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### **Eltern unterschätzen Übergewicht bei Kindern: Hälfte schätzt Fettleibigkeit als Normalgewicht ein**

(aid) - Viele Eltern erkennen nicht, dass ihre Kinder übergewichtig oder fettleibig sind. So lautet das Fazit einer niederländischen Studie, an der die Mütter und Väter von rund 440 Kindern im Alter von vier bis fünf Jahren teilnahmen. Für die Untersuchung sollten die Eltern anhand von Vergleichsbildern und mit Hilfe einer Fünf-Punkte-Skala von "zu dünn" bis "zu dick" das Körpergewicht ihres Kindes einschätzen. Die Forscher bestimmten den Körpermassenindex, kurz BMI, der Kinder und Eltern. Der BMI ist das Verhältnis von Gewicht zur Körpergröße und ein gutes Maß zur Beurteilung des Körpergewichts. Das Resultat: Viele Eltern haben bezogen auf ihre Kinder eine verzerrte Wahrnehmung von "Normalgewicht". So wurden Jungen und Mädchen mit einem BMI im Normalbereich als "etwas zu dünn" oder "zu dünn" beschrieben. Über siebzig Prozent der Eltern von übergewichtigen Kindern hatten nicht erkannt, dass ihr Nachwuchs zu viele Pfunde auf die Waage bringt. In keinem Fall wurde ein übergewichtiges Kind als "zu dick" eingeschätzt. Bei fettleibigen Kindern waren 50 Prozent der Mütter und 39 Prozent der Väter der Ansicht, dass diese Normalgewicht hätten. Im Gegensatz dazu wird das eigene Körpergewicht offenbar realistischer wahrgenommen: Rund 80 Prozent der übergewichtigen Mütter und Väter beschrieben sich selbst als "etwas zu dick" oder "zu dick". Bei Adipositas (Fettleibigkeit) waren es sogar 98 beziehungsweise 96 Prozent. Um das Gewicht des Kindes beurteilen zu können, sollten Eltern aufmerksam beobachten. Deutliche Fettpolster und Speckröllchen am Bauch, in der Hüfte, auf der Brust und im Nacken zeigen, dass die Grenze zum Übergewicht erreicht ist.

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<http://www.aid.de/presse/presseinfo.php?mode=beitrag&id=4577>

### **Most parents don't realise their 4 or 5 year-olds are overweight or obese**

28 January 2010 [Wiley - Blackwell](#)

Half of the mothers who took part in a study thought that their obese four or five year-old was normal weight, as did 39 per cent of the fathers, according to the February issue of *Acta Paediatrica*.

When it came to overweight children, 75 per cent of mothers and 77 per cent of fathers thought that their child was normal weight.

More than 800 parents of 439 children took part in the study, carried out by researchers from the University Medical Centre Groningen in The Netherlands. Five per cent of the children were overweight, four were obese and the rest were normal weight.

“As well as asking them to provide information on their child's height and weight, they were also asked to provide information on their own vital statistics” says Professor Pieter Sauer from the Department of Paediatrics.

“We used this to compare the parents’ assessment of their children with their own weight to see if there was any correlation. Data on the child and both parents was provided in 397 cases.”

The study showed that:

- Mothers and fathers of overweight and obese children were significantly heavier than the parents of normal weight children.
- Parents were more aware of their own weight. 83 per cent of the overweight mothers and 78 per cent fathers realised that they were too heavy, as did 98 per cent of the obese mothers and 96 per cent of the obese fathers.
- When asked to choose their child’s body shape from seven different sketches, 97 per cent of parents with normal weight children chose a lighter sketch than the data they provided indicated.
- The same was true of 95 per cent of the parents of overweight children and 62 per cent of the parents of obese children.
- Parents of normal weight children tended to think their child was one sketch slimmer than their Body Mass Index (BMI) indicated and parents of obese children often chose sketches that were three slimmer.
- Most of the parents did not worry about their child’s weight, but the mothers of obese children were more likely to be concerned than the mothers of normal weight children (44 per cent versus seven per cent).
- Parents of overweight and obese children did not think their children were less active than others and 94 per cent felt they could influence their child’s food choices and eating habits.
- Approximately four out of five parents said they would want to receive information or guidance if their child was overweight, regardless of how they viewed their child’s current weight.

“It’s estimated that 10 per cent of children in The Netherlands are overweight, compared with 20 per cent in the USA” says Professor Sauer. “However, public perception of what is a normal weight has shifted upwards because more people are overweight or obese.

“Overweight children are very likely to become overweight teenagers and adults, so intervening when they are aged between three and five could prevent weight problems later in life.

“It is vital that parents are aware of their children’s weight if we are to prevent them becoming obese in later life.

“The fact that the parents in our study perceived their children to be lighter than their BMI indicated is cause for concern.

“Our findings point to the need for health education programmes that encourage parents to recognise what is a normal healthy weight for their children and work with health professionals to tackle any weight problems.”

<http://www.actapaediatrica.com>

- **Full bibliographic information**The paper can be accessed free at:  
<http://www3.interscience.wiley.com/cgi-bin/fulltext/122680148/PDFSTART>

How do parents of 4 to 5-year-old children perceive the weight of their children? Luttikhuis et al. *Acta Paediatrica*. 99, pp 263-267. (February 2010). DOI: 10.1111/j.1651-2227.2009.01576.x