

Childhood obesity rate in the U.S. Higher now than 12 years prior

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The incidence of childhood obesity is higher than 12 years previously,

according to a study published online July 5 in *Pediatrics*.

Solveig A. Cunningham, Ph.D., from Emory University in Atlanta, and colleagues examined the incidence and [prevalence of obesity](#) across two cohorts of children in the United States 12 years apart using the Early Childhood Longitudinal Studies. Kindergarten cohorts of 1998 and 2010 were followed with direct anthropometric measurements at multiple time points through fifth grade (2004 and 2016).

The researchers noted a 4.5 percent relative increase in the cumulative incidence of new obesity cases by the end of fifth grade across cohorts among children who did not have obesity at kindergarten entry (15.5 versus 16.2 percent), although no substantial change was seen in annual incidence. For children who had a normal body mass index at kindergarten entry, the risk for incident obesity stayed the same, while the risk for incident obesity increased slightly among overweight kindergarteners. There was an expansion of social disparities in obesity incidence: A 29 percent increase was seen in the incidence of new cases during [primary school](#) among non-Hispanic Black children, while the risk stayed stable or decreased for other race-ethnic groups. A 15 percent higher cumulative incidence was seen across [primary schools](#) in 2010 versus 1998 for children from the most socioeconomically disadvantaged households.

"Although extensive public health efforts have been directed toward [childhood obesity](#) since 2010, these policies have had no impact on reducing population-level obesity," the authors write.

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