

Weekly Assignments

Each week, you will be asked to complete three at-home assignments: ***Listen***, ***Read***, and ***Report***, in that order.

For ***Listen*** you will listen to a relevant podcast recorded by the Rudd Center for Food Policy and Obesity.

For ***Read***, you will read portions of relevant journal articles and complete a brief reading guide that will help structure your reading and help you contribute to in-class discussion. You can complete the guide however you wish – written responses are recommended but are not required. The important thing is that you think about the questions in the guide before coming to class and are prepared to respond with answers and/or follow up questions in class. Reading guides are NOT turned in for a grade.

For ***Report***, you will use the knowledge you gained during the Listen and Read portions to complete a written assignment (3-5 sentences) that will be submitted on Angel in a weekly discussion board.

Week 1's assignment will be done as a group in class so that you can learn what is expected. Weeks 2-5, ***Report*** assignments are due by 5pm on the Tuesday before class. Details for each week and the corresponding due dates are outlined below.

Week 1 – Prevalence, trends, and theories of obesity

Due date: Completed in class

Listen

Rudd Center Podcast

Episode 59 Childhood Obesity (20 minutes)

Released Jun 19, 2012

William Dietz, Director of the Division of Nutrition, Physical Activity, and Obesity at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and Kelly Brownell, Director of the Rudd Center for Food Policy & Obesity, discuss childhood obesity.

Read

Davison, K. K., & Birch, L. L. (2001). Childhood overweight: a contextual model and

recommendations for future research. *Obesity Reviews*, 2(3), 159–171.

Reading guide for Davison & Birch, 2011

Start by reading the title then read the full Summary section. Have you heard about ecological systems theory before? Do you think environmental contributors to obesity receive as much attention in the media as individual-level (i.e. “personal responsibility”) factors? Does this differ when talking about childhood obesity vs. adult obesity?

Skip down to Figure 1. Read and think about all of the factors that are listed in the figure. Can you come up with any examples from each category about things that might contribute to childhood obesity (e.g., Why might family TV viewing be a factor?)

Report (Due by 5pm on Tuesday 8/23)

Write 3 to 5 sentences about environmental factors or specific populations (e.g., ages of children, race/ethnicity, geographic locations) that you would like to learn about in this course and why. Be sure to include some of the factors that were mentioned in the podcast and in the Davison & Birch figure.

Week 2 – Home/family influences on childhood obesity risk

Listen

Rudd Center Podcast

Episode 12 Feeding Your Family: (15 minutes)

Released Aug 22, 2013

Marlene Schwartz, Deputy Director of the Rudd Center for Food Policy & Obesity, and Kelly Brownell, Rudd Center Director, discuss feeding your family.

Read

Gerards, S. M. P. L., & Kremers, S. P. J. (2015). The role of food parenting skills and the home food environment in children's weight gain and obesity. *Current Obesity Reports*, 1–7.

<http://doi.org/10.1007/s13679-015-0139-x>

Reading guide for Gerards & Kremers 2015

Read only the highlighted portions of the text. Starting with the first highlighted paragraph: Notice how parenting and the home environment is framed as part of the larger context of environmental influences on children's weight status. In the second highlighted paragraph, pay special attention to the definition of parenting practices and styles. Have you heard of this distinction before? Do you think parents are aware of this distinction while they are parenting?

Now read about "food parenting" in the third highlighted paragraph. I prefer to call this child feeding. Can you think of a child feeding-related example of a practice that might lead to different outcomes depending on the style in which it is delivered?

Scroll down to Table 1. Read each of these factors. Have you noticed parents around you demonstrating these food parenting practices (e.g., in restaurants)? Can you remember times when you were young that you experienced some of these?

Now read about general parenting in the fourth highlighted paragraph. You have likely heard of the demand and responsiveness spectrum before if you are in HDFS. Finish out by looking at the Figure 1 and scrolling down to the final two highlighted paragraphs. What do you think is more important to focus on? General parenting? Food-specific parenting? How can we integrate both into interventions?

Report (Due by 5pm on Tuesday 8/30)

In the podcast and your reading, you learned about the importance of home food availability. Write at least three to five sentences EACH on the following topics 1) factors that you think support parents and caregivers in creating healthy home food environment and 2) factors that you think pose challenges. Be sure to include something you learned from both the podcast and the reading.

Week 3 – School/child care influences on childhood obesity risk

Listen

Rudd Center Podcast

Episode 58 Nutrition Policies in Schools (18 minutes)

Released Aug 16, 2012

Marlene Schwartz, Deputy Director of the Rudd Center for Food Policy & Obesity, and Kelly Brownell, Rudd Center Director, discuss nutrition policies in schools.

Read

Benjamin Neelon, S. E., & Briley, M. E. (2011). Position of the American Dietetic Association:

benchmarks for nutrition in child care. *Journal of the American Dietetic Association*,

111(4), 607–615. <http://doi.org/10.1016/j.jada.2011.02.016>

Reading guide for Benjamin Neelon & Briley (2011)

Read only the highlighted portions of the journal article. These highlighted portions cover the introduction and each of the benchmarks (i.e. guidelines) for childcare centers that should be followed to promote a healthy energy balance in children.

Thinking about your own experiences with childcare (e.g., care of siblings, work experience, volunteer experience, baby sitting experience) how was nutrition and physical activity incorporated into your day? Which of these guidelines were followed? Which were not? In class we'll go over each of the guidelines. Pick at least two to talk about – either by making a comment or asking a question.

Report (Due by 5pm on Tuesday 9/6)

Use the Internet to look up a publically available school or daycare breakfast/lunch menu. You can pick any school or day care center as long as the information is publically available (e.g., the elementary school in your hometown, a State College area school, a random school in an interesting geographical area that you are curious about). Take a screen shot of the menu or copy the URL and include it in your response. Write three to five sentences about EACH of the following topics 1) the types of foods available on the menus (including whether there are vegetables and fruit included); 2) any mention about meal timing or duration; and 3) whether you think the options available are likely to promote or prevent childhood obesity and why. Be sure to apply and mention things you learned from both the podcast and reading.

Week 4 – Food retail influences on childhood obesity risk

Listen

Rudd Center Podcast

Episode 57 Changing Food Practices in Retail Settings (23 minutes)

Released Sep 17, 2012

Jason Riis, Assistant Professor of Business Administration at the Harvard Business School, and Kelly Brownell, Director of the Rudd Center for Food Policy & Obesity, discuss changing food practices in retail settings.

Read

Sliwa, S., Anzman-Frasca, S., Lynskey, V., Washburn, K., & Economos, C. (2016). Assessing the availability of healthier children's meals at leading quick-service and full-service restaurants. *Journal of Nutrition Education and Behavior*, 48(4), 242–249.e1.

<http://doi.org/10.1016/j.jneb.2016.01.004>

Reading guide

Read only the highlighted portions of the journal article, including the highlighted tables. Have you thought much about children's menus and childhood obesity before? What information in this article surprised you? When you complete your report assignment, try to compare some of the characteristics of the menus looked at in this study to the one that you find. For example, whether the nutrition information is easily available (on the menu or on the website), how many different combinations there are for the children's meals, if dessert is included as a possible option, etc.

Report (Due by 5pm on Tuesday 9/13)

Using the Internet, find a publically available children's menu. Take a screen shot of the menu or copy the URL and include it in your response. Write three to five sentences about 1) the types of foods available on the menus (including whether there are vegetables and fruit included); 2) whether you think the options available are likely to promote or prevent childhood obesity and why.

Week 5 – Media

Listen

Rudd Center Podcast

Episode 47 Children's Food Marketing (29 minutes)

Released Dec 10, 2012

Jennifer Harris, Director of Marketing Initiatives at the Rudd Center for Food Policy & Obesity, and Kelly Brownell, Rudd Center Director, discuss children's food marketing.

Read

Harris, J. L., Pomeranz, J. L., Lobstein, T., & Brownell, K. D. (2009). A crisis in the

marketplace: how food marketing contributes to childhood obesity and what can be done.

Annual Review of Public Health, 30(1), 211–225.

<http://doi.org/10.1146/annurev.publhealth.031308.100304>

Reading guide

Read only the highlighted portions of the journal article. Reflect on the three areas that are mentioned as areas of concern: High prevalence (i.e. large amount) of food marketing to children, types of foods that are marketed, and messages that are portrayed. Were you aware of the extend of food marketing to children that exists in the US? What do you think about the discussion of developmental differences in children’s ability to understand that advertisements are “biased opinions”? Can you think of any examples of “affective” marketing (i.e. creating position emotions and memories of brands) that you have observed or may have experienced as a child?

In your Report assignment, be sure to look for (and mention) aspects of food marketing that were mentioned in this article such as branding/logos, emotional tone, “anti-adult” messaging. Consider whether the ad is asking the child (or parent) to “act now” to purchase or consume the food, or is simply building the relationship.

Report (Due by 5pm on Tuesday 9/20)

Take a picture or screen shot of an advertisement you notice online or in-person (e.g., in a magazine, in the grocery store – do not take pictures while driving or other hazardous scenarios) that appears to be targeting children. If the advertisement is a video or game, copy the URL instead of taking a picture. Write three to five sentences about the advertisement in which you 1) Describe what product the advertisement is trying to sell and 2) Whether you think the advertised product is likely to increase or decrease childhood obesity risk and why based on what you learned in the podcast and reading.