

# Fathers' involvement may help prevent childhood obesity

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This is an image of a weight scale. Credit: CDC/Debora Cartagena

Fathers are becoming more involved with raising children, but limited research has examined their association with childhood obesity. In a recent study, fathers' increased involvement with child caregiving was linked with a decreased likelihood that their children would become obese from age 2 to 4.

In the study, which used data from a survey conducted in a nationally representative sample of children in the United States, increases in [fathers'](#) participation in physical child care (such as bathing and dressing children) and the frequency that they took children outside for walks and playtime were linked with a decreased likelihood of obesity in their young children.

The findings suggest that encouraging fathers to increase their involvement with raising children and including fathers in [childhood obesity](#) prevention efforts may help reduce obesity risk among [young children](#).

"There is growing evidence of the importance of fathers' involvement in raising children in other areas of [children's](#) development, and our study suggests that there may be benefits to child health as well," said Dr. Michelle Wong, lead author of the *Obesity* study. "While due to data limitations we could only consider the involvement of fathers, it is also important to understand the relative caregiving involvement of both mothers and fathers."

**More information:** *Obesity*, [DOI: 10.1002/oby.21902](https://doi.org/10.1002/oby.21902)

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