

Symposium Title: *Families and Schools for Health: A Multidisciplinary Approach to Understanding and Preventing Childhood Obesity*

Integrative Statement

Childhood obesity has been declared a national epidemic and a critical public health threat. In the last three decades overweight has almost quadrupled among 6- to 11-year-old children. Obesity is accompanied by chronic disease risks as well as social and psychological problems both at home and at school, where negative family dynamics and peer relations may contribute to or exacerbate child weight problems. The negative consequences of childhood obesity present a pressing need for intervention, but traditional interventions have typically failed. This may be due, in part, to a focus on biological/lifestyle factors to the exclusion of psychosocial factors. Our multidisciplinary research team has implemented an innovative psychosocial obesity intervention that targets the family and peer contexts of overweight children. We also have collected longitudinal psychosocial, anthropometric, and lifestyle data among a large sample of at-risk (rural, low-income, 17% Native-American) children. The posters comprising this symposium present (1) our conceptual model linking key variables from developmental and nutritional sciences to child weight, along with empirical papers reporting: (2) descriptive fitness, physical activity, and weight findings; (3) the link between parent weight concern, parenting style, and child obesity; (4) parent depression, SES, and negative parenting as risk factors for obesity; and (5) preliminary findings from our intervention program. Our discussant, a leader in the nutritional science study of childhood obesity, will provide a needed bridge between the fields of child development and nutrition.

Poster Symposium rated 5.0

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