

Assessment of BMI for Age-At Risk for Underweight Procedure

Purpose

This tells staff how to decide if a child needs follow up regarding Body Mass Index (BMI) and steps to take when a child is identified as underweight.

Guidance

A child's BMI is a calculation that considers weight, height, gender and age. BMI is an indicator of body fatness and is used to screen for underweight in children, age 2 and older. Children with a BMI at or below the 5th percentile are considered underweight. However, growing at or below the 5th percentile for BMI can be normal for a child, if growth is consistent. Reassure parents that BMI is an indicator that a child's growth may need to be monitored. Drastic measures regarding changes in eating are usually not necessary.

A child who has a genetic tendency to be thin is different from a child who stops gaining or starts losing weight. There are risk factors associated with underweight children that can include social factors and/or medical conditions.

Procedure

This is the process to identify, refer, document and monitor children who are identified as underweight.

1. Identify

Site team must identify children at risk for being underweight within 45 days of enrollment.

- Head Start Sites: Review growth charts generated from PSESD.
- ECEAP sites: Input student data in Epi Info or Kids Health and generate growth grids.

Links to Epi Info and Kids Health are:

<http://www.cdc.gov/epiinfo/index.html>

<http://kidshealth.org/en/parents/bmi-charts.html?WT.ac=ctg#catbmi-tools>

Please note: You cannot save data in Kids Health. If you use this program, you will need to enter both sets of data in the spring to generate a growth grid that shows both measurements. When entering spring data, you must first enter child's fall height and weight, select calculate BMI and then click "add entry" to input measurements for spring. This will allow you to generate a growth grid with both measurements.

2. Document

Site team must document children with a BMI at or below the 5th percentile within 45 days of enrollment.

- You may find helpful tips about talking to parents in the resources section below.
- Share the child's growth status with all team members and determine if there are known factors that could contribute to weight status.
- Contact parents/guardians to tell them their child's BMI and discuss plans to address concern. Include the following:
 - Review the child's growth chart and explain your concern.
 - Ask if there have been changes in the home that could affect the child's willingness to eat or access food.

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- Review the Health & Developmental History. Make note of chronic medical conditions and medications which can contribute to weight loss.
- Ask if the child has been referred to WIC or to a Registered Dietitian by their health care provider (HCP)
- If a child is not enrolled in WIC, then explain the program and encourage parent to enroll their child.
- Tell parents you will refer child to their HCP for follow up.
- Document the discussion with parents and referral to HCP.
 - Head Start: Child and Family File
 - ECEAP: ELMS
- Share with team members what you discussed with parents and health care plans

3. Monitor

- The site team will continue to work with the family to make changes that promote healthy choices, eating patterns and exercise.
- The site team will request consultation with the Regional Nutrition Coordinator if the family wants increased intervention.

Related Documents

Health and Developmental History
Health Care Provider Referral
Nutrition Consultation Request Form

Resources

See Health/Nutrition/Safety Resource Hub for related information

<http://www.cdc.gov/epiinfo/index.html>

This site provides detailed instruction for downloading and use of Epi Info. It includes instruction for Windows, mobile devices as well as Web and Cloud use.

<http://kidshealth.org/en/parents/bmi-charts.html?WT.ac=ctg#catbmi-tools>

This calculator is for children and teens between 2 and 20 years old. It allows you to calculate a child's body mass index (BMI) and see how it compares to others of the same age and gender. The calculator also gives you the option of entering multiple sets of measurements so you can view BMI as a trend over time. A trend may suggest whether a person is losing or gaining weight at a healthy rate.

www.choosemyplate.gov

Developed and maintained by USDA, this website has a wide variety of information on nutrition, exercise and health. Tip sheets for parents are available in English and Spanish on many topics.

<http://www.multicare.org/mary-bridge-5210/>

Ready, Set, Go! 5-2-1-0 is a site devoted to the promotion of healthy living. Tips and ideas for child care centers and families to use the concepts of eating five or more fruits/veggies daily, limiting screen time, increasing physical activity and limiting sugary drinks are provided. Many resources and printable teaching tools included.

How to Get Your Kid to Eat... But Not Too Much

Written by Ellyn Satter, MS, RD, this book is an excellent resource for professionals and parents to better understand the dynamics of feeding children. This resource provides information that may help parents with the challenge of a child who does not want to eat.

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<http://www.letsmove.gov/resources>

Let's Move! is a comprehensive initiative, launched by the First Lady, dedicated to solving the problem of obesity within a generation, so that children born today will grow up healthier and able to pursue their dreams. *Let's Move!* materials can be easily distributed as part of a newsletter, web site post, or to attendees of an event or rally.

<http://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/nutrition-and-wellness-tips-young-children-provider-handbook-child-and-adult-care-food-program>

Provider handbook offering suggestions for CACFP providers to help children and families adopt healthy eating and active play behaviors. Materials are targeted towards curbing the increase in childhood obesity and to help children attain their educational potential.