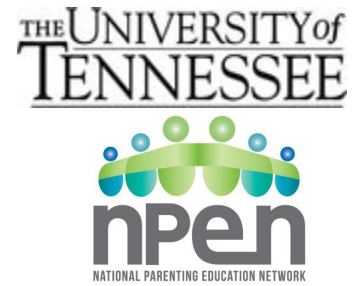




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Research Update for Professionals

Parenting Strategies & Childhood Obesity

Selected Research Article:

Morawska, A., & West, F. (2013). Do parents of obese children use ineffective parenting strategies? *Journal of Child Health Care*, 17, 375-386.
doi:10.1177/1367493512462263



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What were they trying to find out?

- An increasing number of studies have investigated the relationship between parenting strategies and childhood obesity; however, researchers remain conflicted about the role of parenting in childhood obesity.
- Researchers wanted to identify differences in the parenting practices of parents of obese children compared to parents of healthy weight children by analyzing their use of disciplinary practices and health-promoting strategies.

What did they do?

- Sixty-two families with obese children (ages 4-11) were matched with sixty-two healthy weight families. One parent (96.8% were mothers) and one child (59.7% were girls) were measured for their height, weight and waist circumference.
- In addition to collecting biometric measures, parents completed several questionnaires to assess parents discipline styles (with The Parenting Scale) and child and parent adjustments (with The Eyberg Child Behavior Inventory and The Parent Problem Checklist).

What did they find?

- "Permissive and coercive parenting practices are more common in families with obese children than in families without obese children" (p. 383).
- "Only 21% of parents with obese children were confident in managing their children's eating, activity, and weight-related behaviors vs. 81% of parents of healthy weight children" (p. 384).

What does it mean for parenting educators?

- We want to provide parents with the tools and strategies that will allow them to develop authoritative (warm but firm) parenting styles. Providing these tools and strategies may increase parents confidence in making parenting decisions related to children's eating and physical activity.