

# **Body Mass Index (BMI)**

## **New Requirement Under NYS Department of Health**

Beginning with the 2008-2009 school year, BMI and weight status category must be included on Student Health Appraisal forms for new entrants, and grades K, 2, 4, 7, and 10. At your child's next physical, the healthcare provider will screen your child and indicate these findings on the physical form.

### **What is BMI?**

BMI is used as a screening tool to identify possible weight problems for children. BMI is a number calculated from a child's weight and height. After the BMI is calculated the number is plotted on a growth chart to obtain a percentile ranking. The growth chart identifies weight status categories such as underweight, healthy weight, at risk of overweight, and overweight. This is a reliable indicator of body fatness for most children. Any child who is not in the healthy weight range should undergo further assessment and evaluation to identify underlying causes. Recent data estimate that 17% of children are overweight and an additional 16% are obese. Children who are overweight are at increased risk for a number of obesity-related diseases and adverse health consequences. BMI, as a screening tool, is an important step toward prevention and early identification of childhood health problems.

Our school is required to report BMI summary information to NYS. No names or information about individual students are sent. You may choose to have your child's information excluded from this report by notifying your child's school nurse.