

## MEDIA RELEASE

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### Every school-aged child should have access to a registered nurse to maintain healthy weight

#### *ACN Position Statement - Working with Children Above a Healthy Weight: Nurse-led interventions*

The Australian College of Nursing (ACN) is recommending that every school-aged child in Australia should have ready access to a suitably qualified registered nurse to provide care and guidance to ensure the maintenance of healthy weight.

The evidence-based recommendation is a key part of the new ACN Position Statement, *Working with Children Above a Healthy Weight: Nurse-led interventions*.

Interim ACN CEO, Emeritus Professor Leanne Boyd FACN, said today that, despite solid policy development, the proportion of Australian children above a healthy weight continues to rise.

Professor Boyd said that nurses, who compose more than 50 per cent of the health workforce, are uniquely positioned to identify at-risk children, educate families, and combat weight stigma.

“Nurse-led interventions, which are proven effective in various settings, offer a flexible and cost-effective solution,” Professor Boyd said.

“Supporting nurses with training, resources, and leadership opportunities is crucial to optimise impact in combating childhood obesity.

“ACN supports policies that ensure every school-aged child has access to a qualified nurse.

“We recommend reforms to prioritise nurse-led care models.”

ACN commends and supports the recommendations from The Obesity Collective, published in the March 2024 report, *Obesity in Australia: A Time for Action*, which covers prevention, treatment, and tackling stigma within existing policy frameworks.

The ACN Position Statement, *Working with Children Above a Healthy Weight: Nurse-led interventions* additionally recommends that:

- Every school-aged child in Australia has access to a suitably qualified registered nurse.

- Reform of current healthcare funding models to prioritise nurse-led models of care for areas that intersect nurses and children.
- The normalisation of collection and discussion of height and weight data of all children, with longitudinal mapping on WHO recommended growth charts, as outlined in *Working with Children Above a Healthy Weight: An ACN Toolkit for Nurses*.
- Empowering the nursing workforce via professional development to identify children at risk and provide timely, sensitive interventions targeting a whole-family approach to improve eating and activity behaviours.

The ACN Position Statement, *Working with Children Above a Healthy Weight: Nurse-led interventions* is at <https://www.acn.edu.au/wp-content/uploads/position-statement-working-with-children-above-a-healthy-weight-nurse-led-interventions.pdf>

The ACN Fact Sheet, *Working with children above a healthy weight*, is at <https://www.acn.edu.au/wp-content/uploads/factsheet-working-with-children-above-a-healthy-weight-nurse-led-interventions.pdf>

The Obesity Collective report, *Obesity in Australia: A Time for Action*, is at <https://theobesitycollective.org.au/2024/03/a-time-for-action-new-obesity-collective-report/>

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