



# How to Measure Weight

## Equipment Needed:

- A private room to protect the privacy of students. Screens are recommended.
- Digital or balance beam scale.
- A form and a pen to record weights.

## Instructions

1. Place the scale on a level, uncarpeted surface in a private area.
2. Before each measurement, make sure the scale reads zero. If the scale does not read zero before the student gets on, it will not weigh accurately.
3. Ask the student to remove heavy outer clothing (such as coats, jackets, and vests), purses, shoes, and any heavy accessories such as belts with heavy belt buckles. They should also remove everything from their pockets including money (coins), pens, pencils, wallets, and papers.
4. Ask the student to step on the scale and stand motionless in the middle of the scale platform with the feet slightly apart and the body weight distributed equally on both feet. Arms should be relaxed and hanging down loosely at the sides of the body. Digital scales are very sensitive to movement and any movement will change the weight measurement, so students must stand very still.
5. Do not react to the student's weight. While the weight measurement is being taken, it is important not to be judgmental. Any communication about the weight should be neutral (neither positive or negative). Read below for more information on communicating.
6. Read the weight on the scale and record the number immediately on the student's weight sheet.

### Appropriate Weight Communication with Students

- Do not label or diagnose students as overweight, obese, normal weight, or underweight.
- Use neutral comments. See Tip Sheet for examples.
- Respond to negative comments with supportive statements such as, "Healthy bodies come in all shapes and sizes."
- Refer to the tip sheet for School Health Clinic Staff.

*Reminder!*

### Avoid These Common Mistakes

- ⊗ Using bathroom scales.
- ⊗ Not recording immediately.
- ⊗ Not placing feet in the middle of the scale.
- ⊗ Putting the scale on carpeting or an uneven surface.