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Book Reviews/Recension

Our Overweight Children: What Parents, Schools and Communities Can Do to Control the Fatness Epidemic

Sharron Dalton. London, England: University of California Press, 2004; 292 pp

This book provides an understanding of the current obesity epidemic, and offers practical strategies to counter this problem. The author discusses the increasing need for prevention of this disease, including the need to teach children to respect their internal cues of hunger and satiety, and teaching parents to become authoritative, and actively engage with their children. Additionally, this book discusses the nature versus nurture debate and specifically documents that the hereditary factor (genes) and the environmental/cultural factors (home/school) together affect this disease. This book assesses home concerns (feeding practices, and the increase in fast-food consumption), as well as school concerns (vending machines and junk food).

Dalton highlights the increase in unhealthy food, coupled with the decrease in physical activity participation (which may be a result of unsafe streets) as disconcerting for health professionals. She acknowledges different weight management programs, but supports only following the food pyramid, and offering children a diet that is high in fruits, vegetables, and whole grains, and low in fat and protein.

Our Overweight Children displays the need for society to make a lifestyle change, as this obesity epidemic is a threat to the nation's health. Therefore, policy changes, campaigns and community actions are needed to increase healthy food consumption and participation in physical activity. These lifestyle changes will involve an interdisciplinary approach, including involvement from: families, health professionals, school leaders, the food industry, the media, and policy-makers.

The last chapter of this book offers practical implications, suggesting what schools,

communities, industry, and government can do to fight this crisis. The book reinforces the importance of acknowledging this problem, and taking personal responsibility to combat it. Given the current rise in childhood obesity, it has become a major public health concern, and this book offers a multidisciplinary approach to managing this problem. *Our Overweight Children* may prove interesting to many health professionals, including health promoters, and policy-makers. School leaders and parents may also find this book useful.

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