

Childhood Obesity Pt.2

[INTRODUCTION]

[0:00:06.7] ANNOUNCER: Next is Dr. Charlene Wrighton to discuss everything early education about your children or students in our new show, Ed. Talks with Dr. Char.

[EPISODE]

[0:00:21.4] CW: Hi, this is Dr. Char Wrighton and I am going to give a part two today. Last week I talked about nutrition and obesity and how we can help children lose weight with family participation. I want to do a little recap on that and then the rest of the talk today is going to be on exercise and fun things that you can do to get you and your children out and moving.

As always, I'm talking to parents, grandparents and teachers because you all can participate in this and help your children. Some of the things that I said last week is to make sure that your children are participating in the planning of food. I discuss the fact that children are picky eaters and a lot of times, they don't like taste but they also don't like textures.

They don't like mixing foods, I watched my grand daughter last night take apart her corn dog talking about no nutrition, whatsoever. I just happened to have one. Taking it apart, taking the cornmeal part of, bread, of the hotdog and eating them separately because heaven forbid, one eats it all at one time.

The point being is that children have their own ways of doing things and it's okay because they're the ones that have to actually chew, swallow, taste, you know, not in that order, chew, taste and swallow the food. If they don't like it, they're not going to get it inside, they're going to fight you and it's going to be unpleasant.

What we're working on is getting them to have buy in because if they have buy in participation, they're going to be much more likely to eat the foods that you put on the table. I was not raised with my mother cooking separate meals for different people in the family.

[0:02:06.2] CW: She put the food on the table, it was delicious because she was a great cook, I seem to have missed that whole talent. It was nutritious, we always had lots and lots of vegetables and they were never overcooked. She did a great job. But, you ate what was put in front of you and that was really the bottom line.

I remember eating, learning to love absolutely everything. I don't think there's too many – I can't think of a vegetable that I don't like. Even vegetables. Anyway, making sure that children had buy in but also encouraging them to try things. We talked about cutting out coupons and so the child can actually participate in the shopping process. Planning your meals according to what you want them to eat, what they like to eat so that there's a compromise there somehow. Finding out their likes and their dislikes by writing it on a board, so the child can see that you've actually heard them.

Encouraging them to try new things because someday there's going to be a vegetable or a fruit or a meat or a cheese or something that they're going to love but if they don't try it, they'll never know. That the fact is that their tastes change as they grow older.

[0:03:21.3] CW: Being able to plan meals together so that you're going to the grocery store, I talked about the grocery store being a really fun experience, it can be a horrific experience for parents. Sometimes parents either leave their child with a babysitter or behind or just hate the experience because the child starts demanding things or whining or crying or throwing a fit. We have all been through it.

It can be a pleasant experience or very unpleasant experience. I am very big on talking to the child ahead of time before we enter the store. I'm not going to buy toys, I'm not going to buy candy and you set the scene ahead of time, so that they know that they're not going to ask for it while you're there or you can say, we can pick out one treat to share with the family this week.

So we know that it's a once a week treat not every single night or every single day treats or we're going to try to move away from that, remember the whole goal is to work on childhood obesity, that's the goal. But it's also even with these lovely beautifully bodied, skinny, they're all beautiful no matter what, God created them. Bodies, it's nutrition. You can have a lot of skinny people who have very poor eating habits, trust me.

You want to make sure that all children are eating properly. Anyway, this topic covers everybody but really, the focus of last week's topic was childhood obesity because it is a very chronic situation across United States.

[0:04:49.9] CW: One thing I wanted to do was a shout out to our parents of Safari Learning Academy. I have walked around for years and looking at the food that the parents pack their children and I am in awe. I see good, nutritious food all the time.

I see raw vegetables and fruits. Good, healthy sandwiches. I am so impressed. I watched my daughter Katy, who is the director of Safari Learning Preschool and how she packs lunches. I would have never have thought of this. It's just fantastic. They make so many wonderful food carriers and containers so that children can have their things in different containers so like the bento boxes, you can buy the food created for food so they're safe and you can put your blue berries in one section, you can put your carrots or celery in another section. You can put a little dab of peanut butter or ketchup in another section. You can put your meats or your whatever and in other section and it's sealed tightly and then it's got ice on top of it.

Anyway, back to – I just think it's amazing but back to parents. Thank you so much for providing your children the most amazing food. We're very impressed. Sometimes I'll go up to the child when I see some particularly fantastic and I say, can I share your lunch with you? They look at me strangely and they say no. It's okay because I'm only kidding them and I let them know I'm only kidding them. But I'm also giving mom a complement because – or dad, whoever is making it, grandparents. I'm just impressed, so thank you.

[0:06:23.8] CW: Back to grocery store. A grocery store can be a time of a capillary development and practicing the alphabet. I talked to you about signaling out first initials if you're a Zoo-phonics user. Signaling out the first initials in the words that we're buying, whether it's milk or eggs or fruit or vegetables or meat, whatever, we can just look at the first initial of the product that we're purchasing and give it the sound it makes like tomato or peanut butter.

Really pronouncing it so the child can hear it and now you're also including them in the purchasing because we're going to buy them foods that they really like to eat, nutritious. If they have buy in they are far more likely to eat it. Also, it's just a nice bonding time with you, you're going to take your time, you're not going to be in a rush, you're going to enjoy this time and really have a lot of mommy, kid time or daddy kid time. Whoever is in the room at the grocery store with the child. It should be special.

Then, make sure that your child participates in the cleaning of the fruit and vegetables or the – putting things away in the cupboard. Rather than them just race off, let them participate. Children need to grow up with a sense of participation and family work. They cannot be children who just play and be waited on.

[0:07:49.0] CW: That is going to be a topic of conversation sometime soon. I'm a very strong believer in children pulling their own weight in families. I think it is a very important – we don't need them to help quite honestly but they need to help for their own maturity and future independence. It is very important.

Now that you've got your groceries purchased and you've got them put away and you're going to do your meal planning or you've already done your meal planning, then making sure that the child participates is really important. Make sure that they're able to help with that, children, love to cook. They love to do anything a parent's doing.

Get them involved, rather than them to grab their iPad or sit in front of a television, get them stirring or cutting out, having them participate, talk about the ingredients, the measurements. Teach them what a tablespoon is, what a teaspoon is, what a cup is. A half cup, a quarter cup, three quarters of a cup.

I discussed about following recipes. A lot of recipes in books, unless you're buying a book that is very careful on nutrition and food choices, a lot of the cookbooks like for instance, like a Better Homes and Gardens, old cookbook or a Betty Crocker old cookbook, it's going to ask for white flower and white sugar and vegetable oil or lard and so you have to watch your ingredients really carefully and just make sure that you're getting the proper ingredients that are good for the body, stay away from sugars and trans fats.

Cheap vegetable oils. Make sure – I mean, the things like grass fed beef, they know that it's better for you because it produces more omega threes, we eat too many omega sixes, different story, different time. However we get more out of balance, therefore health starts flagging. We want to make sure that we're not doing a lot of trans fats in our foods. Just, processed food just has the wrong ingredients for ultimate health.

Anyway, that's that. Making sure that if the family are attempting to lose weight together, it is very difficult for a parent who is overweight to tell their overweight child that it's time that they change their eating habits and their exercise habits. It's very difficult. It has got to become a family project because everyone needs to share in this and everyone needs to support each other.

Other family members can be enablers and they think that they're being loving, my husband is a really sweet and loving example of this. He loves his treats, he works off his weight really easily. I do not. As I'm battling 20 pounds, he wants to treat me to delicious things because it's part of his love and his joy. On the other hand my waistline doesn't wear it well. Therefore, I need his support and I ask for his support. I tell him, "Don't be an enabler. I need to lose this weight and I need you to help support." And so, we are working on that so you know, let that kind of be a little lesson there because family have got to work together on this. They also have to do it together.

Now I want to shift focus after that quick recap of part one. I want to talk about exercise and I have talked a lot about exercise in many radio spots probably all of them. Because Zoo-phonics which is my company. Zoo-phonics, mnemonic and multi-sensory language heart program is all based on movement. Movement is critical to memory. But movement is critical to brain health. It is critical to cognitive thinking. It is critical to memory, it is critical to longevity.

The statistics are absolutely everywhere, there is not one article online or in a book or in a podcast anywhere that says, if you sit and do nothing, you're going to live to be 95. It can absolutely happen but it's rare. Everything tells you that you got to get up and move. Every single research paper there is, says, you've got to get up and move. And once we get out of childhood, if we go to college, it's mandatory that we take PE classes for at least the first two years.

[0:12:26.3] CW: You're hoping to take more as you get older. But you know, it just doesn't happen and the busier you are, the tireder you are so the less you move. There's nothing like working all day and then coming home and just sitting on a couch and eating, watching television and not moving and the more tired you feel.

That's when the pounds start gaining on the waistline and other body parts. I have shared in the past that they have done so much research since the 90s that show that when the body moves, the brain and muscles literally secrete many different compounds. Not just one, I've always said brain derived neurotrophic factor, BDNF, but I foundd up that there's something called Veg X or Veg 1 that is also secreted.

I don't even think that – that might be the right word, it might be the wrong word but I know that there's something else that I just discovered in my research the other day. It's like my goodness, I need to learn about that because that also is secreted. Different compounds and chemicals and proteins are secreted on the neurons. They grow new neurons and they also sprout new neurons. They solidify the neurons that are already connected. Therefore, we don't know that when we move that it is actually a huge boon on our cognitive processes in our brain. If you're talking about little kids, you're talking about all those neurons making magnificent connections that are going to go into long term memory very quickly.

[0:14:08.4] CW: Faster than normal. That's why Zoo-phonics is so successful. Because it goes into long term memory much faster. The information that we teach. With adults, research, every single day, I read research on how it staves off Alzheimer's and dementia because the brain starts breaking down the neuron connections.

Therefore, we want to make sure that we are protecting our brain by moving. It's good for the heart, it's good for the lungs, it's good for the circulation. It is good for the mood. I guarantee that if – I usually do my workout at the end of the day and at the end of the day, when I worked a good eight to 10 hours, I go over to the gym and I do a cross training, I do cardio and I do weight training and I do a lot of core work and I do a lot of balance work.

In that time — by the time I get done, you would think that after working eight to 10 hours, doing an hour and a half workout, going home and having to cook and wash dishes that I would collapse into bed. If I've had a workout that day, I can keep on going and I'm like a ball of energy and I'm 71.

The point being is, I know this is hard for moms and dads because I was there, I raised three children. I know what tit feels like. I work full time. I worked over full time. I took on extra projects so I know that exhausted feeling. But I'm telling you, if you get out and run early in the morning which is best for weight loss, first of all.

[0:15:37.6] CW: Number two, not run, you can just take walks but do some light weights. I'm going to talk about that in a minute. But get yourself up and moving. You're going to have more energy for your family and yourself, you're going to have a better mood, your mood is going to be elevated, you're going to be joyful because endorphins kick in. But also, it's that brain derived neurotropic factor. They're finding out that it affects mood. Because it's in the hippocampus which is where memory is stored but it is also where the emotions are so it is all interconnected.

Okay, so let us talk about some fun things that you can do with your family together and because I develop curriculum that helps children strengthen their bodies in preparation of helping them rewrite and spell and it is all interconnected and that is exactly what the Zoo-phonics program does. I have developed really fun activities to do that you could do in your home and you can so easily do in your pre-school these are things that you can make.

So for instance, you can do just fun and silly and inexpensive obstacle courses for you and your children to go through, which would include going through, going under, going over, jumping, hopping, skipping, playing a game of – well any game, red light green light. Red rover, red rover, please come over. Things that we played in our childhood if you are older specially.

Oh my goodness, I got my mind just moving so quickly I can't even, there is too much to tell you. Something that I just created for Zoo-phonics and for our brand new handwriting program that is coming out soon, I wanted children to do a Crossfit because cross fit is so fantastic for adults. Teenagers of course and adults.

They are talking about and the research says that it is probably one of the best things that you can do because you are literally using every muscle in the body and during a cross fit activity, you are using toe muscles to the top of your head muscles. You are using all of your appendages, muscles and back, arms, core, legs, fingers, everything. So therefore it is just so good for you and cross fit is that combination of running, lunging, squatting, lifting, tossing, carrying and so it includes everything.

[0:18:04.0] Jump roping, so that is why its value is so good because it includes everything that builds cardiovascular as well as muscle. You can do this with your children. Now children under 13 should not be doing anything that is going to hurt arms. In fact, 15 is even closer to weight lifting, no heavy weights should be lifted because children have green splint bones. Their bones are still growing and they are still considered green. So therefore, they are not fully formed until they reach teenage.

At that point under careful tutelage by a PE teacher or a parent, the child can or trainer can start lifting light weights and work into more heavy weights. You do not want to stress out the body too early. But little guys can do fun weight lifting and what I did was I went into the grocery store and I got orange juice cans or apple juice cans that are little or tomato paste cans. They are little and they are light.

I took off the label, I wrap them in duct tape, cute duct tape. I found her a leopard print, zebra print, I have owls on some of them. So you can find some really — flowers and you wrap it around the metal so it looks cute and it makes a nice handhold and the children can lift those so that they can get that movement. So they can lift it from drop your arms down, lift it up to your hips, put it up to your shoulders.

Lift it up in the air and you can do three of those and then do those three to five times or three times or do five of them and do those three times or do 10 of them as your children gets stronger and do three sets of those and so that is one idea. Make sure that they are jump roping. Jump roping is so much fun. It requires a lot of coordination and we just don't jump rope like we used to. I used to remember playing we jump roped every single day.

[0:19:59.7] Or we played tether ball, we were always out in the court or in the field doing something physical. Hopscotch is such a fun one. You find a slab of sidewalk somewhere, make a hopscotch and do hopscotch with your children. That is something that you can literary do for a long time and still enjoy it

because it requires some skill. You have to toss something in that square and they call it a toss in those days so you can just toss anything in there.

Chains always work really well or a coin, coin sometimes rule. So find something that is going to land and stay and then you can jump in that square if there is something in it. So if your friend has something in a square and you might have to jump over two boxes. So again it could be fun and playful but these were things that we did in our childhood and our health is so much more, actually better than today's health. We were not overweight as a nation, so try that. So we've talked about obstacle courses. We have talked about light weights.

Another thing about light weights, you can get the little small water bottles. Empty them, make sure they are dry, take the paper off them, again fill it — I like filling it with colored sand because it is pretty and then put your duct tape around it for a good handhold and also to make them look cuter and then have your children lift those. If it is too heavy pour out some sand and if it is not heavy enough, put more sand in.

The other thing would be a full-sized water bottle because think about it, you got many sizes of water bottles. I am talking about things that you can do cheaply. You can go to a dollar store and buy a lot of water for a couple of dollars, put some sand in it and I got sand at Lowe's but they also have craft sand if you want colored sand. It makes prettier but it doesn't change the weight any and then the children can hold those and do different.

[0:21:52.4] You can go online and find different weight lifting exercises and just pair them down to fit the needs of your children. But don't forget, you are going to do it too. You can get big water bottles and fill them with sand or water. If you don't have sand, water works perfectly because it carries weight. And so you are going to do the same exercises as your children. You are going to squat, you are going to lunge, you can get down on your tummy and you can wiggle like snakes.

Because it uses all of your muscles in your body, definitely jump rope. With your children you can play snakes and that means you are not going to do it over their heads because they might not be ready. If they are little they are not going to be ready for that but you are going to do snakes with them or just

hold it still and let them jump over. I have had the experience because I don't work at Safari Learning Academy very often anymore because I concentrate on writing for Zoo-phonics all the time.

But every time I've gone over there and gone out in the playground and gotten the jump ropes out, I am telling you it is their number one favorite thing to do. All of a sudden, I will have 30 kids lined up doing this with me. Where usually the kids are scattered doing all sorts of different things. Once you get the jump ropes out, every single child or almost every child is going to be lined up, ready to go. They love to jump and you can modify it for the child.

If you know a child can jump an inch or two, you lower the jump rope. If you know that little girl or boy can jump 12 inches, raise it up and give them a challenge because they love it and in fact they will tell you to raise it because they love – they feel proud, they feel good about jumping like that and so in time, I mean you want to teach children how to get the rhythm down and the jump down for doing overhead jumping, jump roping.

[0:23:40.2] It is so much fun and there is also fun things that you can sing and say at the same time. I mean I spent my whole childhood jumping. I loved it. Even exercise, even swinging on swings you have to pump your body. You have to use your muscles and your arms. You have to use your legs and so that is the fun thing plus it is enjoyable. You get to fly high in the air. Sonora has many different playgrounds around the country that you can enjoy that are wonderful.

And that is such a nice – right down by the library. I mean you could go in and read a lovely book and then go out in the playground or vice-versa, go out on the playground first and then go in and read a nice story, they got such a wonderful children's section but their playground is huge and really, really nicely done as the one on I think it is at Wood's Creek. I think there is all sorts of different places. There is hiking trails that your little one could go on or just plan a short walk, where they are actually walking and even moving up hills, so that they actually have to push their lungs a little bit. Heart and lungs, it is great for adults. It is great for kids.

I told you getting down on your tummy is good because you are actually using all of your body parts as you are pretending you are like a snake or an alligator. You are literally using all the muscles in your

body to promote yourself forward. Doing planks are fun. You get down on your arms and you get down on your toes and you make a plank.

Children can do this, adults can do this. If you have not done this as an adult, give it a try. It is not easy but it is fantastic for you because it build the core muscles in your back and stomach. It will literally strengthen your stomach. I do a lot of them, start out for just 10 seconds and in a few weeks, add five more seconds.

[0:25:34.0] In a few weeks, try to get it to 20 seconds. In a few weeks, try to get it to 30 seconds. If you can hold a 30 second plank, do three of them. Children, a lot of times can do long plank just because they don't have a lot of weight to hold up and they will sometimes have less muscle strength, believe it or not and more weight to carry. So give it a try but it is still fun but it is fantastic for you.

Battle ropes, this is something so simple. I do battle ropes. The battle ropes are probably two and a half to three inches thick. So they are extremely heavy plus each battle rope is about 20, 25 feet long. So when you are trying to make waves with them with your body and you sit in a squat and your arms is going up and down, up and down and you are doing as fast as you can, it is a work out and even 30 seconds by the time you get to the 20 second mark or the 25th second mark, your arms are exhausted.

You want to push it to 30 and just keep going even if you have to slow down a little but keep going. You can do this with your children. I just went to Lowe's, any hardware store that sells rope. It is about three quarters of an inch thick. I had him cut 12 foot lengths and I wrapped duct tape around the ends of it for a nice handhold plus it looks cute and I wrapped it around a table leg, a chair leg, the playground equipment, had the child stretch out the rope and they are going to do battle ropes.

Have them sit down — crouch down, they are not sitting but they are crouching and they are going to make the waves one arm goes up, one arm goes down and they are doing that as fast as they can. Because the ropes are only six feet each. Each hand has six feet of rope in it and they are skinny. It isn't a lot of work for a child but it's great muscle coordination and it expands energy and it helps make those little arms strong. It is a wonderful activity. So give that a try.

[0:27:34.8] Anything that you push over your head like I told you the weights that you have made for your children, push over their heads is really good. Teaching children how to lift things is very important young in life because you don't want them to hurt little backs and so I actually teach children how to carry things. So what I do is I take an appropriate size box for the child and I put toys in it and I don't overload it, of course.

I want to make sure that their two arms can carry it and so what I am going to have them do is they are going to put the objects in the box. So that is hand eye coordination and using two hands together and then they are going to carry that box to another location and then they are going to empty it out and then they are going to fill it up again and walk it back and so you can make a relay race out of it. You can make it really fun.

If you have different ages of children and different sizes of children, make the boxes different sized. Make the objects in it heavier and so it can be a lot of fun. Make sure that you are stretching with your child. You want to bend down to your toes and you want to stretch up to the sky as far as possible. You want to make sure stretching and warm ups, they are really, really important for our bodies. We do need to stretch. Children are so phenomenally flexible. Let your children help you.

You are in the role of constantly teaching and helping and protecting and loving and aiding your children all the time. I can guarantee that you are not as flexible as your child. Let your child or children help you become more flexible. If you are a grandma or grandpa, you are losing flexibility every single day. Make sure that you stretch with your grandchild. Let them be the bosses in this one. How they can curl up into a ball, they're like spaghetti.

[0:29:19.4] Cooked spaghetti, they are amazing to me. It's like, I used to be like that. We all used to be like that. We've lost it because we don't do it. So make sure — do you know that flexibility is the number one reason why older people fall and break hips? Because they do not have the flexibility to move quickly enough, to keep their balance properly and also they don't have upper arm strength to be able to protect themselves when they do fall. So they fall, they fall hard and they fall in the hip and they break it and once it is broken it is not good news for them. So you keep up your flexibility and strength.

[END OF DISCUSSION]

[0:29:57.8] CW: We are out of time and I hope that you have gained something from this. Like I always say, write to us, we'd love to hear from you, I'd love your feedback. If you have a new idea, I'd love to hear from you. Hope you have gotten something out of this.

[OUTRO]

[0:30:18.8] ANNOUNCER: That was Ed Talks with Dr. Char. You've been listening on KAAD-LP Radio live on 103.5 FM or streaming online at kaad-lp.org. If you would like to have Dr. Char answer any of your questions, please email your question to dr_char@zoo-phonics.com.

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