

Health Trends

Children and Parents Often Differ on Nutrition-Related Beliefs

(NAPSA)—A new survey by the American Dietetic Association (ADA) Foundation finds children and their parents may not always be on the same page when it comes to nutrition and physical activity.

In its first *Family Nutrition and Physical Activity Survey*, the ADA Foundation looked at food-related behavior and attitudes from the perspectives of both children and parents.

“The survey found that parents and their kids have a lot to talk about,” said registered dietitian and ADA spokesperson David Grotto.

For example, the nationwide survey of 615 pairs of children and parents found that kids eat more often than many parents realize, and eat more often in front of the TV or computer. While 22 percent of children said they eat “some of the time,” “most of the time” or “all of the time” because they are angry, sad or depressed, only about 11 percent of their parents thought that was the case.

Differences between kids’ and parents’ perceptions become greater when the subject is school lunch. More than 40 percent of children in the survey said their main reason for not eating a school lunch is because their friends don’t. Just three percent of parents, however, thought their kids were influenced by friends.

The ADAF survey also found parents overestimate their children’s satisfaction with their bodies. On a scale of zero to 10, with



zero being “very dissatisfied” and 10 being “very satisfied,” kids rated themselves an average of 6.7, while parents predicted they’d average 7.8.

While the survey showed that a majority of parents eat meals and watch TV with their kids nearly every day, far fewer parents engage in regular physical activity with their children.

“The findings of the ADAF survey will be useful to educators and health professionals in developing effective nutrition messages and programs for the entire family,” Grotto said, “but the results also speak directly to parents.

“The survey asked children whom they ‘most want to be like,’ and many say they want to be like their parents. Other findings indicated that the majority of children would talk to their mom or dad about nutrition and healthy eating,” Grotto said. “So the message for parents is, talk to your kids!”

The ADA Foundation is the philanthropic arm of the American Dietetic Association, the nation’s largest organization of food and nutrition professionals. You can visit ADA at www.eatright.org.