

Most parents don't believe their child's BMI report card

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53% of parents who receive their child's Body Mass Index (BMI) report card do not believe that it accurately categorizes their child as underweight, normal weight, overweight, or obese, according to research

out today in *Health Promotion Practice*.

Researchers Jones et al. conducted a study to determine how parents responded to their child's BMI report card, which contains health information about their child's weight and the steps families can take if their child is categorized as "overweight" or "at risk" for certain diseases, such as heart disease or [high blood pressure](#). Looking at data from 66 parents, they found that:

- 53% of parents did not believe the BMI report accurately reflected their child's weight status.
- 45% of parents believe their child's BMI should be reported to them by their child's school.
- 33% of parents reported that receiving their child's BMI report card led them to think about their family's health habits.
- 22% of parents reported contacting a health care professional about their child's weight status after receiving a BMI report card.
- 16% of parents reported seeking recommendations for tips on healthy eating or physical activity from a [health care](#) professional after receiving a BMI report card.
- 13% of parents whose child was categorized as "at risk" or "overweight" reported making changes to their child's diet or activity habits.

"Though parents support receiving BMI report cards, they may not accurately interpret the information they receive," wrote the researchers. "As more children and adolescents in the United States become overweight, fewer parents may recognize their child as being [overweight](#) or obese."

For schools that issue BMI report cards to parents, the researchers recommend providing parents with opportunities to visit with healthcare

professionals, such as school nurses or physical educators, at various times throughout the school year. They also recommend that schools encourage parents to ask questions and seek advice from [healthcare professionals](#) who can provide them with information about how to improve their [child's](#) health.

"Schools are a critical link in improving the health of children through programs such as BMI health reports," wrote the researchers. "However, if schools take on the responsibility of sharing BMI report cards with parents, they must also be willing to provide some support and act as a resource for [parents](#)."

More information: "BMI Report Cards: Parents' Perceptions and Reactions," by Jones et al., in *Health Promotion Practice*.

Provided by SAGE Publications

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