



## **AED Opposes BMI Reporting and Fitnessgrams in Schools**

**DEERFIELD, IL, May 30, 2014** -- As a global professional association committed to leadership in eating disorders research, education, treatment and prevention, the **Academy for Eating Disorders (AED)** opposes recent “BMI report cards” given to 870,000 public school children in grades K-12 this spring by the New York Department of Education. The report cards, known as “Fitnessgrams”, reported students’ weight and Body Mass Index (BMI), placing students in categories based on their weight. Many apparently healthy young students were deemed “overweight” or categorized as “outside of a healthy weight.” Students responded with confusion and lowered self-esteem, as detailed by the New York Post. Although the New York Department of Education reports the belief that providing information about students’ weight and BMI to be beneficial in “helping students set personal goals” and developing a healthy lifestyle, experts in eating disorders and body image strongly disagree.

There are numerous concerns associated with practices such as Fitnessgrams and BMI reporting. **Body mass index is well established as a poor way of measuring weight in young children, and is influenced by issues such as muscle development.** BMI reporting can therefore inadvertently contribute to overconcern with weight and shape, disordered eating and weight bias. Further, interventions based on BMI reporting have not been shown to increase student goal setting, physical or psychological health. Such assessments provide potential detriment to students’ self-esteem and can lead to dangerous peer-based comparisons. Numbers represented by weight and/or BMI are not accurate depictions of individual health. Further, practices such as **Fitnessgrams** represent “fat-shaming,” associated with the development of dieting and disordered eating practices.

The **Academy for Eating Disorders (AED)** opposes approaches that may be blaming, shaming or harmful. The AED urges media, health-care, educational and governmental organizations to focus on health-promoting policy and behaviour. The AED further opposes narrow focus on body weight and BMI, which may promote shaming and weight-based stigma.

The AED has published guidelines to address childhood obesity without doing harm. For more information about the Academy for Eating Disorders and to learn more about eating disorders and body image issues visit [www.aedweb.org](http://www.aedweb.org).

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*The Academy for Eating Disorders is a global professional association committed to leadership in eating disorders research, education, treatment, and prevention.*

