Are you feeling uncertain about the AAP’s guidelines on evaluating and treating children and adolescents who present in larger bodies? Research has shown that restrictive diets, weight loss medication and surgery pose great risks with short term results in adults. There is much less data on how these modalities will affect growth, development, quality of life, morbidity and mortality in children and adolescents.

Health Care providers are concerned about their patient’s overall health and well-being and want to provide evidence based, ethical and supportive care. However, time does not allow for the in-depth education for families and the support required.

Registered dietitian nutritionists (RDNs) have the specific training and time to evaluate and treat pediatric patients who present in larger bodies or who seem to have eating issues. RDNs are health care providers and are experts in nutrition. RDNs provide evidence-based, ethical and sound care while collaborating with pediatric primary care providers.

RDNs take the whole child and family into consideration when assessing and treating eating concerns, and can determine if eating is indeed a concern, or if something else is at play in a child’s life. Not only will RDNs make food and nutrition recommendations, they will also work with parents/caregivers and children on Ellyn Satter’s Division of Responsibility: the ‘what, when and where’ in regard to food, nutrition and feeding. This approach has been shown most effective in normalizing eating, improving nutrition status, and decreasing eating disorders. ([www.ellynsatterinstitute.org](http://www.ellynsatterinstitute.org))

It can be easy to get swept away with the numbers on the scale. Here are some important things to keep in mind while working with this population:

* Child and adolescent weight gain and/or acceleration may be part of their normal growth and is not necessarily a potential problem increasing health risk.
* Malnutrition can occur in patients of all body sizes. Assess for rapid weight loss or restrictive eating (skipping certain food groups, meals or snacks or a change in physical activity patterns).
* Ask for permission/consent to discuss topic of weight with patients and parents beforehand. If consent is granted, have discussions with parents alone, without the patient present.

Registered Dietitian Nutritionists (RDNs) are here to take the burden off of you. To refer your patient, please contact one of the pediatric RDNs below:

***[As the RDN distributing this information, you may choose to add or edit based on your local needs and patient populations.]***