

Balance365 Episode 20 Transcript

Annie: Ladies, welcome, we have a full house today. Jen, how are you doing?

Jen: Really good. How are you, Annie?

Annie: I'm good. What are you up to? What's going on?

Jen: Well, I just dropped my kids off at school, then rushed back here to attend our podcast.

Annie: Thanks for coming. I appreciate it. Lauren, how are you?

Lauren: I am wonderful, thank you.

Annie: What are you up to?

Lauren: Well I am 3 hours ahead of Jen so I have already worked for my morning and now I'm here.

Annie: And you can't see Lauren, but Lauren has on like, bright, what was it, orange?

Lauren: Yeah.

Annie: Shirt and blonde hair and she just looks so fancy today.

Lauren: Thank you.

Annie: You look nice. Who are you?

Lauren: I don't know.

Jen: What am I, chopped liver over here?

Annie: You know, before we even started recording this podcast, Jen pops on and we're recording over video and she was like, "Annie, what's going on with your hair?" So rude!

Jen: That's because you always look so glamorous and I always look like a hot mess and it was just so shocking to me to arrive and see a fellow hot mess over video. Like, "What's going on?"

Annie: I feel like I look pretty good. I don't see a hot mess when I look in the mirror.

Jen: You look like sex hair. You have the like wild, like your hair's been rubbing around on a pillow for the last five minutes.

Annie: It's post-crossfit hair is what it is. It has some similarities, I guess. Minus the sex. Anyways, we have a special guest, Jacqueline, how are you?

Jacqueline: I'm doing great.

Annie: Good! Thank you so much for joining us. You are a member of Healthy Habits Happy Moms, correct?

Jacqueline: Yes I am.

Annie: And tell us about your profession, what do you do?

Jacqueline: I'm a registered dietician and I've worked in lots of different areas of nutrition and so my background is in school nutrition and community health but right now I'm working in long term care and doing some health education so that's a lot of different areas and I feel like it kind of gives me a little bit of a unique perspective to kind of speak on a few different topics.

Annie: Absolutely and you're from Saskatchewan, right?

Jacqueline: Yeah. Saskatchewan, Canada.

Annie: You Canadians are going to make fun of me for saying that?

Jen: Annie, you've been there! You have been to Saskatchewan.

Jacqueline: We say Saskatchewan.

Annie: Lauren, how do you say it?

Lauren: Saskatchewan.

Annie: Saskatchewan.

Jacqueline: Yeah, you said it right.

Annie: Oh. How did I say it? Saskatchewan?

Jen: I'm not sure but you had a grimace on your face as you are saying like you were just painfully trying to get it to roll off your tongue.

Annie: You know what, I had some of the best poutine from a McDonald's drive thru when I was in Saskatoon.

Jacqueline: Oh, I hate McDonald's gravy.

Annie: it was my first time having poutine. I mean, it was great. It was wonderful.

Jacqueline:: You set the bar kind of low so I think you can only go up from there.

Jen: there's actually a poutine place in Saskatoon right downtown which I will take you guys too next time we all go to Saskatoon.

Annie: I would love to go back because we have quite the community there of women.

Jen: It's huge. We call it, Saskatoon, we call it the birthplace of Healthy Habits Happy Moms. The majority of our community is from there, and then when I check my stats on my followers, it's Saskatoon and I think Annie's, Annie lives in Des Moines, Iowa but the majority of followers are also from Saskatoon, Saskatchewan.

Annie: I know, I feel like maybe I have a little bit more celebrity status in Canada than I do in my hometown.

Lauren: I need to check mine.

Annie: Oh, Lauren.

Jen: I'm sure it will also be Saskatoon.

Annie: Little sister, Lauren, has to be included. Okay, so Jacqueline, the reason we wanted to have you on the podcast, I mean many reasons, and we have a variety of topics that we could discuss but we really want to get your perspective

on what to look for in your child's nutrition education. So we're talking about when we have school aged kids, preschool to adolescents, what are they talking about in schools as far as nutrition, food, education, what to do if we have concerns as parents, what to do if they aren't talking about it at all or if they're just, we feel they're totally missing the mark, which I know Jen and Lauren have both had some experiences with the messages maybe that their schools were talking about as far as nutrition and that's kind of your wheelhouse so let's jump right into it, what to look for in your child's nutrition education. The first point you want to talk about is are the activities age appropriate and you noted that are they focussing on teaching about food rather than nutrition - can you talk to us about that?

Jacqueline: Yes, so a lot of it can be really age dependent, so we know that in early elementary school and preschool ages, children's brain development is different than what adults can kind of comprehend so they have concrete brains and think very black and white. So at this age we really want to focus on positive food experience and kind of learn from being around healthy foods and being involved in food prep rather than looking at what nutrients do we get from our food, that kind of food.

Annie: At what age do you think talking about the nutrients and the actual makeup of food becomes more appropriate.

Jacqueline: I think as kids kind of get into their later elementary school you can kind of start to teach that, or even early elementary you can talk about how food is fuel for the body but still kind of stay away from the specifics but, really, honestly, I wouldn't start talking about nutrients or what specific things we get from our foods until I would say middle school, high school, that sort of age.

Annie: And would you say the same is true for parents as well, like parents and teachers that those guidelines apply?

Jacqueline: Oh definitely, kids learn the most from what we do and how we structure our meals and the routines that we have rather than from actually talking about food.

Jen: I was actually just discussing this with somebody yesterday. We were talking about how really when you want to talk about the different macro or micro nutrients in food, it's very much about chemistry and so, you know, I look at my

son who is 8 years old and he's not learning chemistry yet so it's kind of confusing, I think.

Jacqueline: Yeah, and abstract concepts like vitamins and minerals. Even adults have a hard time understanding them so why would we expect like a young kid to understand. Like, they might be able to regurgitate things that they've heard like "Calcium's good for my bones" but if you actually ask them why they really have no idea.

Jen: Right.

Annie: They're just kind of parroting what they've heard for sure. I guess I should have maybe addressed this before we jumped right into it, but do you have any thoughts on who should be providing this information in the classroom? I mean is this something teachers are doing or is this information that should be reserved for a school nurse or a health teacher or is that again, age dependent, what is your opinion on that?

Jacqueline: I think if the teacher feels confident this is definitely within their realm of understanding as long as they're using very credible resources that are current and are written by those who really work in the field and understand nutrition. So I think they can really do a great job if they're open to learning about these topics, by all means inviting good guest speakers is a great idea. They have an opportunity to do so.

Annie: Yeah.

Jen: What would you look for in a guest speaker to come in? So because, I guess, because I don't want to say anything I'm not supposed to but I guess, in my experience, there are just different healthcare professionals, like a doctor or a registered dietitian who practice very differently and some I would want talking to my children and some I would not.

Jacqueline: Absolutely. So, personally, I would want someone who is trained in nutrition specifically, not just a healthcare professional. Anyone can be educated as to how to address the concepts as well but I think that does give a little more sensitive to some of these topics if you have specific training in nutrition. And even within the realm of dietitians, I would ask for someone who understands like a health at every size mindset and the importance of being body positive and just

looking at healthy habits instead of diets as well. So, there can be a little bit of variation among health professionals. Just like any area as well-

Annie: Go ahead, sorry, Jacqueline.

Jacqueline: I would definitely look at what their credentials are as well. There is also a whole other realm of "nutrition professionals" who maybe are self-taught or maybe don't quite have the same level of education in this area, so just like we wouldn't have a teacher teaching our children who don't have their certification, we wouldn't want to just invite anyone who doesn't have the education to come in.

Annie: I think if my memory serves me correctly the Health At Every Size website, which we can link in our show notes, has a resource tab, doesn't it, where it can tell you some providers in your community? Although I'm not sure how extensive that list is.

Jen: I have zero in my community. I've looked so-

Annie: But that could be a good starting point if you're looking for, even if you're looking for a personal just healthcare provider like a general health doctor for yourself, that could be a good starting point, I like that suggestion. Which kind of leads right into another one of your guidelines is does the education, what you just said, does the education focus on healthy habits rather than healthy weight and noticing any diet talk, weight talk that you would argue or that you would know that that's a red flag?

Jacqueline: yes, absolutely. A lot of people have their own struggles around nutrition and we just want to make sure that we are not bringing our own biases into the classroom. So, that can actually happen and we know that everyone has the absolute best intentions and goals for our children, right, we all want them to grow up to be happy and healthy and have a positive relationship with food but just trying to keep the focus on health and not on size and weight so actually an interesting story was I was in a grade 8 classroom a couple years ago and while we were talking about nutrition the teacher actually piped up and was like, "Maybe we should all be limiting our carbohydrates because they are not as good for exercise." I had to really control my facial expression but that was a really good opportunity, learning opportunity for me to actually dispel that myth and talk about how all foods are really great for our bodies and there's no foods we

should be avoiding. And actually the opposite is true. But, yeah, no, that was kind of eye opening for me as a young dietitian to hear that as I was in the classroom that he was bringing his kind of diet bias into the topic.

Annie: Lauren, you have a similar experience. Do you want to share that about that happened with Elliot?

Lauren: Yes. So, I have a daughter who just started preschool this year and so I was not expecting to have to deal with this for like at least a few more years but I had brought her a snack in the car and if you listen to the last podcast, sometimes we talk about having like treat snack and then like "regular snacks" and I had brought her a couple of donuts to have on the way home and she piped up in the backseat and said "My teacher said donuts are bad for you."

And I'm glad she couldn't see my face because she was in the backseat because my face just like dropped and like I said, I was not prepared for that to come out of her mouth and luckily I had been kind of reading up on this topic and I had been following Ellyn Satter for a few years now and so what I told her was just that, "You know what, different people eat different foods but that doesn't mean that any foods are bad for us and you really don't have to worry about what kind of food is good or bad for you right now, I think about that when I plan your meals." And she just said, "Oh, okay" and ate her donuts.

I was not prepared for that. Of course, I was fuming, you know, like, what is being taught at my kid's preschool. So I did talk to the teachers and she actually never said anything about donuts being bad, they were reading a book about vegetables and then they were showing flash cards and the teachers were saying "Fruits and vegetables and meats and milk etc help our bodies grow and chips and donuts and cookies are really yummy but they don't help us grow." Which, I mean, in what my daughter got from that was 'Donuts are bad' so that really just illustrates that even if you're not specifically saying a certain food is bad, at that age, that's what they're getting out of it.

Jacqueline: Oh, that is such a great point and it's definitely reinforces that abstract thinking of, you know, if I eat a good food, it makes me feel like I'm a good person and if I eat a bad food I must be a bad person. Think about the messages that might send to our kids and, yeah, that kind of just breaks my heart that.

Jen: The other thing is that kids, what they really desire, is love and connection from the adults around them and so they will start changing their eating behaviours in order to please the adults in their lives, right? So-

Lauren: And also, kids want cookies and chips and donuts so if they think that they're bad and that's what they are wanting, you know, like what's wrong with me that that's what I want and that is bad?

Jen: But we see this in grown women too. It starts in childhood but then we see in grown women how ashamed they feel for having a donut, you know, with their coffee in this afternoon and it's like, yeah, so it rolls on.

Jacqueline: I actually read a statistic the other day that said that children as young as 4 years old report feeling guilt and shame when they eat those "forbidden foods."

Jen: That is heartbreaking.

Annie: Yeah, it is. But Lauren, I have to say, I really love your response of, "I consider that when I put foods on your plate and when I give you treats and snacks and foods and meals, I'm already thinking of that for you." I think that's such a loving, caring response as a mother that you gave her. She doesn't have to worry about that, that's your job. I love it. High five.

Jen: It's a burden that children shouldn't have to take on and I think it's lovely to say, "You don't have to worry about this, I'm your mom, I got this."

Annie: Yeah. Why does that make me emotional? That's so sweet, Lauren.

Lauren: I have a heart, guys.

Annie: Sorry, Jacqueline, what were you going to say?

Jacqueline: Sorry, it also, their job really is to trust their care providers too and for their teachers, their parents and that's just encouraging that trust relationship.

Annie: Absolutely. This kind of connects to another one of your guidelines of what to look for in your child's nutrition education but does the language avoid judgement and emphasize that all foods fit and that's kind of what we are talking about good foods, bad foods and foods having moral value and when I eat good foods I'm a good person, is there anything you wanted to add to that, Jacqueline?

Jacqueline: Yeah, I just focussing on the joy and how lucky that we are that we have so many wonderful foods. Whether it's pizza, or bananas or anything and just, you know, kind of keeping all foods to be really neutral, I would say.

Annie: I like that a lot, I think that's just caring. When I think about these guidelines carrying on into adolescence and adulthood, these are just really good foundational relationship guidelines with food to have that just hopefully really benefits them as adults. I wish I had these. Okay, moving on, do the messages emphasize body positivity, size diversity and media literacy? Tell me more of that thought.

Jacqueline: I think, in the classroom, we can and of talk about how everyone is built genetically differently, talk about the body ideals we see in magazines and you know, how they don't represent our population as a whole. And I think that gives us a good, it's a good place to really talk about how we have successful people of all shapes and sizes even if the media and tv doesn't want to celebrate the same way, we still-

Jen: I'm really conscious of that in our house so the other thing is that I'm tall and thin and so I sort of thought about how my kids, they see like thin women on TV and in books and you know, kind of, everywhere and I'm also thin and so I'm very conscious of trying to have things around that have women of different sizes so one book I have is Jade Beall's Beautiful Body book, it's just kind of a coffee table book that has photos of women, you know, breastfeeding, it's like a postpartum body book and yeah, I'm really conscious of that, like my kids being exposed to different body diversity and also answering their questions when they have them because, again, being like a thinner woman, and me being really the only woman in their life as their mom, I'm their point of reference and my kids have asked me questions, they ask me questions about other people's bodies all the time, like "Why is she so big?"

But you know, I do deal with it very neutrally and yeah, I think what a lot of people don't think about around media literacy is that the vast majority of women's bodies in the media, so whether you're watching a movie with your kids, or even just reading just picture books, it's not all body sizes are represented and so it's just something to think about and keep in mind.

Annie: And you know that kind of made me think of when we had Bethany on our fatphobia podcast, Jen, one of the suggestions she offered, I think it was her,

said she really likes to create a safe space in her home for children to ask questions about different bodies, whether it be the size, the shape, their abilities, disabilities, and I really like that so it's not that we can't, you know, talk about bodies, or comment on other people's bodies, but if you have a question about someone's body, know that you can come to me in the privacy of our own home and we can talk about it. You know, maybe we don't talk about it in public in front of them and make a big spectacle about it, but that, you know, we can ask questions because they are curious, they want to know. They just have questions.

Jacqueline: And it shouldn't need to be this taboo subject either so you don't want to go to either extreme where we should never talk about bodies, but we want to talk about them in a positive way and kind of emphasize and celebrate the diversity that we have in our culture and around us.

Jen: The other thing I was just thinking about was how beyond nutrition, the nutrition curriculum your child might be hearing, there's other classes and subjects where this might come up. Somebody posted in Healthy Habits Happy Moms the other day that a teacher, a biology teacher, their assignment for the day was to graph everybody's weight on a scale.

Annie: NO. I missed that.

Jen: Yes.

Annie: No, really?

Jen: Yeah, and we're talking like, I think her daughter was a bit older, maybe like grade 8ish, but like whoa. So it kind of infiltrates every and maybe that biology teacher maybe it was a man that was not aware of because men don't seem to be as weight sensitive but anyways she was just talking about how her daughter was the heaviest in the class and it was a traumatic experience for her and so, yeah, I just think, you know, think about it beyond nutrition. Like in phys. ed.

Jacqueline: Oh, absolutely.

Jen: Because everybody brings their biases everywhere. I bring my biases in. So, you just really have to think about it even beyond the nutrition curriculum.

Jacqueline: And even just in our general conversations too, like, kind of watch how we talk about our own bodies, even if we're not talking directly about someone else's bodies. Or, our child's body. So, how we talk about our own bodies, or our friends, or those we see can impact as well and can kind of spread some of these messages and that can make a child kind of internalize, "Oh well, if they think that about their own, maybe I'm going to grow up to think that." Or, it kind of creates a fear of, it can create a fear of body change and become maybe a certain size or weight.

Jen: I think the way some women talk about their bodies, even when they think their children aren't listening, I think creates a fear in little girls and a dread of becoming a woman, really, like going through puberty, having babies, like even the way we speak about it is so negative.

Annie: Okay, the last one you have, the last guideline recommendation you have for what to look for in your child's nutrition education and of course, this is like my favorite, is movement discussed for enjoyment rather than exercise.

Jacqueline: Yes, so focussing on your child's strength and their capability and finding pleasure in movement rather than their benefits on their weight or their size or their health even. I mean, think about us even as adults, I know the recommendation is to get 60 minutes of physical per whatever, but does that mean that that's going to change what I do necessarily. It can, but probably me enjoying exercise is going to have a bigger impact. Also, kids can also take that, those guidelines around the numbers and take it really literally too. I recently hear a story where a child came home and told his mom, "Mom, my teacher said I should be getting 60 minutes of activity a day and you have to make sure I do that." And, the child's like, "Kid, you never stop moving, like, that is not your job to worry about. You know, I create those opportunities for you and you just have to enjoy the activities that we do," and so I just kind of thought that was very interesting to hear.

Annie: And how kids exercise can look really different from how adults exercise. They're not usually going to aerobics classes or crossfit classes, they're riding their bikes, playing football with their neighbour kids or basketball or swinging, running on playgrounds, like they're moving, they're just not maybe in a structured exercise.

Jen: I feel like my kids are at a crossfit class all day long when I watch them.

Annie: Oh that looks exhausting.

Jacqueline: Even just watching my toddler run around the house, I'm getting tired.

Annie: It's exhausting taking all the clothes that I have folded out of the laundry basket and then dumping them out. Anyways, you know, I think this one, this hits home, obviously I love to exercise but I think one of the reasons I love to exercise is because I grew up in a household that was focused on athletics and so that was just, you know, we love sports, like, that's just what my family enjoyed and so sports was how we got our exercise and playing sports to me was really fun. And so that's why just moving my body has always been a way to really embody my body and made me feel really powerful and given me confidence and one of the questions we get a lot in Health Habits Happy Moms is what kind of exercise should I do, or what's the best exercise for weight loss, what's the best exercise for building strength or fill in the blank and 9 times out of 10 our answer is "what do you enjoy?"

Because enjoyment trumps so much when it comes to exercises, if you actually enjoy what you're doing you're so much more likely to engage in it and I think that's a really great tip for kids when you consider kids, exercise can be enjoyable and it can feel like play and often is play, and that's a great way to develop some really great habits of movement early on in life. So, I dig it. Lauren and Jen do you have anything to add to those guidelines before we move on?

Lauren: I have a question actually, and my question is, so what do you do when you find out that your children's nutrition education in their school is sub-par or harmful? Like, what steps can you take, where do you turn?

Jacqueline: I think the first thing that I would do if I was that parent is start the conversation. Have a conversation with the teacher, talk to the principal not tattle but to try to get a wider audience and to raise the awareness of how these messages can kind of impact our kids and then after that I would kind of start looking at how can I have a role in advocating and working with the school and working in the community because I think it really is a joint effort and I think teachers do an absolute amazing job with the resources they have, they have such a huge role in our child's life, I think it's up to everyone to promote these concepts and to try and bring these, raise awareness about these messages.

Annie: That's a good question. Jen, you kind of had an experience with that recently, do you want to share that?

Jen: Yeah. So it was around Christmas time this past year when my son started reading labels of things coming out of our fridge. And I thought it was strange, he never really noticed them before. And he was telling me what is healthy and what is unhealthy in our fridge. And he wasn't looking at the whole label, he wasn't looking at protein, carbs, sodium, fat, he was zeroing in on the sugar and reading how many grams of sugar were in each thing and then making his decision on that. So he opens up the fridge, grabs the jug of milk, reads how much sugar is in it, turns to me and tells me, "Mom, this milk is really unhealthy, do you see how much sugar is in here?" And I was extremely triggered and I was just sort of fumbled with it, "I was like, well, there's different types of sugars and there's sugars in fruit and there's sugars in vegetables."

You know, I was like, "There's natural sugars and then there's the sugar we might add to cookies, but you know, that's okay sometimes, you know, we don't eat cookies for every single meal and I just really fumbled with it and I wanted to go and talk to his teacher but I felt very nervous about it. I guess I felt like, she's the educator, she knows, and like many, I don't like confrontation or uncomfortable situations, so I kind of just left it until my younger son who is six and in kindergarten announced sometime in January that he is no longer eating yogurt, yogurt is too unhealthy, it has too much sugar in it. Then, I was like, "Okay, enough is enough, I need to go in and talk to the school and see what's happening here."

So I went into my son's teacher and I opened up this conversation and I talked about my own history because I remember getting nutrition lectures when I was younger that affected me and told her what we were experiencing at home and my son's homeroom teacher wasn't the one that gave the education, it was actually the phys ed teacher and she was surprised and like, very surprised and said she would talk to the phys ed teacher about it.

But when I questioned why they were even having those conversations, what does an 8 year old need to know about food labels for, she told me it's in the curriculum and then she showed me, she pulled out the textbook and showed me what they're basically required to teach and I was like, you know a lot of it would align with what I would say, because it did talk about the whole picture of health, it talked about sleep and eating well and talking to somebody when you're feeling

sad and that's amazing but then we would turn a page and it would like, "You are what you eat" and having pictures of junk food and it's like, "Whoa. Like, this is, but it's in the curriculum" and so I pointed that message out to her and I said, "This is terrible," and she was just kind of like, "Yeah, it is kind of terrible. Well, just so you know, the kids don't see this, this is just my textbook to follow."

I just, it was really tough, so after that I went and talked to the principal and I ask if I could put something together for them and I've actually been waiting for this podcast so I could include this podcast and they were just so receptive to it because they're all parents too and they all want to do the right thing. Everybody wants to do the right thing, right? They just need the right guidance. My school was so open to talking about this more and learning more and I'm really stoked about it.

Jacqueline: I think it's awesome that you addressed that and it sounds like they're receptive to it. I think that there is areas where nutrition curriculum can be improved, and that you kind of need that advocacy at a higher levels so in those circumstances I would maybe even ask to see if you can get the help of someone who works at the ministry of education if they have that or in health promotion in health care. Because, really, we should be teaming up to create the curriculum for health and nutrition I think it is just so important.

Another thing, actually, there's the Feeding Doctor, if you've ever heard of her, Katja Rowell online, and she has some good information and tips and she actually says to parents that, "You know, I think it's your right to ask what they're going to be teaching before they talk about nutrition." And she says, "They need to send a note home for things like sex ed and you know, nutrition is important just as much as those kind of concepts that we're teaching." So, I thought that was really interesting and we wouldn't typically think about it like that.

Jen; People have to understand, zoom out, big picture, and think about what your kids are learning in the context of the world we live in. We live in a world that's obsessed with nutrition and perfect eating and diet culture dominates our nutrition conversation rather than actually speaking about nutrition, what most people are actually doing is speaking about dieting.

So you have to understand that in the context, this is extremely important, it's I think kids need to have these moderation and balance messages right up and down the line because that's not what they're rehearsing in the mainstream. What

they're hearing in conversation in the mainstream are about dieting, what's good, what's bad, what bodies are good, what bodies are bad and it's so important the people that they are attached and connected to aren't reiterating body positivity, teaching positive body image and a balanced approach to fitness and nutrition, right?

Jacqueline: Absolutely and also recognize where the messages are coming from, not even just in the school and foods and messages are being marketed to kids directly, I mean, we could talk a whole other podcast about that too-

Annie: Oh, yes.

Jacqueline: But I think there's ways for parents to kind of get involved and try and address those at the younger levels. When I was working with the schools I actually had a group of youth and parents, we worked on looking at where do we get food messages in our community and in our school and what does that look like?

So they actually went around the community, we took cameras and we took pictures of food and nutrition messages in marketing to kids at the school, at the convenience store, the sports centre and they were able to bring those findings and present them to their school and their school board and even in the community so I thought that was a really great way that they can raise awareness about how we are marketing foods to kids and indirect messages can have consequences too.

Annie: One of the ways I got involved, my children's school has a health and wellness committee. I don't know if that's a state school standard that all schools in our state need to have but I know quite a few schools in our area have a wellness committee but the purpose of it is to serve both the students and the staff and the committee has to have X number of parents, administrators, teachers and we even have had my kid's school goes up to 8th grade, part of the 8th grade curriculum is they have to join some of the committees so we even have a couple students involved and we just meet like, maybe a couple times a year but it's really just to make sure that we're providing some opportunities for both the staff and the families to get involved in health and wellness, we plan a couple events, and we, I would love to have you back on for another podcast because I'm sure we could talk about treats in school and treats as rewards for a whole other hour, but we have some guidelines about that per our school

recommendation about when treats are offered at what hours and what circumstances and I joined that and it felt really good to kind of have my hand in there and I thought that was a great way to be a part of the solution and kind of stay in the know about what's going on in the classroom, even outside of just my children in the grades above and below them.

Jacqueline: I think that's an awesome suggestion

Annie: Yeah, awesome. Well, ladies, anything else to add.

Jen: Can we do like a quick sum up of how we, Annie could you just read the four points-

Jacqueline: Five.

Annie: Yeah.

Jen: Sorry, five points, and then if Jacqueline, I wonder if Jacqueline could just do a quick sum up of like sort of-ish, age ranges when it's appropriate to introduce certain nutrition strategies.

Annie: Yeah, absolutely. Here is a quick review of what Jacqueline recommends to look for in your child's nutrition education. The first one is, are the activities age appropriate? Does the language used in the classroom avoid judgment, emphasize that all foods fit (recognize that no foods are good or bad), does the education focus on healthy habits rather than healthy weights, do the messages emphasize body positivity, size diversity and media literacy and is movement discussed for enjoyment rather than exercise? Which are just amazing guidelines.

Jen: And the other thing I don't think we have super touched on this is why this is so important, in case people haven't listened to our past podcast because we do talk about this a lot, it's that we have found research, research has found that the messages that children are getting about food are really harming them.

Jacqueline, did you want to say anything about that? Anything that you observe or see or stats you know about?

Jacqueline: Yes, actually, when I was looking into this recently I actually found a stat that said about 11% of high school students have actually been diagnosed with an eating disorder and we know that they're even under diagnosed and even

looking at younger grades, about half of 9-11 year olds have either sometimes or very often been on diets. Of those, about 80% of their family members have.

So I think that that's the culture that we live in and I think that just making small steps to try and improve these messages can be important. And also, I want to say that, we don't say this to produce shame or guilt in parts, we know that we all do the best with the information that we have but spreading positive messages can help make improvements and it's never too late to try and change some of these messages you see or hear your kids receiving.

Annie: Absolutely, because when we know better-

Jen: I think it's okay.

Annie: Go ahead, Jen.

Jen: Yeah, I was just going to say, as a parent, I have changed my nutrition philosophy drastically with my kids which we've talked about on previous podcasts and I think it's okay to acknowledge if your kids notice a change, because if they are older, they may notice a change, I think you just acknowledge, "You know what? We have new information now. And we're going to be doing things a bit differently.

Jacqueline: And it shows them they don't have to be perfect as they grow older. As a parent they're going to learn and grow and everyone's kind of learning at the same time.

Annie: Yes. Absolutely. I think that was kind of the message echoed in our Hilary McBride podcast is more so about body image but it was that kids don't need us to be perfect they just need us to be consistent and honest and authentic.

Jen: And engaged.

Annie: Yeah. And if you make a mistake, that's okay. You just say, "I made a mistake." Just as we would encourage our kids to. I know better and now I can do better. Yeah, absolutely. Love it.

Jen: I just wanted to reiterate too, last thing, just to leave everyone with this, Jacqueline, what would you hope to see, when would you want to see schools or

curriculums moving away from, not moving away, moving towards teaching about the science of nutrition.

Jacqueline: yes, so these are just kind of my idea, and I think there is different ways to approach it, but Ellyn Satter actually suggests not to teach about nutrition until high school even. So I know that there are maybe some nutrition concepts that are appropriate in later elementary but what I would kind of focus on for the different age groups is in pre-school really looking at the food experiences like we talked about earlier.

Learning about food in general, so something I would do when I visited preschool and younger elementary school classes is I would bring a food with me at a presentation and I would be like, "Pass it around" and they would have to like feel it through a paper bag, and try and guess what it is, and then we would take the food out and they would describe it, what does it look like and then I would show them a picture of where it grows.

Pineapple is actually the one I would do, because that's the one they would typically know what it is, they would get really excited and then we would look at, you know, "Let's cut it up! Like, why not? Let's taste it. See what, do you notice any difference between this pineapple and maybe the stuff in the can?" And just kind of explore foods.

You can also connect it to what they are learning already so there's an alphabet book about nutrition, I can't remember what it's called where it looks at the ABCs of different food and then I would also kind of look at how are we promoting a healthy environment? So they learn through observing, not necessarily teaching. So, do we have healthy foods available? Do we always bring junk food into, for exciting events, or are they getting the message that that's more important? What are the messages we are sending indirectly?

So that's kind of preschool/early elementary. As they kind of get into their later elementary schools, I would kind of start teaching some principles of variety. Encouraging them to try new foods. There's kind of like gentle peer pressure when they see their friends trying foods that might encourage them to try it as well. And encouraging them to try it without pressure so they feel that they can say no if they try one bite and they don't like it. And teaching that food is fuel for our body, so kind of relating that to a story that you know, cookies provide fuel, so do bananas, so do eggs, they all provide fuel.

Jen: Everything contributes, right?

Jacqueline: Yes, you know. And as they kind of get older talking about the biological diversity, you know, how our ideals have changed throughout history and I wouldn't even start talking about the science of nutrition until high school and maybe talking about food digestion but still being really cautious of the messages that we're sending.

I would avoid talking numbers at all, like I know there is one activity where they have to kind of look at the foods that they are eating at home and compare it to the Food Guide. Now this might be controversial but this is my personal contribution but we don't need to be counting servings of food because that's not learning to listen to our own bodies and that's a controversial thing. And we definitely shouldn't be comparing how much protein we are getting to the recommendations.

Jen: Right.

Jacqueline: Yeah, I would still-

Annie: You guys, we didn't even ask her to say that.

Jacqueline: Did you talk about this before?

Annie: No, it's just really in line with Healthy Habits Happy Moms and our Balance365 massaging.

Jen: You're really our people.

Annie: So it's perfect that you said that.

Jen: Yeah.

Jacqueline: Well, I gotta say I love your Healthy Habits Happy Moms community and the only reason I would ever agree to be on a podcast because I think the message you're spreading, you guys are just doing such a great job.

Annie: Thank you.

Jacqueline: So those are just a few pointers.

Annie: Thank you.

Jen: So would you talk to children and when would you talk about this, to listen to their bodies' cues? "Oh are you hungry? Are you full?" Would you bring that up? Or would you just...

Jacqueline: I think it would depend if the situation arose, I think kids intuitively, they know how to listen to their bodies. What we want to try and do is kind of avoid teaching them otherwise, really, they know what to do and they know how to listen to their bodies but it kind of, this is kind of going off topic, when you look at we actually learn to not listen to our bodies.

So, looking at the food rewards. Looking at the, "You have to eat a certain amount" and those types of concepts. Those are kind of un-training them. But if the situation arose where, you know, maybe a kid, for example, they're maybe elementary school, they say, "Mom, my tummy hurts." And you can kind of start asking some questions like, "Why do you think that is? What have you done today?" Maybe they ate a whole or half a package of cookies or something. You know, without, you know, blaming the cookies, "Oh, you feel sick because it was the cookies."

Annie: Yeah.

Jacqueline: You can be like, "Okay, maybe that didn't make your body feel very good, maybe that's something we can think about the next snack time. Trying to listen to our bodies and eat what feels good." Not blaming the cookies, because I mean, if we ate a whole package of carrots, I don't think any of us would feel very good even though-

Jen: I used to do that when I was a dieter, I used to eat packages of carrots because they are like a "clean food" and another woman in Balance365 shared that with me that she used to binge on baby carrots because they were 0 points in weight watchers so she would just like binge on them. But I used to get the worst stomach aches after I would eat all my carrots. Yeah, so.

Annie: High fibre.

Jacqueline: I have kind of an embarrassing story. This kind of an embarrassing story but I'm going to share it anyways. But like, I love snap peas and for some reason I just never ate them much growing up. And then, as I got older, I was like,

"I can just buy what I want." And one time I ate a whole bag of snap peas before a soft ball game and I never felt so sick in my entire life.

Jen: The other thing is I follow Ellyn Satter's guidelines as well and that's what we recommend and we have a whole section in Balance365 about it, how to feed your kids, family, all based on the Ellyn Satter education that Lauren has and anyways, so we implemented the hallowe'en treat thing several years ago as I was transitioning my nutrition philosophies and so we got home from trick or treating and the first night I let my kids just go to town and of course, they went savage on that candy because I had been the most restrictive mother ever around treats and so, you know, that's a typical response when you never have access to candy and all of a sudden you have a big bag of it, you're going to go crazy.

So, my son, my oldest son ate until he threw up and it was so hard for me to sit back and I was just trusting the guidelines, trusting this is going to be a long term strategy for us that will work out. And I just did that, I just said, "Oh, like, why do you think you feel sick?" And he answered his own question. "I think I ate too much halloween treats." "Oh, what would you do differently?" "I would probably eat a little bit less." And yeah, so it was good.

So I just stood back and let him come to his own conclusions. And we had another incident like that recently and I just try to remind myself that that's how you learn. You have to make mistakes. And we make mistakes, like we overeat sometimes, and we have to go, "Oh that didn't feel very good." But our kids needs to experience that too to learn, right?

Jacqueline: Yeah and by providing that structure and those guidelines, you're kind of giving them the safe environment to learn and grow in that.

Annie: Awesome. This is a good talk.

Jen: It was so good. I hope we can talk to you again, Jacqueline.

Jacqueline: I would love that.

Annie: I would love to have you back on because I think we could talk a lot about what goes on at lunch time with the volunteers in the lunch room and what's served and how it's offered and like I said earlier, with treats in school too, I'm

certain you have a lot of suggestions and thoughts and ideas around those topics so will you come back another time?

Jacqueline: Sure, I will.

Annie: Awesome.

Jacqueline: Thanks for having me on.

Annie: Yeah, thank you. And Jen and Lauren, I'm sure we'll talk to you soon.

Jen: Yes.

Lauren: Yeah.

Annie: Alright, bye ladies.

Jen: Bye!

Lauren: Bye!

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