

E-Portfolio

Stephanie Flowers-Pena



About Me

My name is Stephanie Flowers-Pena. I was born, raised, and still live in Sacramento, Ca. I am 27 years old. I am married and have a three year old son. I am a 4th grade teacher at a local private school. I am currently in the process of obtaining a degree at National University.



Educational Background and Goals

- ▣ I graduated in 1998 from Victory Christian High School with a diploma.
- ▣ I graduated from American River College in 2006 with an AA Degree in Early Childhood Education
- ▣ I am currently pursuing a BA Degree in Interdisciplinary Studies from National University
- ▣ I would like to obtain a teaching credential and a Masters Degree in Education Administration or Curriculum.

Resume

Education:

National University – Pursuing BA in Interdisciplinary Studies

Relevant Courses:

Interdisciplinary Practice: Integrating Knowledge with Technology

Special Skills:

Basic Computer Knowledge: Windows XP, Power Point, Internet Explorer, Microsoft Office, Outlook, Excel, Publisher, and Word

Adult and Pediatric CPR and First Aid Certified

Hold an Associate Teacher Certificate through the California Board of Teacher Credentialing

Experience:

Summer Camp Director, Carden School of Sacramento

02/05 - 08/05 & 02/06 - 08/06

Responsible for implementing a summer camp program

Responsible for advertising and boosting enrollment

Supervised a staff of six+ employees

Responsible for financial records and creating financial spreadsheets

4th Grade Teacher, Carden School of Sacramento

2005 – Present

Planned Daily schedule and curriculum

Pre-k Teacher/Assistant Pre-k Director, Carden School of Sacramento

2002 - 2005

Head teacher in the three year old class

Acting director in absence of the director

<http://www.cardensac.com>

Project

I recently began working on a research project dealing with childhood obesity. I have wrote one paper thus far with an overview of the causes and possible ways to fix this problem in America. The next few slides are a copy of that paper.

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Obesity in America seems to have become an epidemic over the past few decades. Our society continues growing more obese. The solution to this problem must start with our children. The children in America are also obese and this epidemic seems to be attributed to bad eating habits that they are forming and their lack of physical activity. We need to instill in our children healthy eating habits and provide ways for them to stay physically fit.

Obesity does not refer simply to someone who is overweight. Health professionals label someone as obese if they have over a certain percentage of body fat. Overweight is defined as having a body mass index (BMI) between 25 and 29.9. Obese is defined as having a BMI more than 30. Someone who is 5'2" and weighs between 102 and 137 pounds has a normal BMI between 25 and 29.9. Anything over 137 would make that person fall into the category of obesity.

Over the past 20 years the proportion of overweight children ages 6-11 has more than doubled and the rate for adolescents ages 12-19 has tripled. A 10-year-old girl who is 4 feet 5 inches tall has an ideal weight at 79 pounds. Anything over that would place her into the category of obese. Today 1 in 6 children – more than 9 million youths are overweight and 2 out of 3 American adults – 130 million people are either overweight or obese. Approximately 25-30 % of adult obesity cases begin with adults being overweight during childhood or adolescence.

Because of the growing number of childhood obesity cases, health problems have also risen in children. Health complications associated with children who are overweight are type 2 diabetes, hypertension, early onset of puberty, polycystic ovary syndrome, fatty liver disease, depression, cardiovascular disease, stroke and many other complications. Obesity recently almost beat out the tobacco industry in related deaths. In 2000 tobacco was linked to 435,000 deaths and obesity was linked to 400,000 deaths.

Although many known factors contribute to adults being overweight and obese, one factor is commonly overlooked: obese adults were once obese children. Most of the elements that make adults obese also make children obese. If we can stop the cycle when children are young then these choices could reduce the numbers of obese adults. Now let us examine some factors that cause obesity in both children and adults.

One of the factors is related to people's poor diets. Weight gain is caused by consuming more calories than the body needs, most commonly by eating a diet high in fat and calories. The risk of obesity is higher for people whose fat intake makes up more than 30 percent of their calories. Big Macs, French fries, hot dogs, potato chips – all these high-fat American favorites are cheap, accessible and delicious. Is it any surprise that fatty foods are contributing to the soaring obesity rates in this country?

Another factor contributing to obesity is lack of physical activity. Most people spend most of their time at a desk or on a sofa. This inactivity increases the risk of obesity. Studies show that people who get 20 to 30 minutes of exercise most days are less likely to be obese. A person's risk of obesity is even lower when combined with an active lifestyle and a low calorie diet.

Although these particular factors are affected by people's choices, other factors may not be within a person's control. Studies have shown that obesity can be attributed to genetics. Researchers have proven that obesity tends to run in families. If one or both parents of an individual are obese, their obesity risk is higher because genes determine a person's body shape, and to some extent a person's weight. People who are vulnerable to obesity do not have to; however, seal their fate. A person can defy Mother Nature by learning to control their diet and develop an exercise routine. In some circumstances diet can also be controlled by medication or surgery.

One other factor that may or may not be controllable is medical, physical, and psychological disorders contributing to obesity. People whose bodies have a difficult time regulating their thyroid can cause those people to struggle with being overweight and obese. People with a slow metabolism burn fat slower. This condition can be a factor in obesity. A slow metabolism means a person needs to work harder at losing weight. Because muscle burns more calories than fat, exercising can help burn calories faster and could increase a person's metabolic rate.

Some people overeat when they feel stressed or depressed. In fact, research shows that 30 percent of obese people are binge eaters. Binge eating, for some, temporarily relieves the stress of negative feelings. Unfortunately for binge eaters, after binging they usually develop guilt, shame, disgust and depression, feelings which make the process continue.

These factors and theories pertaining to overweight issues and obesity in adult Americans are very relevant. In most cases these are the same reasons children in America are overweight. I believe that adult obesity can be reduced, however, by targeting these same issues in children. Educating and training people better at a young age on how to have good eating habits and maintain a good level of physical activity may reduce the epidemic in years to come and when these children are adults maybe the rate of overweight adults will be reduced.

One reason children are obese, like adults, is lack of physical activity. For adults lack of physical activity mostly comes from people being too busy, but in children inactivity is for entirely different reasons. When children get home from school or other activities usually what occurs is children are put in front of a television screen or allowed to sit and play video games. When parents and families get home from a long day of work and other activities they are usually over tired and do not want to have to bother with their children. They want their children to find activities that are quiet and require the least amount of energy from the parent. This ritual, however, is causing more problems than just obesity and is a horrible routine for parents to form with their children.

Children are also spending less time outside playing. This lack of outdoor play is for the same reasons listed above and also because of society and our environment. Our society has become unsafe for children to play outside unsupervised. Children now days have a more difficult time playing in the neighborhood with other neighborhood children for fear of some horrible crime being committed against them. Parents are too tired to supervise outside, thus the children spend time inside watching T.V. and playing video games.

Also, children can not play outside because of lack of play space. Because housing developments are building houses so close together, houses have very tiny backyards. These backyards are not sufficient in many cases for children to play in and burn the energy they need , to help with obesity. So once again children have to resort to T.V. and video games.

Physical Education is the starting point of teaching our children how to be physically active. In most P.E. programs the teachers go over stretching, and motor skill building techniques with the children. They also teach children how to play team sports. Team sports, not only help them learn how to be physically active but also helps them with social skills that can help teach them to work in a group of people later in life.

They also have taken away the children's recess time thus reducing even more opportunities for potential physical activity. The government took away funds the schools use to hire yard duties to give the children recess. This occurrence then reduces the children's outdoor time. So without recess and P.E. are children today are getting even less physical activity.

What a huge mistake on the government's part to take away P.E. programs. What the government does not realize is this cut will attribute to these children's failing health when they reach adulthood and then the government will have to pay for they ailments when these children are older and on Medicare.

Another effect of parents being too busy and stressed out is the increased consumption of higher fat and over processed food by our children in America. There are fewer home cooked meals. The days of June Cleaver are gone forever. With society now it is almost impossible for most families to live on less then a two parent' income. Mothers are no longer home to take care of the children. Instead mothers have entered the work force. After work the last thing they want to worry about is going home and cooking a meal and then cleaning up the meal after dinner. The easiest solution seems to be the drive thru window.

Another reason children are not getting enough physical activity is due to government budget cuts. In California when budget cuts occurred in education these cuts also reduced the amount of time our children were given for physical activity. Children in the public school system, in most public schools, have been reduced down to having a Physical Education class only once a week. I don't know about you, but growing up I had P.E. five times a week. Yes, not one of my favorite classes, but now I understand the importance of having P.E.

This choice undermines the health of our children. The nutritional content of the food given to us at our local drive thru restaurants leaves little to be desired. These foods not only have higher fat and calorie content which, with the lack of physical activity our children are getting cause them to gain weight faster. But this weight gain also causes a number of other health problems in our young children.

Another choice that can affect our children's waist line is the food purchased at the grocery store. Loading our cupboards full of sugary and processed junk food can also set our children up for obesity problems. We should be stocking our cupboards full of healthy snacks that our children can be consuming in place of the junk food.

To be able to tackle these problems now and reduce the risk of our children adding to the already high number of obese adults in America we must create and establish some solutions. First, parents should be educated not only about the health risk but they should be given alternatives to do with their children that can fit into their already busy schedules. Fast food restaurants are implementing healthy choices on their menus and grocery stores are offering full dinner meals that are like home cooked and are ready to eat and can be purchased in the same amount of time that a fast food drive thru takes.

Second, we as parents need to fight our legislatures and local government to give back the funds taken away from our children. We need to petition for our children right to have a full education and this right includes the education on how to be a physically active individual. We need to petition them for our children's health.

Last, we as parents must be our children's educator on how to be a healthy adult. We need to teach them healthy habits. This teaching includes eating healthy and maintaining good physical activity. If we start this training with them early in life these choices will reduce their risk of health problems later in life and may reduce the percentage of overweight American adults.

Links

Childhood Obesity

- ❑ <http://www.kidsource.com/kidsource/content2/obesity.html>
- ❑ <http://www.mayoclinic.com/health/childhood-obesity/DS00698>
- ❑ <http://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/obesityinchildren.html>
- ❑ <http://www.ext.colostate.edu/pubs/foodnut/09317.html>

