

Reducing childhood obesity in Ontario through a health equity lens^[1]

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Source: Wellesley Institute

Format: Report

Publication Date: 1 Oct 2012

AVAILABILITY

Full report in pdf^[2]

Excerpts:

Introduction

Childhood obesity is increasing in Ontario and has significant health implications. Childhood obesity, defined by the World Health Organization as a body mass index greater than or equal to 30, can lead to a lifetime of poor health, negatively affects the broader well-being of individuals and communities, and, as a result, increases demands on the health care system. Not all children are affected equally by the burden of obesity and poor health. Children in families that do not have adequate resources are more likely to be obese and face a greater burden of ill health than children who grow up in families that are better off. Contributors to poor health include poverty, a lack of safe and affordable housing, inadequate access to good food, being socially marginalized, and faring poorly in a range of other determinants of health. While these determinants affect everybody, children are particularly negatively impacted. This paper sets out strategies to reduce childhood obesity in Ontario and its associated health problems by taking a health equity and social determinants of health approach.

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Focus on early development

It is important to children's health that they get a good start in life. Children who have a good start in life do better at school, get better paid jobs, and have better physical and mental health in adulthood. According to the World Health Organization, a good start is characterized by:

Having a mother who:

- Was in a position to make reproductive health choices;
- Is healthy during pregnancy;
- Gives birth to a baby of healthy weight.

The baby:

- Experiences warm and responsive relationships in infancy;
- Has access to high-quality child care and early education;
- Lives in a stimulating environment that allows safe access to outdoor play.

Providing high-quality prenatal and early childhood services can help to compensate for the effects of social and economic disadvantage on early childhood development. This means ensuring that pregnant women and young children have access to essential supports like safe housing, nutritious food, clean air, affordable child care, accessible and affordable recreation services, and access to high quality health care.

Related link: Preventing Childhood Obesity in Early Care and Education Programs^[3]

Region: Ontario^[4]

Tags: health^[5]

child development^[6]

outcomes^[7]

Source URL (modified on 27 Jan 2022): <https://childcarecanada.org/documents/research-policy-practice/12/10/reducing-childhood-obesity-ontario-through-health-equity>

Links

^[1] <https://childcarecanada.org/documents/research-policy-practice/12/10/reducing-childhood-obesity-ontario-through-health-equity>^[2]

<http://www.wellesleyinstitute.com/wp-content/uploads/2012/10/Reducing-Childhood-Obesity-in-Ontario.pdf>^[3]

<http://childcarecanada.org/documents/research-policy-practice/12/06/preventing-childhood-obesity-early-care-and-education-progr>^[4]

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