

Dads have bigger influence on child's BMI

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Australian researchers say fathers may have more influence than mothers in determining whether a child becomes overweight.

A study of almost 5,000 4- and 5-year-olds found that fathers who had permissive or disengaged parenting styles were more likely to have heavier children. Fathers whose parenting was more consistent were less likely to have a child with a higher Body Mass Index.

Mothers' parenting behaviors and styles were not associated with a child's risk of having a higher BMI, the study found.

The report by the Center for Community Child Health at The Royal Children's Hospital in Melbourne, and the Murdoch Childrens Research Institute, will be presented at the Pediatric Academic Societies' annual meeting in Toronto.

"Mothers are often blamed for their children's obesity, but this study suggests that for more effective prevention perhaps we should focus on the whole family," Associate Professor Melissa Wake of CCCH said Friday in a release.

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