



Case Study Series: Addressing Child Weight Concerns in the WIC Setting

Agenda

- | | |
|-------------------|--------------------------------|
| 9:00 - 9:03 a.m. | Welcome and introductions |
| 9:05 - 9:25 a.m. | Case background and discussion |
| 9:25 - 9:50 a.m. | Breakouts- Practice skills |
| 9:50 - 10:00 a.m. | Final thoughts with Q&A |





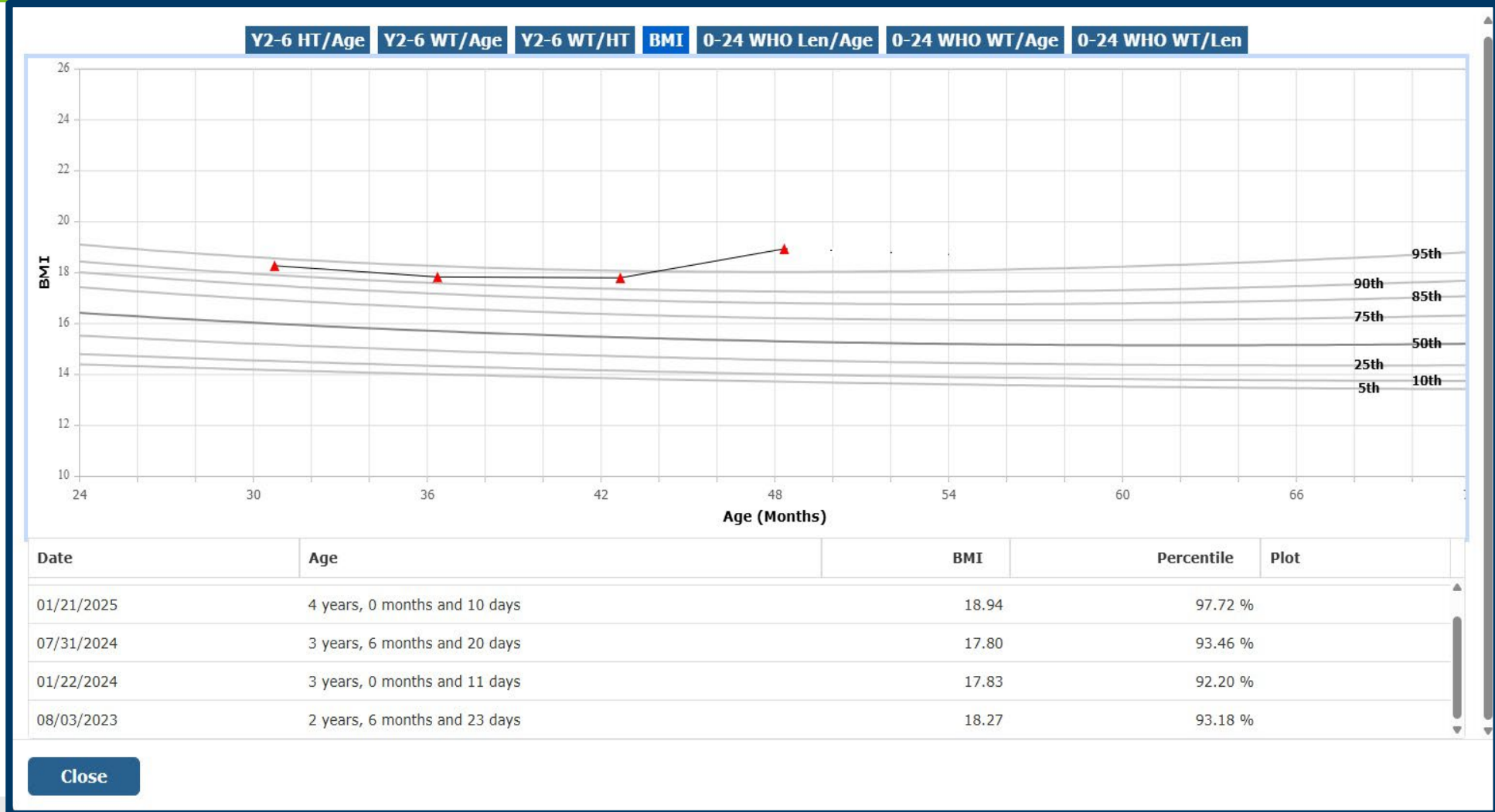
Learning objectives:

- Identify early signs and contributing factors to childhood obesity.
- Practice using supportive, participant-centered language to discuss growth concerns with families.
- Share practical age-appropriate strategies for growth and healthy feeding behaviors.
- Identify referral needs and resources to be offered.



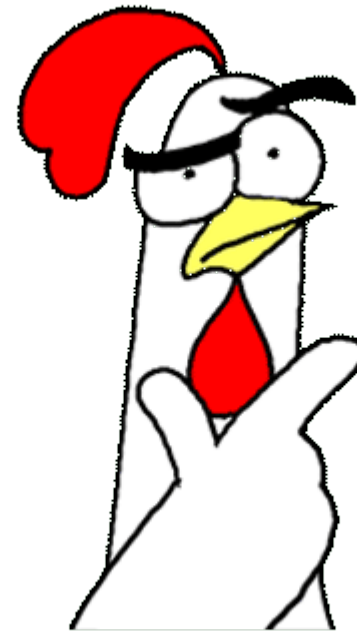
- Mersadi brings her 4-year-old son, Leo, to his WIC appointment.
- Leo is always hungry but refuses vegetables.
- Family relies on fast food for quick meals.
- Leo has gained weight but not grown taller.
- Leo's BMI is at the 95th percentile for weight for height.
- The system has flagged him as high risk.

Growth Chart



Based on Leo's growth **over time**, would you consider him high risk?

- A. Yes
- B. No



Risk Criteria

Risk Code # and Name	Brief Description of Risk Code	Info System Assigns Risk Code?	High Risk Category and Criteria	Info System Flags as High Risk?
113 Obese (Children 2-5 years)	<p>≥ 24 months to 5 years: ≥ 95th percentile BMI-for-age on the CDC Growth Grid</p>	Y	<p>Children 2-5 years Child is ≥ 95% BMI-for-age with a high rate of weight gain and has not established a parallel growth curve to the recommended curve. OR Child is ≥ 95% BMI-for-age and has gained ≥ 5 pounds in past 6 months. OR Child is significantly above the 95% BMI-for-age (more than 2 squares above 95% channel line)</p>	<p>Y CPA must assess if meets High Risk Criteria</p>

The child's growth should meet at least one of the following criteria to be considered high risk for this condition:

- BMI of ≥ 95% for age with a high rate of weight gain that does not follow a growth curve parallel to the recommended curve; or
- BMI of ≥ 95% for age with a weight gain of ≥ 5 pounds in the past 6 months; or
- BMI-for-age plots more than 2 squares above the 95% BMI-for-age channel line

Resources:

- [WIC 113 Obese \(Children 2-5 Years of Age\)](#)
- [Exhibit 6-A High Risk and Medical Referral Criteria](#)

Resolving High Risk

➤ It is not always appropriate to resolve high risk!



CPA may resolve the high risk designation if:

1. The participant does not meet the qualifying criteria, and no other high risk concerns are present.
2. The condition is beyond the scope of WIC, and the participant is receiving care from a qualified healthcare provider. (This situation is uncommon.)
3. The condition has resolved or stabilized, and further monitoring would be unnecessary.

Always document the reason for resolving the high risk designation with a note in the information system.

Resource: MOM [Section 6.6: High Risk Individual Nutrition Care Plans](#)

Childhood Weight Gain

- Rapid weight gain in early childhood is thought to be a predictor of obesity later in life.
- A child's weight that is significantly higher than normal for height could be a predictor of future health concerns.
- Children with elevated weight may be more likely to develop chronic diseases such as type 2 diabetes, hypertension, or high cholesterol.
- **Environmental factors:** quantity of dietary intake or food security; environmental exposure to disease or toxins.
- **Behavioral factors:** activity level; parental use of smoking, drugs, or alcohol; childhood adversity or trauma; timing of weaning; dental hygiene; vitamin intake, sleep duration, screen time.
- **Genetic factors:** inherited family characteristics.
- **Hormonal factors:** internal bodily changes.

What additional questions would you ask this parent?

- **Type response in chat**



Additional Information



- Leo drinks 2-3 cups of sugary drinks.
- Doesn't really like vegetables.
- Prefers buttered pasta, goldfish crackers, and chicken nuggets.
- Spends 3+ hours daily on screentime.
- Mom is struggling to prepare some WIC foods.

What do you think is contributing to Leo's extra weight gain?

- A. Eating habits
- B. Screen time
- C. Limited time for active play
- D. Most likely all of the above



Healthy Childhood Behaviors



Healthy eating habits:

3 daily meals

2-3 healthy snacks

Limit sugary beverages



Active play:

Aim for 3 hours of activity
throughout the day for ages
3-5



Limiting screen time:

1 hour per day for ages 2-5

Division of Responsibility



Healthy eating habits:

3 daily meals

2-3 healthy snacks

Limit sugary beverages



Child's Role:

Whether to eat

How much to eat

Parents' Role:

What food is offered

When food is offered

Where food is offered

Staying Active



Active play:

Aim for 3 hours of activity throughout the day for ages 3-5



Limiting screen time:

1 hour per day for ages 2-5

Breakout Discussion

1. How would you start the conversation with Mersadi about Leo's growth without causing shame or blame?
 - a) What if Mersadi had said she wasn't concerned about her child's growth, how would you respond?
2. What tips can you give Mersadi to introduce more variety at mealtimes, including increasing vegetables?
 - a) What are some realistic suggestions to reduce juice intake?
3. How can screen time and activity levels impact Leo's health?
 - a) What are some age-appropriate activities you could recommend?
4. Mersadi says she's too busy and doesn't know how to cook WIC foods. How can you help her overcome these challenges?

Assessment to Education



How would you start the conversation without causing shame or blame?

“You want to be sure Leo is growing well, and you are trying to keep him active. Could I share a few things about the way children grow that might be helpful?”

“This is an important time for growth and development. Many parents are curious about how their child is growing. This is a great time to build healthy behaviors.”

Using open-ended questions can help explore Mersadi’s concerns.

“Mersadi, can you tell me a bit more about your concerns with Leo’s eating?”

“You said Leo gets upset when offered vegetables. How have you responded to him in the past?”

“What are some of the things you haven’t tried but may have wanted to?”

Handling Resistance

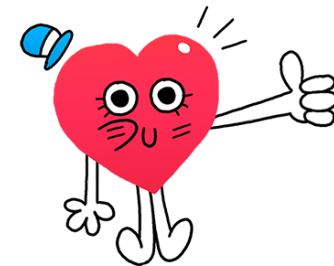
What if Mersadi had said she wasn't concerned about their child's growth?

“Is there anything about your child's eating, growth, or activity that you would like support with today?”

“That's okay, we don't have to talk about Leo's growth today. If you are open to it, we can talk more about how he is eating.”

“A lot of parents have mixed feelings when talking about their child's growth. We are always here if you want to talk about how he is growing in the future, but for now, is there something else you would like to focus on?”

- Use neutral language when discussing growth.
- Refrain from sharing the growth grid.
- Never promote weight loss.





Quote



What tips can you give Mersadi to introduce more variety at mealtimes, including increasing vegetables?

- Share recipes using fruits and vegetables.
- Allow Leo to help with shopping and meal prep.
- Make it fun by creating faces with the vegetables.
- Explore offering vegetables at snack time.

What are some realistic suggestions to reduce juice intake?

- Offer whole fruits instead of juice.
- Dilute juice with water.
- Put fruit in water (age-appropriate recommendation).
- Limit juice to one time per day.

How can limiting screentime and promoting activity levels impact Leo's health?

- Daily activity is an important part of a child's physical, mental, and emotional development.
- Technology can interfere with sleep, exercise, play, reading out loud, and engaging in social interaction.

Age-appropriate activity ideas:

- Family dance party.
- Helping with cleaning around the house.
- Hide-n-seek.
- Playing catch with stuffed animals.

Mersadi says she's too busy and unsure how to cook WIC foods. How can you help her overcome these challenges?

- Introduce meal prepping:
 - Create a shopping list (stick to it!)
 - Prepare meals as a family
- Share quick and easy recipes.

Resources:

- [Recipes](#) on Welcome to WIC!
- [Affordable Flavors Meal Plan and Cook Book](#)
- wichealth.org: It's easy! Create an account and select **Health eKitchen Meal Planner**
- [MyPlate Kitchen Recipes](#) (on YouTube)
- [Dr. YUM Project- tag: WIC food package](#)

Welcome to WIC website

health.state.mn.us

WIC Recipes

Meals on a budget

[Affordable Flavors Meal Plan and Cook Book](#)

Minnesota WIC recipes

- [Main Courses](#)
- [Beans](#)
- [Breads & Grains](#)
- [Cereals](#)
- [Fruits & Vegetables](#)
- [Snacks](#)
- [Desserts](#)

Minnesota WIC app

Back Recipes and Food Tips

Sites Videos

Recipes

Kids in the Kitchen

Food Tips

FAQs about WIC Foods



Key Takeaways

- Children's growth is complex and sensitive.
- Approach feeding practices with empathy and humility.
- High childhood weight gain may lead to future health concerns.
- Tailor education to reflect family perspectives while promoting healthy feeding practices.
- **WIC makes a difference!**



Resources for participants

- [Healthy Choices for Kids \(PDF\)](#)
- [I Am Thirsty \(PDF\)](#)
- [Picky Eaters \(PDF\)](#)
- [Mealtime Routines \(PDF\)](#)
- [Enjoy Family Meals \(PDF\)](#)
- [wichealth.org](#)
 - Help Your Child Develop Healthy Eating Habits
 - Making Mealtime a Family Time
 - Happy, Healthy, Active Children
- [Recipes](#)



Resources for staff

- [WIC 113 Obese \(Children 2-5 Years of Age\)](#)
- [Section 6.6: High Risk Individual Nutrition Care Plans](#)
- [Exhibit 6-A High Risk and Medical Referral Criteria](#)
- [Weight Inclusive Approach](#)
 - [Growth Charts: Topic of the Month \(PDF\)](#)
 - [Discussing Child's Weight: Topic of the Month \(PDF\)](#)
 - [Weight Inclusivity & Growth: Topic of the Month \(PDF\)](#)
 - [Responsive Feeding Practices: Topic of the Month \(PDF\)](#)
 - [Indoor Play Time- Topic of the Month \(PDF\)](#)
- [Media and Young Children: Topic of the Month \(PDF\)](#)



Thank you for joining us!