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### Childhood obesity bill: Knowledge of BMI helps parents

By Other Voices

December 13, 2009, 3:38AM

The Plain Dealer's editorial, "A weighty issue parents must face," objected to a provision of pending legislation that would require Ohio schools to measure students' body mass index.

Childhood obesity is a critical public health issue in our state. The proposed legislation would help ensure that nutritious food and physical activity are a part of every student's daily school routine.

Interventions require a means of measurement; body mass index is an indirect measure of childhood obesity, calculated from weight and height of each child. We agree with The Plain Dealer that obesity prevention begins at home, and parents need tools to recognize when their child may be at risk. You wouldn't ask a parent to help strengthen a child's reading or math skills without test scores: Improving health and nutrition is no different.

Ellen Rome, M.D. *Cleveland*

*Rome is head of the Section of Adolescent Health at the Cleveland Clinic Children's Hospital, and associate professor of pediatrics at the Cleveland Clinic Lerner College of Medicine.*

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