

## OVERALL STUDY RESULTS



### What we wanted to know

Young children who gain too much weight too quickly are more likely to have health problems like diabetes or high blood pressure when they get older. We wanted to see if a program called **GROW Healthier** would help prevent young children from gaining too much weight.

### Who was in the study

A total of 610 low-income families from Nashville were in this study. Most families were Latino (9 out of 10). Children were between 3 and 5 years old and none were obese when the study started. About half the children were girls and half were boys.

### What we did together

All families got a program called **GROW Smarter**. This program taught families how to use their libraries. It also encouraged parents to read regularly with their children. Half of the families also got a 3-year program called **GROW Healthier** to build habits for both parents and young children in healthy eating, physical activity, and use of their social and built-in environment to support healthy behaviors. This program also showed families how to use community resources like nearby recreation centers and parks. Over the 3 years, families gave us information about how their habits and weight changed.

### What we learned

- **Families who got GROW Smarter (All families)**
  - Learned how to use the library and increased their use by 50%.
  - Changed their habits and kept going to the library throughout the 3 years.
  - All children had more than an hour of physical activity a day.
  - Even though children had healthier behaviors, 1 out of 3 children still gained too much weight by the end of the 3-year program.
- **Families who also got the GROW Healthier program**
  - Used their recreation centers almost 30% more, and this lasted over 3 years.
  - Children ate 100 fewer calories a day, and this lasted over 3 years.
  - Children slowed down their weight gain and decreased the start of obesity at the end of the program's first year. However, at the end of 3 years, that difference did not last.

### Why this matters

The **GROW Healthier** program improved and sustained healthy behaviors over 3 years for underserved preschool children and their families. However, this did not reduce the start of obesity by the study's end. The families that were the most successful, made changes for both parents and children. Focusing on healthy habits for the whole family is most important.

### Thank you!

We thank all the families that were in the GROW study. We would also like to thank our community partners, Metro Parks and Recreation and the Nashville Public Library. Through our partnership, we continue to do the parts of the program that worked.

---

To view the full scientific article about GROW study findings, please click on the link below:  
<https://jamanetwork.com/journals/jama/article-abstract/2695670>