This paper investigates biopedagogical discourse, which instructs parents about healthy lifestyle choices, soliciting changes in their children to counter the 21st-century childhood obesity epidemic. Although biopedagogical discourse is now used in online health promotion as a more far-reaching intervention to fight the epidemic, it essentially draws on cultural schemas, or health-related knowledge which is socially shared by members of a same community. Accordingly, different cultural schemas may be invoked across health cultures for a more effective impact on parents. Cultural schemas therefore appear helpful in manipulating community-level discourses, driven by the ideology of regulating obesity in the childhood population and disciplining individual behaviours. They are thus useful analytical tools to investigate the linguistic features that instantiate biopedagogical discourses, especially where childhood obesity has become a major health issue. Based on these premises, the present study explores how biopedagogical discourse is mediated through the use of cultural schemas across US and Italian health cultures, currently affected by alarming rates of childhood obesity. The twofold aim is to investigate how cultural schemas contribute to organizing information and situating the meaning of childhood obesity cross-culturally, and to disclose possible distinctive discourse patterns. Modal verb types are analysed as indicators of potential discourse manipulation, which draws on different cultural schemas to shape these patterns, thus reflecting differences in the exertion of ‘biopower’. A comparative analysis of a collection of US and Italian web-based texts is conducted, guided by a cultural approach to CDA, and specifically by cultural schema theory. Accordingly, the cultural schemas of facts-and-concepts, context, role and emotion are used as four indicative types of cognitive constructs influencing US and Italian biopedagogical discourses to frame the cross-cultural analysis. Overall, the paper sheds light on diverse approaches to constructing biopedagogical meaning across two different health cultures, and on possible contending conceptualizations of health.