

# General Health Appraisal

## Height and Weight Screening

### A. Regulations

No statutes or rules require districts to provide such services. Please call your district school health contact.

### B. Overview

Height and weight measurements are one component of a physical examination that may help identify significant health problems. Problems include physical (e.g., deficient growth hormone and gastrointestinal conditions) and emotional (e.g., dysfunctional eating, such as anorexia and bulimia) conditions that can negatively impact well-being and longevity.

### C. Background/Rationale

Weight-related health problems for children include psychosocial and orthopedic conditions, high blood pressure, sleep apnea, and persistence of problems with weight into adulthood. In the United States at least one child in five is overweight, and the number is increasing.

The range of growth for each child will vary, but generally children grow between to 2.5 inches yearly. Growth problems can be caused by multiple factors such as malnutrition, lead poisoning, and inadequate thyroid hormones and can lead to noteworthy problems with health status (such as inadequate bone formation). Ideally, children and adolescents are evaluated yearly to every two years by a private health care provider. However, many children and adolescents lack medical access and consistent medical care. Schools can provide an ideal environment for routine height and weight screening programs.

### D. Guidance

#### Roles and Responsibilities

Reference the “Guidance” section of the “General Health Appraisal” chapter for commentary about the inclusion of the constituent domains of the coordinated school health program. It is important to provide students and families with

appropriate health education on how to avoid risk factors and practice healthy life habits (e.g., routine exercise, appropriate nutritional intake). Likewise, it is important to involve nutrition and physical education staff in planning and providing appropriate school programs for students' daily participation. When identifying planning programs to address dysfunctional eating, it is important to involve school staff, families, and community experts. School Wellness Committees may provide a venue for such planning.

The planning process should include:

- defining the screening population when resources do not allow all students to be routinely screened, and
- identifying resources for students needing medical referral.

## **Procedures**

- Height and weight screening programs should be conducted under the direction of the school nurse. The supervising professional has the responsibility for training and monitoring screening activities.
- It is advisable to inform parents of height and weight screenings. Communication mechanisms include a parent notice in a school publication, hand-carried notes to parents, or as part of the student handbook. (See Height and Weight Screening Appendix I, "Template for Parent Information Letter.")
- Students should be informed of rationale and process to afford informed assent. Students shall not be screened against their will.
- The school must provide adequate time, student supervision, equipment, and environmental space to assure appropriate assessment and individual privacy. Each measurement should be in private to avoid embarrassment for the student.
- Yearly screenings provide the best data to identify deviant growth patterns.
- Refer students with height/weight measurements in the 5th or 95th percentile or showing a deviation from a normal growth curve for medical assessment. (Refer to Height and Weight Screening Appendix II, "CDC Growth Charts.")
- Results of all screenings and testing should be shared with parents or guardians. It is the responsibility of the parent or guardian to secure and fund any recommended medical evaluation.

- Documentation should be on a standardized growth chart. If the parent or student declines to participate in the screening, this should be documented.
- Documentation should be filed according to guidelines in the section “Health Information and School Records.”

## Staff Development Needed

- Establish policies and procedures for offered screenings.
- Provide staff training about symptoms suggestive of growth problems, eating/self-concept, self-esteem disorders, and actions to take for referral to the school’s nurse and parent or guardian.

## E. Oregon Resources

- Oregon Public Health [Obesity Prevention | Obesity Prevention](#) → 
- Healthy Kids <http://www.oregonhealthykids.gov/> → 
- Oregon Dairy Council  
[Oregon Dairy Council | Resources | Nutrition And Kids](#) → 

## F. National Resources

- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention [CDC - NPAO - Obesity Facts - Adolescent and School Health](#) → 
- Healthy Eating: [ChooseMyPlate.gov](#) → 
- Childhood Overweight and Obesity Prevention Initiative  
<http://www.surgeongeneral.gov/obesityprevention/index.html> → 
- Nutrition, Physical Activity and Obesity [CDC Features - Nutrition, Physical Activity and Obesity](#) → 
- Obesity in Children [Obesity in Children: MedlinePlus](#) → 
- Fitness [President's Council on Fitness, Sports & Nutrition](#) → 
- We Come In All Sizes [www.naafa.org- We Come In All Sizes](http://www.naafa.org- We Come In All Sizes) → 

# **General Health Appraisal – Height and Weight Screening Appendix I**

## **Template for Parent Information Letter**

Parents,

Height and weight screening for all 8th grade students will be held on **(insert day and date)**.

You will be notified of the results of the screening by mail if your child needs further assessment by a specialist. Otherwise, your child will hand carry his/her report home. Expect results within 2-3 weeks after the screening.

Only 8th graders will be screened on that day. However, should you have concerns regarding your 6th or 7th grade child's hearing please feel free to call me. I would be happy to screen your child at any time upon request.

**(Signature)** , School Nurse  
**(Phone Number)**  
**(Email Address)**

# **General Health Appraisal - Height and Weight Screening Appendix II**

## **CDC Growth Charts**

Website for growth charts: [http://www.cdc.gov/growthcharts/cdc\\_charts.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/growthcharts/cdc_charts.htm)