



a world premiere by
by Melissa Leilani Larson

Plan-B Theatre Company's
Fourth Annual Free Elementary School Tour
created specifically for grades 4-6
(running time 35 minutes)
October 8-November 19, 2016

planbtheatre.org/theediblecomplex



THE EDIBLE COMPLEX by Melissa Leilani Larson (running time 35 minutes) is a comedy about ten-year-old Anna, who dreams of being a chef. She is also becoming aware of how her body is different from others at school. So, one day she decides to stop eating, but it's hard to ignore your Food when it starts talking to you.

Plan-B Theatre Company provides a free assembly for schools across Utah each year. THE EDIBLE COMPLEX, our Fourth Annual Free Elementary School Tour, is a funny and thoughtful new play about body image created specifically for 4th thru 6th graders. Students will watch with delight as the food around the protagonist comes alive to teach a lesson about loving oneself in the face of multiple, conflicting messages regarding what society values when it comes to body shape and size.

Why Body Image?

The topic is often neglected in schools, even though it is a part of the health core curriculum and affects boys and girls equally in grades 4-6. One of the reasons it may be neglected is the lack of available lessons or materials for teaching about body image to young people. Only one fifth grade lesson is available through the state board website which is woefully outdated.

A 2015 BYU-Idaho study revealed that:

- Although 6.4% of Utah adolescents are obese, obesity is far higher among boys than girls (13.2% vs. 8.9%) in grade 5.
- 50% of 9-year-old (grade 4) and 80% of 10-year-old (grade 5) girls in Utah have dieted.
- While most Utah and Idaho school districts have drug and alcohol treatment information readily available, nearly none have similar information regarding eating and body image issues.
- Utah boys and girls grades 4-6 are more afraid of becoming fat than they are of cancer, nuclear war or losing their parents.
- Utah boys and girls grades 4-6 are more likely to develop problems with eating and body image than with drugs or alcohol.
- While most Utah and Idaho school districts have drug and alcohol treatment information readily available, nearly none have similar information regarding eating and body image issues.

Prior to the assembly, we encourage you to have some preliminary discussions and activities about body image. Not only will you be addressing the core curriculum, you will be preparing students to get the most out of their assembly experience.

Ask students what they understand about the term body image.
Listen to ideas and come up with a class definition.

Have a discussion with students using the following questions:

- What do you notice in others when you first see them?
- What do you think others notice about you when they first see you?

Encourage students to generate positive messages about themselves. Encourage them to focus on writing a positive comment that is less focused on the body and more focused on talents. Ask students, "Why might it be important to focus more on our internal rather than our external strengths?" Stress that our comments about other people may influence their body image. Even a comment that is meant as a compliment like, "Wow, you are really skinny," can lead to individuals being overly aware of their bodies and what others perceive of them.



THE
EDIBLE
COMPLEX

Use the Book “The Best Part of Me: Children Talk About Their Bodies in Pictures” By Wendy Ewald

Third-, fourth- and fifth-grade students offer personal observations about their bodies in this insightful, accessible and age-appropriate book. It will help students see themselves and their bodies in a positive light, diminishing the body shaming impulse.

Discuss the Role of Media in Shaping Body Image

Have students generate ideas for the types of media they interact with regularly and encourage them to consider how people in those media are portrayed: What do the characters in video games look like? On television? In movies? What do you like or not like about that? However negative its influence may be, especially related to body image, media is not going to diminish. If anything it will become more present in their lives. Therefore it is important to empower children to be wise consumers. As long as we are teaching children to critically think about the images they are presented with while encountering media, they will be less subject to its negative messages.

In a lesson plan about different versions of beauty, the Teaching Tolerance website offers several free images that students can use to process the beauty and intended messages of particular images. Once students have discussed beauty as portrayed in different images, they may finish the following sentence starter verbally or in writing: Beautiful is _____. This can serve as an additional reminder of how different our perceptions of beauty can be.

Encourage Healthy Lifestyles

Books such as “Eat Healthy, Feel Great” (Sears, Sears, & Watts Kelly), “Good Enough to Eat: A Kid’s Guide to Food and Nutrition” (Rockwell), “Staying Healthy: Eating Right” (McGinty), and “Being Active” (Schuh). Again, there are free posters available through the Teaching Tolerance website to help students identify healthy forms of exercise, healthy versus unhealthy foods, and healthy alternatives.

Utah State Office of Education Core Standards Related to Body Image Grade 4

Standard 1, Objective 1: Demonstrate effective decision-making based on positive self-worth.

Objective 3: Set goals to enhance personal health.

Standard 2, Objective 1: Discover personal strengths and talents that make one unique.

Objective 2: Identify the qualities of positive role models.

Standard 3, Objective 3: Exhibit qualities associated with healthy body image.

Standard 6: Students will understand how a healthy diet and exercise can increase the likelihood of physical and mental wellness.

Grade 5

Standard 1, Objective 3: Predict the influence body image may have on body acceptance.

Standard 5, Objective 3: Develop vocabulary that shows respect for self and others.

Standard 6: Students will understand how a healthy diet and exercise can increase the likelihood of physical and mental wellness.

Standard 7, Objective 2a: Analyze the influence of media on needs and wants.

Grade 6

Standard 1, Objective 2: Demonstrate acceptance of self and others.

Standard 3, Objective 1a: Adopt behaviors contributing to a healthy body image.

Standard 6: The students will understand how a healthy diet and exercise can increase the likelihood of physical and mental wellness.

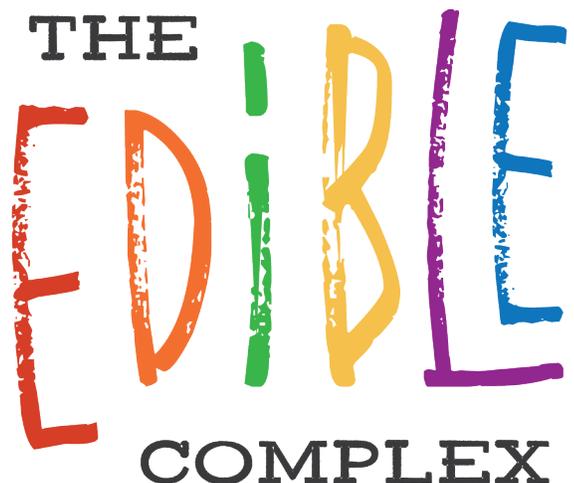
Standard 7, Objective 3a: Recognize media influences on making healthy choices.

Resources

tolerance.org

WebMD: Body Image and Children

planbtheatre.org/theediblecomplex





Maybe Mom is right;
maybe she is too happy
to be a model.

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from **THE EDIBLE COMPLEX**

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