

Child-feeding practices in Latinos: an early start in obesity prevention

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What we know about CFP

- Most research on :
 - Infants, preschool and school age children
 - Largely white middle-class
- Little research on toddlers
 - Transition phase from infancy to family food structure
 - Parents often confused about what to do
 - This is a missed opportunity to intervene!

More on...

What we know about CFP

- Research findings on parenting styles:
 - Authoritarian style may have negative consequences
 - Latinos more likely to be indulgent
 - Both indulgent and authoritarian styles associated with higher child BMI

Research questions

1. What role do indulgent practices play in toddler dietary intake?
2. What role do indulgent practices play in childhood overweight?

Ultimately...

3. Can we help parents improve feeding practices in toddlers?

Research in 3 Steps

1. Qualitative interviews with Latino moms
2. Development of Toddler-Feeding Questionnaire
3. Longitudinal Study

Results to date...

1. Interviews indicate mothers deviate from current recommendations regarding:
 - Timing of solid food introduction
 - Introduction of novel foods
 - Structure of family-meal pattern

Toddler-Feeding Questionnaire

- Feeding Style

“I let my child have something to eat whenever he/she asks.”

“I encourage my child to eat foods even if he/she does not like them.”

- Family Food Environment

“My child eats the same foods prepared for the family.”

“If my child does not want what is prepared, I give him/her something else.”

Toddler-Feeding Questionnaire

- Influential People

“I feed my child based on advice from family members such as my mother or mother-in-law.”

“I feed my child based on advice from my husband or partner.”

- Health Concerns/Barriers

“It is difficult to offer healthy, balanced meals.”

“I limit outside playtime because I worry about my child’s safety.”

What we expect to see

- Indulgent practices will be associated with higher dietary intake of added sugar
- Indulgent practices will be associated with greater weight gain and heavier toddlers
- Other factors likely to play a role include past food insecurity and socioeconomic factors

Implications

- Toddler-Feeding Questionnaire
 - May be used in nutrition programs serving Latino populations to assess indulgent practices
- Findings may be used to develop culturally relevant nutrition education for toddlers
- Future research
 - Can we change toddler-feeding practices?