

Soccer kicks up activity level of overweight kids, research finds

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After-school program got the heaviest children moving more.

(HealthDay)—When looking for ways to get a heavy child moving, soccer could prove a winner.

California researchers found that a soccer program increased the [physical activity levels](#) of overweight and [obese children](#).

Researchers examined the impact that a community-based, after-school soccer and youth-development program called America SCORES had on the physical activity, weight and fitness of students in a large, urban school district.

The study, published online Feb. 25 in the journal *JAMA Pediatrics*, involved 156 students from six schools. The SCORES program was implemented at three of the schools.

The research team found that the program significantly increased moderate-to-[vigorous physical activity](#) among overweight and obese students after school (by 3.4 minutes per day) and on Saturdays (by 18.5 minutes).

The program did not, however, lead to significant changes in physical activity, fitness or weight among all the students in the study, said Dr. Kristine Madsen, of the University of California, Berkeley, and her colleagues.

"Existing community-based programs such as SCORES can increase physical activity among low-income youth, particularly those most at risk for weight-related [[health issues](#)]," the researchers concluded.

More information: The Nemours Foundation has more about [children and exercise](#).

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