

Parents feel limited in ability to prevent child obesity

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Photo: U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

(HealthDay)—Parents want to help their children avoid obesity but feel limited in their ability to take action, according to a study published online April 3 in the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's *Preventing Chronic Disease*.

Burton O. Cowgill, Ph.D., from the University of California Los Angeles Fielding School of Public Health, and colleagues conducted a qualitative study involving 38 parents whose children attended Los Angeles middle schools. Parents participated in focus groups from 2010 through 2011 to examine how best to engage children in [obesity](#) prevention and control efforts. Focus groups were conducted in English (two groups with 14

parents from different racial/ethnic backgrounds) and Spanish (two groups with 24 Latino parents).

Based on findings from the focus groups, the researchers found that parents sought to help their children avoid obesity, but felt limited in their capacity to take action. The overarching desire to become better parents was identified as a potential incentive for pursuing obesity prevention efforts. Parents supported family-focused approaches to [obesity prevention](#) programs, such as parent-child cooking classes and family-focused sports leagues and clubs. Consistent findings were seen between language groups, but language-related barriers were cited by the Spanish-language group.

"Our findings confirm the notion that [parents](#) want to help their children avoid obesity but feel constrained in their ability to take action," the authors write. "Increasing the development and testing of simple programs that are sustainable, community-based, and family-focused may lead to innovations that can empower families to live healthier lives in their communities."

More information: [Full Text](#)

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