Fathers' involvement may help prevent childhood obesity

21 June 2017

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

Provided by Wiley

APA citation: Fathers' involvement may help prevent childhood obesity (2017, June 21) retrieved 12 June 2022 from https://medicalxpress.com/news/2017-06-fathers-involvement-childhood-obesity.html

This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.