversation.

WHEN GETTING THE CONVERSATION STARTED

Things to think about

DO

- Always ask permission to have the conversation.
- Use person-first language (e.g. “person with obesity”).
- Make eye contact and talk to children and families equally.
- Ask children and families what is important to them to feel healthy and well.
- Listen.
- Affirm and acknowledge the child and family’s responses, even if you don’t agree with them. Seek common ground to move forward.
- Hold genuine interest in what children and families have to say.
- Make growth and healthy lifestyles a part of every consultation (as appropriate). This can help to de-stigmatize the topics.
- Talk about the benefits of healthy lifestyles and healthy home environments for children and the entire family.

~~DON'T~~

- Over-simplify the problem or solution (e.g. just move more, eat less, it’s just a matter of will power).
- Assume the reasons for weight-related issues (e.g. they are not taking their health seriously).
- Assume that families are not already engaged in healthy behaviours.
- Be judgemental or use shame, blame or scare tactics.
- Leave a family without resources and next steps.
- Assume that families are ready, willing and able to make changes right away.

