

Building Blocks
Healthy Eating, Physical Activity, and Oral Health
A Lesson Plan Module for Teachers
Junior Kindergarten – Grade 6

Healthy Eating
Grade 5
Lesson 3

Lesson 3 – Ads and Us

Curriculum Expectations:

Students will describe the influence of the media on body image (e.g., shape and size).

Objectives:

Students will learn about advertising.

Suggested Outline

Section 1: Introduce Today's Lesson

Section 2: Discussion/Background Information

Section 3: Classroom Discussion and Activity

Section 4: Conclusion

Section 1: Introduce Today's Lesson

Today we will learn about advertising by completing the "Ads and Us" activity sheet.

Section 2: Discussion/Background Information

Media messages

Children absorb an enormous amount of information from the media. Advertisements, TV shows, movies, celebrities and sports stars can have a big influence on children and their physical activity choices, food choices and body image. Children are often not aware of how much influence TV and other media have on them. Advertisers use a variety of techniques in their advertisements to encourage children to consume foods that are high in fat and Calories. There are many different kinds of techniques used including nutrition claims, give-aways/prizes, testimonials, new/improved statements, claims of social success, jingles, and humour.

Media can be a powerful influence on how young people view themselves. The media delivers the message that "thin is in" and a large body shape is unacceptable. The media or corporate view of the "ideal" body type for women is now at the thinnest 5% of a normal weight distribution. This excludes 95% of women in our society. The increasing pressure to be thin is reflected in cultural images. The typical female model weighs in at 13% to 19% below expected weight for their height and age. It is not always easy to resist the pressures from the media to conform to an "ideal body image".

The media often presents or creates false images of what people should look like, sometimes glamorizing unhealthy images. They create a distorted picture of reality by:

- frequently propagating myths and falsehoods;

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- normalizing and glamorizing what is abnormal or unhealthy; and
- creating the false impression that all women and men are the same by not representing whole segments of the population;
- sending the message that one must continually improve and that they are never good enough.

A lot of girls are taught at a young age that looking beautiful can mean having power and control. Young girls feel pressured into being thinner than their healthy weight because that is what is accepted as beautiful in Western culture. Many girls have a distorted idea of what their body shape or size should be.

Boys are also affected by pressure to shape their bodies to match current ideals. Fitness, muscle and body sculpting magazines and products are increasingly targeting them. Studies suggest that the body concerns of most boys is focused on building body mass and sculpting rather than reducing weight. The value being taught is that only physical “perfection” is acceptable.

Peers

Peer pressure influences children of all ages and is particularly strong in the early teen years. Although pre-teen children identify strongly with their family, they also want to be like the peers whom they admire. Acceptance in a peer group can depend on eating, liking and doing the same things as the other children in the group.

Section 3: Classroom Discussion

Have a class discussion about the influence of advertising and peers in our lives. How do marketing and advertising techniques and strategies affect what we buy, what we eat and how we think we should look?
How does the influence of our peers affect us?

Activity

Distribute the *Ads and Us* activity sheet. This can be completed as an in-class or take-home activity.

Section 4: Conclusion

Today we learned about advertising by completing the “Ads and Us” activity sheet.

