

Hello. This is Dr. Char Wrighton and the topic today is childhood obesity. I've got many facets to this talk today, so it's gonna be fun. I want to share some research with you that is significant and eye opening. Some of the problems that we face in today's society as far as obesity is concerned, and also some solutions and the solutions are wonderful. They're fun. They're not always easy some of them, but this is a time where families and again possibly can be done in the classroom just different dynamic, but can be also done in the classroom, so as always I always talk to parents, grandparents and teachers of early education children.

So at Rutgers University, they did a study and what they found ... they did a study on early childhood obesity I should finish that sentence and the prevention interventions beyond preschool education settings, so what they found was that studies in the past, or interventions in the past have done very, very little to help childhood obesity. It may educate, people may hear the information, but it's not practical or sufficient enough for the parent to implement, and really difficult for the school to implement. That's really going to be the thrust of the conversation today is, some of the problems that the study found. Then after my reading it then what I feel are some really strong solutions and also some of the problems.

They found that a need for culturally adapted bilingual nutrition and physical activity programs for children and their families. That is really significant because their study is looking at the entire United States childhood population which is including many, many different other cultures and ethnic groups. And as well as poverty and they did a study in Head Start as well as the YMCA which serves low income children. We know that low income and diverse populations are not the only ones that create obesity. We have an obesity problem in all sectors of our society, and so we have to take a look at that and not just think it is one demographic that is causing the issues or participating in the issues.

They said most health care system initiatives did not improve childhood growth trajectories, and they discovered that there was very little research on how cost effective any of these programs were. So as is very typical of grants and government funding, whether it's state or federal, money can be poured into something that number one doesn't either get there, doesn't do what's planned, never reaches the kids, so change doesn't happen. That is probably one of the biggest things that they found, is that anything that was implemented in schools or in ... to rich private homes was not literally changing lives and that is critical.

Some of the things that they found that was beneficial in their study was definitely limited time on technology, television, moving around more, more exercise and changing to nutritious snacks and choosing physical either family activities or physical classroom activities, stepping up the moments that children play.

Now I have talked about in prior shows that across the nation in the last 10 years they've literally reduced physical education in schools, and they did that so that they could have more time teaching reading, because our reading scores were so low and the math scores were so low. Literacy is so low in all areas, and so according to test scores. So what they did was they took away recess, because there's 15 20 minutes that you could still read and they took, they shortened physical education classes and then they limited it to a couple of times a week rather than five times a week or even three times a week, and they also shorten the minutes.

So with all that happening, our children are moving less and less. With the advent of iPhones we know our children are moving less and less. They're not getting outside, they're not running around. They're

becoming very, very passive, whether they play games on the computer, the iPhone or the iPod or watch movies and videos. There's less movement and so this is gonna be a huge critical part and as you knows Zoo-phonics moves. We love movement. I have talked also about how important it is for every single age group to get out and move and how it staves off Alzheimer's disease and dementia. It literally staves it off, it stops it, it reduces it, it delays it. However you want to word that one depending on the person, movement, exercise is imperative.

For the study they're gonna have to do more studies is basically what they came up with, and the question is how can we make it cost effective and how can we actually make it so that it changes lives and that children lose weight? That's the bottom line. So anyway the study was good. It certainly informs us, but now what do we do with it. It's that's left on our laps to read and cogitate and then we have to say now what. So my interest is in talking to individual people in their homes or classrooms. So we're switching from research to practical application. Some of the things that I have personally done in my own family being someone who's really exercise and nutrition conscious.

You'll hear from my parenting, grand parenting and also my teaching as well as the curriculum I develop I make sure that it's in my curriculum, because I feel like teachers may or may not know some of the worst states for obesity is right there in the heart of America and in the south, because of dietary issues. Way too much sugar and everything's deep fried. God bless them, but it's the truth and they know it. I've been there too many times and they have the best desserts in the world. No question about it. However, the obesity rate is gigantic and they're more strokes and heart attacks are in that area, because that's just part of their culture and it's just part of what they've grown up with and it's what they love.

They wouldn't give up their sweet tea for anything, but this doesn't mean that we can't alter these, our special things. We all love pizza, we love hamburgers, we love pasta, so we like our sugar beverages. This is just anywhere I've been traveled all over the world and I find the same things, some of the best foods treats I've ever seen. Italy, France even Japan has incredible with all their tiny skinny wonderful people, their desserts are incredible. This is just, we love our desserts we love our treats, so how do we make it practical for our family. Sometimes I have, well sometimes many times all the time, often, choose one of those. I have been waiting in line at the grocery store and I just observe what other people eat and I am shocked I would say all the time.

It is a rare time where I see vegetables outweighing chips, candy, sodas, alcohol and all other sorts of packaged processed foods. In this day and age 2019 it is hard for me to believe that people don't know because it's on the television, it's in the news. It's in the reading material. I mean you walk by the magazines or the news whatever, the magazines in the grocery checkout and you've got diet stuff right there staring you in the face. You have nutrition, so it's hard for me to believe that people don't really know. However, it is certainly as possible because if you don't pick one of the magazines up and open it and read it you might not know. If it doesn't catch your eye, if it's of no interest to you, but I think a lot of it is also we really don't want to change much.

We know if we're overweight, we know if we're eating properly, we know if we're getting enough fruits and vegetables. I don't think that there's anybody alive in America that doesn't know that they should be having a balanced nutrition. We know that, we know that we're not supposed to be eating candy, milkshakes, sodas and we know that. However, it doesn't change the way we live.

One of the large concerns that I have, and I find it very serious and kind of daunting as trying to find solutions for it and certainly a concern because of my love for people in general and children's very specifically. I have found that if there is an overweight child there's an overweight adult or two, very often two. I'm a people watcher, so if I'm in a place where I'm watching observing people, I will notice that overweight children come with overweight parents very often both of them. Now my question is and this is not to offend anybody. This is purely to help not hurt. I will give you a disclosure, I am always battling 20 pounds ever since turning 50, I have battled weight, so I know how hard it is.

I know how hard it is to turn that cookie down when it's sitting on a plate and it's got your name on it. However, it's the overall nutrition and exercise that we're going to take a peek at today. It is very, very difficult for an overweight parent to say to their child, you need to lose weight or honey you're packing on too many pounds. We don't want to hurt our children. We don't want to shame our children. We have to word things carefully, so as not to embarrass or make uncomfortable or make our children feel less worthy, especially when they're little. Children go through chubby stages not everybody for sure, but just depending on genetics children go through ... some children I'll put some in there go through chubby stages, that will soon be rectified just by growing.

Especially if you know that your child is eating nutritiously and running around enough then you can say you know what this stage is going to pass and it does. Those little chubby boys once they get their growth they turn into strong muscular boys especially if they're moving enough, but right now today we're looking at those who are not going to get through that chubby stage, and they're going to stay that way and they're going to get bigger and as they age. I want parents and teachers, because it's really hard when you're a teacher. I personally lost a parent, a family from our preschool, because I saw that the parent was giving the child snack pack every single day with cheese crackers, salami or processed chicken or turkey or some kind of meat and candy treat, and every single day.

There was never variety, there was never an apple. There was never any extra vegetable sent in. After watching that for six months to eight months I can't remember the timeframe, and feeling really uncomfortable about it because what was happening is this child was bored and not eating it anymore, so now the child wasn't eating, I finally said something and the parents were very angry with me for stepping in, and I bet they pulled their child out of the school. So I'm going to put that out there teachers and parents. It's a very touchy subject that we don't take lightly.

On the other hand, our hearts are for that child's future, and so when we see a child who is either bored with what they're eating or is not getting the full nutrition that that child needs to properly grow, and that child is already showing tendencies of being overweight, then someone has to step in and surely it should be the doctor's duty, but if the doctor doesn't do it and the parent doesn't notice it or doesn't think about it someone has to say something. So forgive those teachers if they come to you and be grateful, because I think it's a good eye opener for everybody.

Our goal really on earth is to grow and mature and to give back to society as much as possible, to work hard, to provide for our families. All that takes energy and all that takes health. If your children start out in life obese, they're not going to have the full life that you want for them, and that is just the cold truth.

The other thing to think about is the fact is that as children grow older in school they become less tolerant, and they become plain mean. They fat shame, and your child if they are overweight, he or she is overweight. Sooner or later they're going to feel very uncomfortable about their weight and they're going to be teased by other children. It's just the way it is. When it comes time for picking teams for

soccer or baseball or whatever the sport is, they're not going to be picked. It's very difficult to run and be graceful when you're overweight. That's the bottom line. You do walk differently, you run differently, your movement is different because it's hard to get around the weight.

Again, it's looking at this with open eyes and open heart saying, "This is something that I need to seriously look at." If you're a teacher and you're listening, it's finding that the children who may be overweight in your school and then it's delicately, carefully and maybe prayerfully figuring out a way to talk to the parent or somehow broaching the subject, but for sure making sure that the snacks in the child care are healthy. That is something we tried very strongly to do at Safari Learning Academy, is to keep as much sugar out, as much processed food out, and as many vegetables and fruits as we can get. We definitely limit the juice. We keep that for parties only, juice is sugar and you think you might be doing something great for your child by giving them orange juice, apple juice, grape juice.

Juice is sugar and the body reads it as sugar. They don't read it as nutrition. It will draw out the vitamins from it there's no question about it, but what's missing that is really important to health and nutrition is the fiber that goes along with the juice and that's being taken out and often it's cooked, it's homogenized. So you're even killing the nutrition out of it or some of it. So we have really strived to do whole grains and to also give children a variety of foods, so that they can learn to taste. Also, little children have a lot of texture issues and a lot of food issues, and so they may not like certain foods and so what you have to do for all children not just anyone who is overweight, but you have to find out what they like and then stick with it.

I happen to have my first born was very, very skinny slight boy and I was concerned because he didn't eat a lot, but he certainly didn't never stop moving. He was constantly moving and he was never sick so I figured you know what he's doing okay. On the other hand he lived on Cheerios and grilled cheese sandwiches and peas. There are just certain things he likes, certain things he didn't like. So I went to the pediatrician and she told me very, wise words. Give him what he likes, just make sure it's nutritious. If he likes apples give them apples every day if he likes bananas... Find out what they like and that's what you give them. If he like cheerios every day, give him cheerios at least it's oat flour.

I think her advice was really, really good, but going back to little children, little children have texture issues. They don't like certain taste and they do not like certain textures, they don't like how it feels in their mouth. You have to go through stages with children and you have to be very patient and certainly do not force a child to eat something that is going to make them gag, all that makes them is adults in life who hate broccoli. I speak from experience not my own personally I won't mention names, but yes if you force broccoli down a child's throat, they're going to hate it when they get older, and how sad to miss out on such a magnificent vegetable.

It's trying new things so that the child can say yay or nay. If they don't like it then you write it down in fact it would be fun to have a board in the house, where you do decision making where the child can literally see you writing down what they like on the board in the kitchen, so that they feel like they have had a voice and a vote in their own life. I think that is really important. It's good to while you're grocery shopping, what you're trying to do is educate the child in a simple and kid friendly way, but you're also trying to help them make decisions on their own so that they feel listened to, so that they don't feel that all decisions are in Mom and Dad's hands, or grandparents hands or teachers hands.

Children are filled with all older people telling them what to do and for good reason. However, children do need to have a voice. If they, if yes your tasting things you could put doesn't like on one side and

write it down, and put likes on the other side so the child can see and you know what, in time it's going to change, but that's okay, you can keep tasting. There's so many things and so many incredible foods that children will discover, but if they don't taste it they'll never know, so you can always definitely use that one. Some suggestions for food and cooking good nutrition is, well first of all like I said, if you are overweight as well as your children then it is time to look at it kind of square in the eye and saying, "Okay, I got to do something about this."

I'm going to give you some suggestions for family weight loss and upping the nutrition and upping the exercise, and you're going to find it fun. Dieting is not easy. Like I said it is very difficult to pass up that dessert or second helping. I speak from experience personally on that one, but I try fight it all the time. First of all sharing the planning. Children love to do whatever the adult does, and too often parents are exhausted and it's like, "Let me just get this done without little fingers slowing me down." So sometimes we take that approach in life.

\Even in preschools, we get all things prepared for them and then we hand it to them. They have no vote. They have no choice, and they have no participation. So I'm really, really big on children sitting on the counter or having a very safe spot, where they can sit on their knees and they can stir things or they can cut things up safely. Sharing in the planning. If you were as a family, and I like it all of you together. The reason for that is because you got to have family by in. If you have two people who are overweight in the family say it's mom and child, then and if Dad isn't overweight, or the other family members aren't overweight, it can be a private thing just between mother and child. That's okay, but it's really difficult to sit at the dinner table when everyone else is having heaping plates of spaghetti and whatever or big desserts.

Family buy in even if it's only for one person. It has to be part of the love that family feel for each other and the closeness and the support the family feel for each other, and so it isn't easy, but I think it's imperative. Sitting down together planning what are we going to have for this week. Maybe it's a good Sunday thing to do as you're getting ready for the week and then maybe cutting out coupons for healthy foods, coupons usually are for junk food, so be very careful that you're not cutting out coupons.

I would have the child be the one who physically throws it in the trash. So it's that person's job to toss it in the trash can or tear it up whatever, but then keep out the ones that ... go through the brochures they send them out email, or they have them in the grocery store where the child can go through with you and circle what they like. I'm a teacher as you can dare do that as well. You can take those back to your preschool, sit down and have a wonderful conversation about nutrition, and have children vote on the foods that they'd like to eat. That gives you a really good picture of what they like and what they don't like. So planning, so that's ahead of time maybe on Sunday, maybe it's Saturday whatever.

The next thing is you're coupon cutting like I said, and then go to the grocery store, allow the child to be part of the process. Again Mom Dad usually in a big hurry, piling things in the cart moving as fast as they can. Everything is always interest of time, we rarely have enough of it. The child sits and at that point the child starts making demands and then the child's whining and then the child throwing a temper tantrum and then it becomes a frustrating and tiring situation. What we're trying to do is get the child involved. Now you've heard me talk before about Zoo-phonics, how we signal out our initial sounds with our body signals, our animal related body signals. It's how we teach the alphabet. This is a great time to combine and connect the alphabet to your shopping.

If you're going to buy carrots, carrots starts with Katina cats, we do the Katina cat signal as we're in the grocery store going down the vegetable. Tomatoes. Timothy Tiger signal, so you can combine your alphabet work sounds and signals with your shopping and your nutrition, your whole concepts. You can even with older children talk about if apples are a dollar a pound, and I'm going to buy three pounds how many dollars is it going to cost? So you can even bring in math. It's also talking with your child, listening to your child. Every moment of this experience can be extremely positive and extremely valuable, and believe it or not your child will do this with their children, if it's enjoyable, and it's peaceful, and it's affirming, they're going to want to do it with their child, and they're going to remember it forever.

When you get home it is important that the child not run off. This is a good time for the child to help you. They love helping, and I know sometimes their help is more trouble sometimes, but we are going to let them do it because it's important. They could be at the sink washing the apples or washing the carrots or whatever you ... I mean this is a good thing for them to do. Food should be washed. They have wonderful sprays that are organic and helpful and long as they rinse off, you're gonna do the double checking, but let them do that. Let them help. They can put things where they can reach, so let them do that.

Interesting point, something that I kind of bark against. I'm not a big vegetable, can vegetable person. I somehow knowing that vegetables are in cans, and they're led seals and then I don't really know what they use, but they used to use lead and then it cooked, just not my favorite thing. So I really do very, very little canned goods. I will buy frozen vegetables and certainly lots of fresh, because I love to eat raw vegetables. However, the nutrition experts say they all pack about the same amount interestingly as fresh vegetables in fact, because they're canned, and they're frozen. They actually store their nutrition even better because sometimes we let our vegetable sit way too long and should be tossed out much earlier so therefore, they lose nutrition especially if the vegetables are cut up and sitting there.

Also don't soak your stuff in water or sugar water or lemon water or anything the water dilutes it. I mean that's something that you can do that day, but you don't want to leave it very long, any length of time. If you're trying to do apples, and you don't want them to brown, you put him in a water solution you're going to lose your nutrition. So just kind of keep in mind those kind of things. Cooking together is such a wonderful activity. Kids love to stir, they can cut up, give them a nice safe knife like a serrated metal knife is safe or a plastic knife and give them things that cut up easily, and they might have to work out a little bit like if it's say an apple or celery.

However, bananas are easy, orange slices are easy, so give them the strawberries are easy, give them those kind of things to participate with, they'll love it. Purchasing children's cookbooks are wonderful, because then these are really usually tried and tested with kids and many kids and so they usually know what kids like and so they include them. They also make it so that it's real easy for children to be able to participate in making it, because they make them simple. What I would do is take your recipes that you have in your house and at or in the children's cookbooks and be very careful with the ingredients. If they call for three cups of sugar or two cups of sugar even one cup of sugar, use half what they're asking for.

You can also substitute it with stevia or stevia however you pronounce it. Coconut sugar has a stronger flavor, but it's actually really good for you and it doesn't spike glucose ... insulin, which is really critical. If it asks for white rice, either mix it with brown or mix it with quinoa or all three. Oils, make sure you're not using cheap vegetable oil. All it does it hurts the heart, but it also just adds trans fat. So trans fat is probably one of the biggest issues plus sugar that we have in cooking and nutrition today. So be very,

very careful with that, make sure that you're using really good oils. You're not supposed to cook with olive oil, because it doesn't take high temperatures very well, so add it later, add at the last minute to your mixes.

Coconut oil, it doesn't taste like coconut, is really, really good oil to use. Choose grains and legumes and vegetables that don't cause insulin spikes. You want to choose foods that slowed down the insulin because that causes obesity and the diabetes epidemic. We have an epidemic in the United States because of our chronic overweight and chronic lack of nutrition and chronic lack of activities and exercise.

So we're going to do this was part 1 of this discussion, and we're going to do part two next and part two is going to be all about exercise. I hope you got something from this. Remember that you can always email us at Char@Zoopphonics.com. You can also write the radio station. We'd love to hear your questions, your comments. If anything that I've omitted or didn't state properly or something I need to learn, feel free to tell me I love learning, and I'd love to hear your feedback.