

clinical setting but also in educating the public and other professionals as well as research.

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## The Effect of Maternal Beliefs and Behavior on the Body Weight Status of Preschool-aged Children

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**Purpose:** The purpose of this study was to determine the extent to which maternal beliefs and behavior regarding the child's body weight status influenced the child's actual weight beyond the known risk factors for childhood obesity.

**Background:** Childhood obesity has become one of the leading health concerns in the country. One group that is disproportionately affected by the obesity epidemic is low-income preschoolers. Around the age of three children stop eating from deprivation and start eating based on how they are socialized to the mealtime environment. Maternal behaviors are postulated to have a strong influence in the development of a child's eating habits, food choices, food preferences, and weight control behaviors. One of the specific behaviors believed to affect a child's body weight status is maternal feeding style. However, few studies have examined how maternal beliefs and concern about the child's weight status affect the development of maternal behaviors. In addition, limited studies have been conducted to evaluate the relationship between maternal behaviors, such as feeding style and a child's actual weight.

**Specific Aims:** (a) Determine which maternal beliefs (i.e., nutritional belief, perceptions and concerns regarding the child's weight) are most predictive of maternal behavior (b) Determine the extent to which maternal behaviors predict a child's body weight status. (c) Determine the combined effect of maternal beliefs and maternal behavior on a child's body weight status (d) Determine the extent to which the relationship between maternal behaviors and the body weight status of a preschool-aged child is moderated by either the

child's behavior and/or pregnancy and infancy factors known to affect a child's weight.

**Methods:** IRB approval was obtained prior to the start of data collection. A descriptive correlational design was utilized. One hundred and twenty-six low-income mother/child dyads were enrolled in the study. Mothers completed a research packet at home that included two feeding style questionnaires that evaluated the mother's mealtime feeding style and overall feeding style. The child's height and weight were obtained from the child's Head Start file. Chi-square, correlations, regression, and moderated regression were utilized using the latest version of SPSS.

**Results:** Mothers who utilized an authoritarian feeding style had children with a lower body weight status than mothers who utilized the other feeding styles. Additionally, the relationship between an indulgent maternal feeding style and the child's body weight status was moderated by the child's screen time. Lastly, the relationship between a prompting/encouraging feeding style and the body weight status of a preschool-aged child was moderated by the mother's weight at the time of pregnancy.

**Clinical Implications:** Maternal feeding styles influence the body weight status of preschool-aged children. It may also influence the food preferences and eating habits that the child develops during the preschool years. Primary care providers need to assess not only what a mother is feeding the child, but also how is the child being fed and how is the child being socialized to the eating and mealtime environment.

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## An Intervention to Address Bullying in 5<sup>th</sup> Grade Students

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**Emerging Knowledge for Clinical Practice Podium Presentations focusing on Research Agenda Priority of Healthy Promotion and Disease Prevention Presented at the 35<sup>th</sup> Annual NAPNAP Conference, March 2014, Boston, MA**

**Purpose:** The purpose of this study was to measure the effectiveness of a comprehensive anti-bullying training program on child health outcomes, bullying behaviors,