



The Childhood Obesity Crisis: How Brain Child Press is Helping

Increasing rates of childhood obesity and related chronic health conditions present our nation with an unprecedented challenge. An entire generation stands to live shorter, less healthy and productive lives than the generation that came before it. The causes of this unfolding crisis are many and complex. At its most basic level of analysis, however, five key issues stand out: poor nutrition, poverty, low literacy, parental avoidance/denial of the issue, and contemporary consumer culture. These five factors have created a perfect storm of conditions that have put our children's health and well-being at risk.

Due to the complex psychosocial dynamics at the heart of this issue, no single program or intervention will be able to stop its progression. Interdisciplinary collaborations and partnerships between private, public, non-profit, and philanthropic sectors need to be created, and all of our best efforts must be applied.

Brain Child Press, Inc. was founded with an understanding of these issues and a clear focus on developing effective responses based in educational, psychological, and sociological theory. What follows is a brief overview of each of these five distinct issues, the way these psychosocial conditions intersect, and the rationale for why children's picture books about food, fitness, and other topics important to health and wellbeing are an important, effective medium for creating awareness and helping to promote change in individuals and families. Each issue is first addressed, and then is followed by a discussion regarding the way in which Brain Child Press, Inc. and the books we publish, is helping to respond to these conditions.

Issue 1- Poor Nutrition:

Poor nutrition in children is rarely the result of one specific problem. Rather, it may be the result of a combination of factors, including poverty (lack of money & access), low literacy (lack of understanding about nutrition concepts & inability to use printed information to seek it), parental avoidance and denial (obesity and poor diet and health habits in parents, lack of food literacy i.e. knowing basics of food preparation and nutritional needs) and consumer culture (seductive advertising, selection of nutrient-poor foods, societal pressure to purchase manufactured food).

How Brain Child Press is Part of the Solution

The nutrition messages in our books are encouraging and positive and are combined with basic concepts that all young children need to know, such as colors, shapes, and numbers. Rhyming text, clever design, and fun content-related brain teasers create unique, memorable books that kids will want to look at again and again. As they do so, they will learn to identify around 50 different types of fresh produce, thereby beginning the process of becoming food literate. Furthermore, our Brain Child Books provide valuable exposure that results in children being more likely to look for, point out, name, and ask for veggies and fruits when they visit the grocery store or Farmers' Market with their parents.

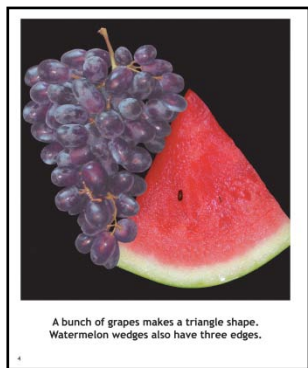


Issue 2 - Poverty:

Poverty is directly correlated to a lack of functional literacy skills and low levels of educational attainment in adults, and results in poor health status, food insecurity, and lack of resources of all kinds for the entire household. Research also indicates that the intermittent nature of food consumption (not having enough food, or any food at all during times of the month or week) that is common to families in poverty may disrupt normal metabolism and is a factor in obesity levels among this population. Furthermore, when funds are available, poor food choices (fast food, junk food, high sugar, fat, and sodium) beckon from all sources of media.

How Brain Child Press is Part of the Solution

Low income families typically have few books of any kind in the home, and children in these families are read to less frequently than middle and higher income families. Books stimulate the use of more complex language and sentence structure between parents and children, even if parents are only talking about the pictures on the page instead of actually reading the text. Being read to and exposure to rich language experiences is key to learning to read, and the roots of low literacy can be found in the fact that kids in poverty are exposed to four times fewer words than children from professional-class households (estimates are 12 million vs 48 million words by age 4). We offer great bulk prices so organizations can put our books in the hands of youngsters who might not otherwise have a book of their own.



Issue 3 - Low Literacy:

Low literacy levels, like obesity, are at crisis levels in this country. Almost half of all adults ages 16 and up in the U.S. read at the 4th grade level or below. Low literacy plays a role in school dropout rates, teen pregnancy, drug use, depression, criminal behavior, and the inability to get or keep a job that provides adequate household income. Moreover, poor reading skills limit the kind of health information a person can access, and this lack of “health literacy” results in medication errors, missed doctors appointments, overuse of emergency rooms, and billions of dollars of expense, among other issues. People who don’t read well and have lesser amounts of education are less likely to use preventative care, have poorer health status than those who are more highly educated, and are less likely to have health insurance. Finally, poor reading skills prevent individuals from being able to adequately access and analyze print information about health, nutrition, or any topic, which leads to the unquestioning acceptance of mass media messages.

How Brain Child Press is Part of the Solution

Our books are written at the second grade level, making them easy to use and understand, even by adults in the household who may have poor literacy skills. When a child brings one of our books home, they will want to share it with a parent and other family members. While this will reinforce their own learning, it will also expand the reach of the message promoting good nutrition to others in the household, as well as to extended family, friends, and neighbors.



Issue 4 - Parent Outreach and Education:

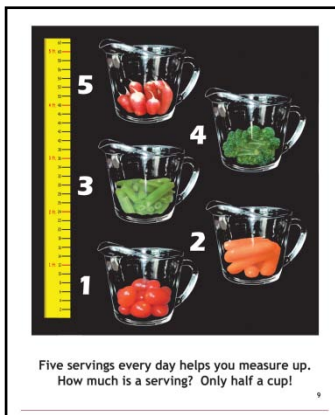
A child’s parents are the conduit by which all of their needs are met. Ample research shows that the more education a mother has, the better cared for, fed, and educated her children are. Parents who do not understand basic nutrition, or cannot provide nutritional food for their children are putting the healthy development of their children at risk. A parent who is obese may not see their child’s diet as an issue and may, in denial, either ignore or dismiss efforts at intervention. Likewise, obese parents may see intervention in their child’s diet as insulting and intrusive and act out with anger, as well as avoid future communication about the issue. Resistance or defensiveness is not unexpected when trying to make change in the dietary habits of parents and families. The strong emotional and cultural

connotations and attachments food engenders also means that increasing parent awareness about better nutrition needs to be done gently, particularly with those who may feel attacked, guilty, or remorseful about what they are feeding their child, their child's health status, or their general parenting style.

How Brain Child Press is Part of the Solution

The psycho-social *TransTheoretical Model* (Prochaska et al, 1992, 1997) of learning and lifestyle modification explains intentional behavior change as having cognitive and performance-based components. Based on more than two decades of research, the TTM has revealed that individuals move through a series of stages before change is recognized as being needed, attempted, and then maintained.

These stages - precontemplation, contemplation, preparation, action, and maintenance depict how difficult it is to change ingrained eating patterns. The first three stages are especially pertinent to



the use of picture books in promoting changes. Individuals begin at the stage of "*Precontemplation.*" They are unaware, resistant, unmotivated, and avoid information, discussion, or thought with regard to the targeted health behavior. As information is provided to them and is consistently reinforced, they slowly progress to the *Contemplation* stage. As they become aware of the issues, concerns and benefits of change, they may begin to see how the information applies to themselves. They may occasionally state their intent to change but are ambivalent about it and

procrastinate. This stage may take a long time as individuals weigh the issues and consider how changes will impact various aspects of their daily living and overall lifestyle.

Individuals who are fully motivated and have the actual intention to change are in the *Preparation* stage. They develop plans, seek out support mechanisms, and share with others the actions and changes they intend to take. As they move into the action stage, they can envision what the results of their change-making will be and feel a sense of resolve and determination.

This behavior is followed by the *Action* stage whereby individuals actually beginning to carry out their plans. This stage is marked with stops and starts as individuals lapse into old behaviors, then try again and again. The learning of new behaviors is difficult, but



because of their understanding of the need to do so, they continue to attempt it. *Maintenance* of new behaviors may result after time, but there is no guarantee this will occur. What is guaranteed, however, is that permanent changes will never be made unless accessible, understandable information that kick-starts the process of becoming aware and educated is readily made available.

This model illustrates why a children's book can be an excellent tool to help parents move from the initial *Precontemplation* stage, which is marked by the lack of awareness, to the *Contemplation* stage whereby they begin having thoughts about making changes. Using a picture book as the conveyor of information is non-threatening, and in fact, is a pleasurable experience as parent and child explore the book together. Moreover, by sharing the book together, mutual support for making the decision to plan for, and then begin to carry out changes in the family's eating habits is developed among the family unit.

Issue 5 - Consumer Culture:

Consumer culture is a key player in the crisis this country faces. The past 50 years of "food modernization" has vastly changed the diet of Americans. The rise of electronic media has influenced consumer behavior in all areas, and in ways that are often not beneficial to individuals, families, and society as a whole. Mass produced and marketed manufactured in foods have taken over the vast majority of space in American supermarkets.

The result is an ethic and aesthetic that prizes time and convenience over quality and nutrition. This processed, prepackaged food may be quick and tasty, but it is filled with dangerously high levels of sodium, sugar, fats, and all manner of chemical additives. While fresh, nutritious fruits and vegetables, whole grains, meat and dairy ring the outer aisles of the store, these foods often cost more in terms of dollars and cents. The nutrient value per dollar of fresh, unprocessed foods, however, far exceeds that of processed foods – a fact few consumers may know.

Furthermore, in order to use these elemental foods in both a basic and creative way, one needs to know how to select, store, prepare, and cook it, as well as how to safely keep any leftovers. In other words: one must be food literate.



How Brain Child Press is Part of the Solution

The attractiveness and novelty of our books creates a “come look at this!” moment that promotes sharing of the book with others and having the nutrition messages more greatly disseminated. While any one source of information cannot cancel out the million-dollar messages of the food industry, the emotional power of a parent and child sitting together and sharing a book they both enjoy and learn from cannot be underestimated.

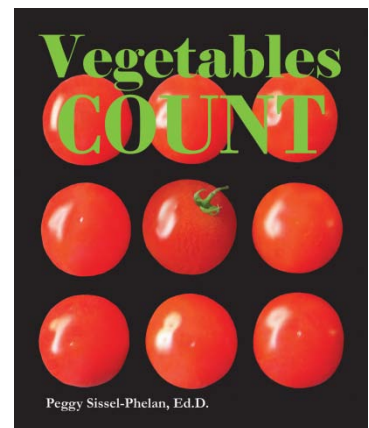
August 18, 2010
 Brain Child Press and Jump with Jill: A Proposal for Collaboration
 Prepared by Peggy Sissel-Phelan, Ed.D
Proprietary: Embargoed until Further Notice

A Proposal for Collaboration with Brain Child Press, Inc.

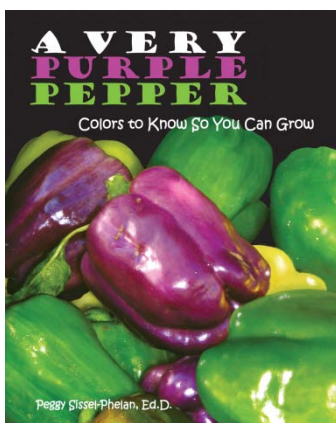
Benefits to Jump with Jill

When Jump with Jill hands out content-related books from Brain Child Press following a show, the benefits to the brand, and to the process of message delivery are numerous. Distributing books . . .

- Promotes goodwill with parents and educators (Books are perceived as a valuable, honorable resource)
- Highlights importance of reading (Shows Jump with Jill as having an up-to-date understanding of the health-literacy dynamic)
- Reinforces learning (Jump with Jill is seen as even more cutting edge by providing reinforcement of the message by way of three types of media - music, movement, and print, thereby capitalizing on all learning styles: audio, kinesthetic, and visual)
- Provides a tactile reminder (souvenir) of the Jump with Jill presentation (book becomes a viral promotion tool for brand and increases longevity of the message)
- Extends the access of Jump with Jill's message (no CD player or other technology needed to pick up and use the book)
- Increases Jump with Jill's "cool" factor (Hand out ordinary books? Not Jump with Jill!)
- Brings the Jump with Jill message into the child's home (Another way of being an advocate for helping children make good choices in the home)
- Gives Jump with Jill income potential through resale of books or through earned commission



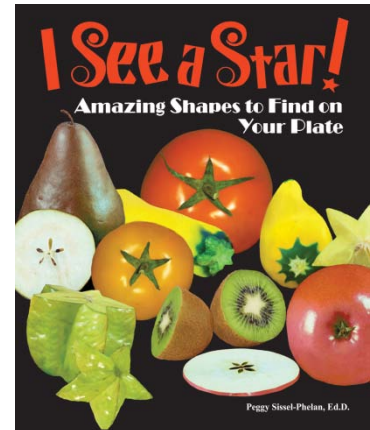
Book Selection



- Book(s) offered with the show would selected by Jump with Jill
- Book(s) can be customized with the Jump with Jill brand
- Book(s) can be created especially for Jump with Jill using your own copyrighted material
- Books could be source of material for new Jump with Jill songs
- Size, binding style, and price to charge would be determined jointly

Costs or Risks to Jump with Jill

There is no risk to Jump with Jill, and with Option 2 or 3 as stated below, there would be no cost to Jump with Jill (except for minor administrative tasks).



Distribution Options

Option 1 – Traditional Wholesale/Retail Relationship

- Jump with Jill promotes books as one of the additional, optional features of the show (similar to the way the Jump with Jill CD is offered)
- Jump with Jill includes within the program's fee structure the option of each child being handed a book at the end of the show
- Jump with Jill purchases our books in bulk, pays shipping and maintains inventory, and reorders from us as needed
- Our books would be made available to Jump with Jill at a substantial discount (wholesale)
- The amount Jump with Jill charges for each book is priced above the wholesale cost
- Jump with Jill earns profit from sale of the books

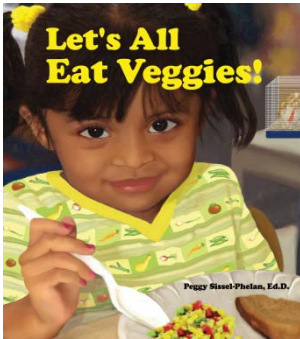
Option 2 – Fulfillment Service plus Commission

- Jump with Jill promotes books as one of the additional, optional features of the show (similar to the way the Jump with Jill CD is offered)
- Cost of including the book option is listed in the Jump with Jill fee structure
- Client pays Jump with Jill for the books when they arrange and pay for the show
- Jump with Jill informs us when books have been requested – i.e. title, quantity, location, show date, contact person
- We print and drop ship books to the show site prior to each show and confirm their delivery
- We invoice Jump with Jill for the books and the cost of shipping them to each show
- We pay Jump with Jill a commission for each book sold.



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Option 3 – Referral plus Commission



- Jump with Jill promotes books as one of the additional, optional features of the show (similar to the way the Jump with Jill CD is offered)
 - Book costs are included into the Jump with Jill fee structure
 - When client books the show and selects the book option, Jump with Jill refers them to us, the supplier, and gives them our contact information
 - Client orders from us, we drop ship to them in advance of the show and confirm their delivery
- We bill the client and they pay us directly
 - We pay Jump with Jill a commission for each book sold

With Option 2 or 3, Jump with Jill is not required to purchase the books or maintain inventory. The cost of books for each show is borne by the school, and we handle all inventory and shipping tasks.

