

# Candy Kids

## Youngsters learn weight control with help from entire family

By Rebecca Haynes  
staff writer

Dieting and the desire to lose weight have become ingrained in American culture.

For adults, losing weight can be difficult and frustrating. For children, it can actually be dangerous if not done correctly.

"We don't put kids on a restrictive diet. That's not good for them because their bodies are growing and they need a lot of nutrients," said Keith Levick, a counselor who runs the Center for Childhood Weight Management in West Bloomfield.

"Our philosophy is to teach them to maintain a healthy lifestyle, to teach them nutrition, which foods are good and which are bad, and exercise."

LEVICK STARTED the center through the West Bloomfield Schools about a year and a half ago.

Recently he has moved the program to the One On One health club in West Bloomfield. Here the children in the 10-week program have access to exercise rooms and equipment.

"I don't think there's any other program in the country where kids have access to the kind of equipment they do here," Levick said.

"It's really unusual because most health clubs don't want children. One On One came to me because they said they were wanting to make their club more family oriented."

LEVICK WORKS with children age 6-17. He uses what he calls the CANDY philosophy, Control, Attitude, Nutrition, Diet and Yourself.

"The children meet once a week for one and a half hours and they break into age groups and one group works with the dietitian, another with the exercise counselor and the other with the behaviorist. Then they

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— Keith Levick

rotate," he said.

"I work with the parents and I'm teaching them the same curriculum that the kids are learning."

"The philosophy has to be reinforced in the home before it will work," Levick said. "Without parent participation we know the program won't be successful."

MORE THAN 100 youngsters have gone through the program since its inception.

"The first year was sort of a pilot year," Levick said. "We've worked with the kids on the curriculum and we've made some changes."

"We found that we really needed to help the younger kids conceptualize the ideas of calories and nutrition. We broke up the foods and grouped them by color," he said.

"If it's a red food they should stop because it's high in fat and not good for them. Yellow foods mean caution, only eat them some of the time and green foods, like carbohydrates, are good and healthy and they can eat as much of them as they want."

THE CHILDREN also set goals and earn points that they can use to buy prizes. Goals may range from losing weight to eating just in the kitchen.

Cholesterol screening and body composition analysis are all part of

the program. Levick is working with several researchers to compile information on childhood obesity and to develop weight standards for children.

He also has been involved in a study being done by a professor at Wayne State University on the family dynamics that occur when a child is obese.

PROGRAM PARTICIPANTS range from children who are just a few pounds overweight to those who need to lose up to 150 pounds.

"Sometimes the kids who really aren't that big are brought in by their parents because they're concerned about the potential that they have to gain weight," Levick said.

"Statistics show that if a person is overweight as a child, they're more prone to be an overweight adult. Also, a child has an 80-percent chance of being obese if both parents are."

Some of the other facts Levick has compiled on childhood obesity include:

- One out of four American children is obese.
- A fat preschooler has a 25-percent chance of being a fat adult and a fat adolescent has a 50-percent chance of being a fat adult.
- Girls today cannot run as fast as girls in 1975.



STEVE CANTRELL/staff photographer

Farmington Hills psychologist Keith Levick, founder and director of Center for Childhood Weight Management, talks about CANDY, his philosophy of Control, Attitude, Nutrition, Diet and Yourself for overweight youngsters.

• Forty percent of boys between 6-15 years of age cannot reach beyond their toes.

• Today's children expend half the calories compared to children 40 years ago.

• Obese children are more rejected than most disabled children.

• The average American child watches 24 hours of television per week.

COMMARADERIE is high among the children in the program.

"They're all there for the same reason and they really develop a cohesiveness," Levick said.

"They've all been discriminated against and been made fun of. I've found that they really enjoy coming because they've developed friendships and they don't have to worry about any of those problems when they're here."

"Ours are really long-term goals," he said. "If we can get the children early enough they can learn the good, new habits."

"Our emphasis isn't on weight loss, it's on changing their behavior

so that they can gradually take the weight off and not gain any more," he said. "We have to help them have fun while they're here. These kids go to school all day and if coming here wasn't fun, they wouldn't want to be a part of it."

THE PROGRAM can take up to 40 children in one session. The winter session begins Jan. 31 and the cost is \$200. Levick can be reached at the Center for Childhood Weight Management, 855-5771.

"If we can teach the children and their families the necessary behavioral changes, like eating right and exercising, then they can learn them and they can take them into adulthood," he said. "It takes a real change of attitude, but it can be done."

## Night on the Town

Stan and Elaine Szot of Troy and Richard and Bea Palmer of Farmington Hills were two couples who attended "A Night on the Town," a party for committeemen who are working toward Detroit Country Day School's Auction '89. Auction volunteers will be out in force seeking donations for the auction block leading up to the evening of the fund-raiser, Saturday, May 20. Reservation information is given by Marcia Bearden, 646-7717.



## 7 Michigan Bands join for festival

Center Court at Twelve Oaks Mall will be filled with the sounds of music all day Saturday, Jan. 28, when the Annual Festival of Community Bands is presented.

The program is co-sponsored by the mall and the Farmington Community Band. Guest announcer Carl Grapentine will serve as master of ceremonies for the seven community bands from Michigan.

The band performances will run continually from 11:30 a.m. to 8 p.m. by community bands from Birmingham, Lansing, Novi, Plymouth, Schoolcraft College, South Oakland and Farmington.

Grapentine is the "voice" of the University of Michigan Marching Band and WFMT-Chicago. He has appeared with the Farmington Community Band on previous occasions, both as soloist and narrator.

## His own room

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