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Peer Influence on Children's Physical Activity: An Experience Sampling Study

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▶ Abstract

Objective The primary objective was to examine the associations between social context (the presence of peers, friends, and family members) and physical activity intensity for overweight and lean girls and boys. **Methods** Participants for this study included 10 boys ($M = 13.4$ years; $SD = .8$) and 10 girls ($M = 13.8$ years; $SD = .8$). Twelve participants were between the 15th and the 85th BMI percentile (eight girls, four boys) and eight youth were at or above the 85th BMI percentile (six boys, two girls). Participants reported on their activity intensity and whether the activity was solitary or with others for seven consecutive days. **Results** Children were more likely to report more intense physical activity when in the company of peers or close friends. Overweight children reported greater physical activity when in the presence of peers


than did lean children; however, overweight children also reported more time spent alone. **Conclusions** Taken together, findings highlight the importance of considering peer relationships in studies of physical activity and childhood "obesity."

Key words: overweight in children; physical activity; social context.

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