



# PENNSYLVANIA PSYCHOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION

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## **What Can I Do About My Child Being Overweight?**

***By Jacqueline B. Sallade, Ed.D. and Judith S. Blau, Ph.D.***

There is a “fatty” in every neighborhood and almost every schoolroom, and the sight of such a child usually evokes pity from adults and scorn from peers.

In several studies in which children were shown pictures and/or photographs of a “normal” child, compared with children with various physical handicaps and an obese child, the viewers least wanted the fat child as their friend.

The rejection fat children experience forms a very significant part of their thoughts and feelings towards themselves. They may overeat out of depression, frustration, and fear of social relationships. A vicious circle may develop.

Overweight children profit from lots of encouragement and support. Help your child to become involved with a hobby, project, or activity that does not include eating. Encourage your child to get off the couch and be more physical. Reinforce the child’s accomplishments with positive statements and affirmative actions. Consult with your physician to plan a diet, and with a psychologist to help your child deal with his or her feelings and behavior.

***Talk to someone who can help.*** If you would like the name of a qualified psychologist in your area, please try our Psychologist Locator.