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Editor's Note: The following research will be released at the Society for Prevention Research (www.preventionresearch.org) annual meeting, May 31-June 2, 2006, Hyatt Regency, San Antonio, TX.

RISK FACTORS FOR OVERWEIGHT IN AFRICAN-AMERICAN AND HISPANIC PRESCHOOLERS

Emerging Research Offers a Glimpse into some of the Contributing Factors

In the U.S., 30% of children are considered overweight and 15% are obese, and these numbers are increasing rapidly, according to The National Institutes of Health. African-American and Hispanic children are more likely to be overweight than white children, and importantly, this disparity is seen as early as age 6.

Among African-American and Hispanic families of preschoolers:

- **Do prenatal and perinatal factors such as exposure to tobacco and low birth weight predict who will be overweight by age 6?**
- **Does the early home environment, including general parenting practices, feeding practices and TV viewing, predict which children will become overweight by school entry?**
- **Do children who are overweight by age 6 have a greater likelihood of having behavior problems?**

Prevention experts are attempting to understand the predictors of overweight in ethnic minority children so that they can design and test intervention programs aimed at preventing children from becoming overweight early in life. At the Society for Prevention Research meeting, a group of researchers from the New York University Child Study Center will present results from an ongoing study of 99 African American and Hispanic preschoolers from low-income, urban neighborhoods. Parents were surveyed on the preschoolers' overweight and overeating, the prenatal environment, parenting practices, aspects of the home environment, and TV habits. The results suggest that exposure to tobacco in utero, TV viewing, and certain parenting practices specific to eating are related to children's overweight and overeating by age 6. Additionally, children who are overweight by age 6 are more likely to engage in aggressive behavior with parents.

Sources: Spring Dawson-McClure PhD, Laurie Brotman PhD, New York University.