Response to *Body Quest: Food of the Warrior*

I appreciate the opportunity to respond to the *Body Quest* developers' concerns¹ regarding my review of *Body Quest: Food of the Warrior*.² I am somewhat perplexed by the authors' statement that *Body Quest* is not a weight-focused curriculum, when its overarching aim is to prevent childhood obesity. I recognize that the focus is on fruit and vegetable consumption, but the authors describe this as a means of helping children reach a healthy weight. Even if the program is designed as a nutrition education curriculum, we still need to think critically about weight bias in developing and implementing such programs to avoid unintentionally contributing to further weight bias in society.^{3,4} In our mission to prevent childhood obesity through nutrition interventions, weight bias is often overlooked.^{5,6} However, it is critical that they both be addressed in tandem.⁷

Prior experience working with children in nutrition education sensitized me to the ease with which children pick up subtleties in the language we use surrounding food choices. Whereas the explicit term *bad food* may not be used in the curriculum, this implicit association can be drawn from, for example, the description of Trans Fat Cat being "naughty" and consuming "greasy, fried foods" (p. 15). As nutrition educators, we need to be judicious in our word choices. Parents are also becoming increasingly concerned about weight bias and weight-based victimization in schools, and have shown support for portrayal of children of diverse body sizes engaging in healthy behaviors.⁸ The field of childhood obesity is changing rapidly with new evidence-based frameworks, including modifying intervention approaches to focus on wellness rather than weight.⁹

Perhaps this was not expressed adequately in my review, but I do

believe that *Body Quest* is a valuable addition to an instructor's toolbox, and I appreciate the innovativeness of the superhero theme to captivate children's attention. I am also aware of evidence supporting its effectiveness in increasing fruit and vegetable intake (eg, Struempfer et al¹⁰ and Parmer et al¹¹) and do not question its usefulness in that regard. Here, I merely highlight some potential areas of caution and suggest that a holistic approach to nutrition education, which considers unintended outcomes and the multitude of factors impacting children's abilities to make healthy food choices, be taken in implementing childhood obesity interventions. As a public health doctoral student researching in the field of weight bias, inevitably my background colors my review, but this is not a conceptual conflict of interest. Reflective practice is a core value in public health.¹² A wholly bias-free review is unfeasible given that we all view the world through a unique lens influenced by our previous experiences.

Alexa R. Ferdinands, RD, BSc
Edmonton Clinic Health Academy
School of Public Health
University of Alberta
Edmonton, Alberta, Canada
aferdina@ualberta.ca

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