

Teacher Classroom Script for Basic Screening Survey

We have developed some language to help teachers talk about the screening with students. This includes some suggested approaches to handle questions about health and body image.

Feel free to make this your own and not read it verbatim, as you know what will work best for your classroom. The main points we want to get across:

- Make sure the kids know how the screening works and how the information will be used. *This is a part of the consent process.*
- Share how this information is helpful and how students are helping others.
- Children can be healthy at a variety of body sizes and shapes.
- Taking care of mouths and teeth can help kids learn, play and grow.

We do not want the dental screening or measurement of height and weight to be a negative experience for students. Please use body positive language and encourage them to talk to their parents or a trusted adult if they have concerns.

If you have questions about the screening, talk to your school nurse or the screening staff.

Talking about the Screening

How the screening will work:

- A team of licensed dental professionals will look at your teeth and measure your height and weight.
- You will be offered a mask (disposable with ear loops) to wear while waiting in line for the screening. This is to protect you and the screening team from being exposed to COVID-19, or other respiratory disease. You will remove your mask when it is your turn to have your teeth look at by a member of the screening team and will put it back on for the height and weight measurement and return to the classroom.
- You will first be asked about any COVID-19 or lung symptoms you might have, and close contact with people who may have COVID-19 or lung symptoms.
- You will then be asked to take off your shoes and heavy clothing, like a jacket.
- You will need to take items out of your pockets. You will be provided a paper bag to place all of your belongings in.
- You may be asked to take your hair down, if you have a hair style on the top of your head, like a bun. If you don't feel comfortable doing this, let a teacher or screener know.
- The screening staff may ask you about your teeth, like if you have lost a tooth recently or had one pulled by a dentist. If you don't know the answer, that is ok.

How the information will be used:

- Your information will be used to help others. Leaders will learn from you to help make our schools and communities healthier places to be.
- Taking care of our mouths and teeth can help kids like you learn, play and grow.
 - This information collected will be kept private.

- No one will share any of your information with your classmates.

Talking About Height and Weight

- It's normal that everyone looks different, because there are different body shapes.
- Kids can look very different from each other and still all can be healthy.
 - Both apples and broccoli look different from each other and they are both healthy.
- Everyone, no matter what your shape or size, has the ability to be healthy and make healthy choices.

Tips for Answering Student Questions and Difficult Topics

Body Image

- If students ask about their results, stay focused on the overall health for all students. Do not focus on their size or say how big they are.
 - Healthy bodies come in all different shapes and sizes. Health is more than just body shape or size. Health also involves other factors, such as mental health, sleep patterns, and relationships with friends and family members.
- If students are concerned about their weight, height, and/or health, ask where those thoughts and feelings came from. Validate those thoughts and feelings as real. Do not shame them for feeling a certain way. Advise them to talk with their parents or a health care provider if they want next steps to improve their health.

Bullying or Teasing

- Be aware of any teasing related to body shape and size and take time to deal with this.

Questions or concerns from Parents

- Listen and validate their concerns. You can connect them to your school nurse or principal (whoever is organizing the screening at your school) or the Minnesota Department of Health: Prasida.khanal@state.mn.us, 651-201-3538

Resources

- Tips for Elementary Schools to create a healthier environment
 - <https://5210.psu.edu/toolkits/non-military/>
- Phrases that Help and Hinder health habits
 - <https://5210.psu.edu/wp-content/uploads/2018/02/helpandhinderphrases.pdf>
- How to talk with children about weight
 - <https://www.eatright.org/health/weight-loss/overweight-and-obesity/how-to-talk-to-kids-about-weight-and-obesity>
- Connect with your local the Statewide Health Improvement Partnership, to help create a school environment supporting health, like such as farm to school and active classroom
 - <https://www.health.state.mn.us/communities/ship/contacts.html>