











Abstract

A wide array of health policies and initiatives have emerged in New Zealand recently in an attempt to resurrect a presumed 'lost', adventure-loving, physically capable and non-obese Kiwi kid. Chief among these is Mission-On—a 67 million dollar package of 10 initiatives designed to explicitly target the eating and exercise dispositions of young people. I suggest that Mission-On, together with the raft of other avowedly health-promoting resources being directed at young people, provides an exemplary case of body pedagogies at play both via its far-ranging formally enunciated objectives and due to its annexing of these to popular cultures, familial obligations and educational missives. The aim of this paper, therefore, is to examine how pedagogies, like those regularly deployed under the Mission-On rubric, are made sense of by young children. The key habits and dispositions children believe are needed to achieve a healthy 'self' are highlighted, together with some of the ways in which young people come to assess the veracity of health knowledge. Analysis of interviews with New Zealand primary

school students suggests that children engage with, enact and disrupt health imperatives in multiple ways, often linked to their differing social and spatial locations in home, school and community contexts. While their testimony points to small fissures in the Mission-On armoury, it is suggested that in a climate so thoroughly saturated with messages around healthy eating and exercise, it remains challenging for children to imagine themselves as the adventurous, confident, fun-loving 'kiwi kids' government desires to 'bring back'.

Keywords:

Health Obesity Children Body pedagogies

Notes

1. Pseudonyms for both schools mentioned and children who were interviewed are used throughout.

Related Research Data

Teaching Bodies: Affects in the Classroom

Source: Body & Society

Being Fit and Looking Healthy: Young Women's and Men's Constructions of Health and

Fitness

Source: Sex Roles

Who Wants to Marry a Millionaire? Reality Dating Television Programs, Attitudes Toward

Sex, and Sexual Behaviors

Source: Sex Roles

Discourse analysis: a new methodology for understanding the ideologies of health and

illness

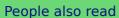
Source: Australian Journal of Public Health

Health care costs of obesity in New Zealand

Source: International Journal of Obesity

We have to live in the future

Source: Early Child Development and Care



Information for Open access

Authors Overview

R&D professionals Open journals

Editors Open Select

Librarians **Dove Medical Press**

Societies F1000Research

Opportunities Help and information

Reprints and e-prints Help and contact

Advertising solutions Newsroom

Accelerated publication All journals

Books Corporate access solutions

Keep up to date

Register to receive personalised research and resources by email









Copyright © 2025 Informa UK Limited Privacy policy Cookies Terms & conditions



Registered in England & Wales No. 01072954 5 Howick Place | London | SW1P 1WG





Accessibility