

# SHAPEDOWN



## PARENT'S GUIDE

A GUIDE  
TO SUPPORTING  
YOUR CHILD

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## WELCOME TO SHAPEDOWN!

You have come to the right place. SHAPEDOWN is the nation's leading weight program for children. The program is based on the experience of more than 80,000 graduates and on scientific research showing that family-based interventions like SHAPEDOWN cause weight loss that, on the average, is maintained even ten years later.

What you accomplish with SHAPEDOWN is up to you. However, our hope is that it is not only weight loss. SHAPEDOWN is designed to gently and effectively help your child lose weight. But it also pays attention to the subtle issues that have allowed weight problems to settle into your family's life. SHAPEDOWN is offered as an opportunity to throw open the windows and blow away a few cobwebs - the feelings, ideas, beliefs, and actions that haven't worked well for you - and to consider some new ones. Many families use dealing with their child's overweight as an opportunity to make their parenting more rewarding and to create a more emotionally satisfying family life.

Before you embark on your SHAPEDOWN experience, I want to congratulate you on being one in 250. That's right, even though studies have shown the profound effectiveness of family-based weight programs for the young, most families with overweight children don't find their way into a program. As a mother of three and a person with an oversized commitment to helping the young escape lifelong battles with food and weight, I ask you to go through SHAPEDOWN and, if you find that it helps your child and family, to tell others about your experience. It's a risk to come to SHAPEDOWN, and your encouragement may prompt another parent to take that leap and to get some help, potentially giving rise to their child avoiding the snarl of troubles that obesity can bring.

Let's deal with basics. How does SHAPEDOWN work? It involves three steps:

**1. Assessment** - First, you and your child will participate in an assessment given by a trained pediatric obesity specialist with consultation from a multidisciplinary team of health professionals. This team includes a physician, a registered dietitian, a mental health professional and an exercise specialist. The purpose of your assessment is to give you a clear understanding of the causes and consequences of your child's weight. Then your family can work with your SHAPEDOWN instructor to determine the most effective way to support your child in losing weight.

A computerized assessment, called YES, the Youth Evaluation Scale, is available to families through SHAPEDOWN instructors. YES uses standardized tests to measure many aspects pertaining to weight, such as percentile of body fat, body fat patterning, blood pressure, cholesterol, signs of "gland problems", fitness (flexibility, endurance, strength), lifestyle habits, emotional overeating, knowledge about weight management, self-esteem, anxiety, family lifestyle, parenting practices, family closeness and adaptability, and parent-child communication. YES points out all of the areas in which the child and family are already healthy and those areas on which to focus to get the best results with weight and well-being.

**2. SHAPEDOWN** - Next, you will begin taking care of the weight. The plan you and your SHAPEDOWN instructor develop may or may not involve SHAPEDOWN. Some children require no care. Others benefit from other kinds of counseling before or in addition to participating in SHAPEDOWN. Some families go through SHAPEDOWN in a group; others complete SHAPEDOWN through individual counseling.