Today’s story was prepared by Kat Bailey-Plough, MD, based on a CNN article [Children of Obese Parents at Risk of Developmental Delays, Study Says](http://www.cnn.com/2017/01/02/health/parental-obesity-child-development/)

The article summarizes a study recently published in Pediatrics that reports a correlation between parental obesity and early child development, noting children of obese mothers and fathers as more likely to have delays in fine motor and social skills development, respectively.  Children born to extremely obese couples did worse with problem-solving. The article clarifies that the study shows correlation and not causation and posits underlying connections such as hormonal/metabolic and genetic differences in obese parents. It concludes by saying more research is needed to understand the relationship between early childhood development and parental weight, but the findings could influence how we screen children for developmental delays.

The report of the study findings could easily lead a lay reader to think that having obese parents causes developmental delays. At the end of the article the research study author is quoted clarifying that this correlation does not indicate causation, however this could easily be a point of confusion for a reader. The header “Effects differ based on the heavier parent” contributes to this confusion about causation and correlation. The article does a nice job outlining the study methods and discussing the uncertainty of the underlying cause of the discovered correlation. I was surprised that the discussion of the potential underlying cause focused on prenatal/physiologic differences of children born to obese parents and did not theorize about differences in parent-child interactions, such as physical or social-emotional influences of obesity on parent health or behavior. The article also provides a misleading closing remark, “In the end, it’s one more reason to keep an eye on your waistline,” and the researchers imply no such thing.

**RESOURCES ON DEVELOPMENTAL MILESTONES, INCLUDING FOR PARENTS W/DISABILITIES:**

[Child Development Tracker](http://www.pbs.org/parents/child-development/) *Sponsored by PBS, this tracker gives parents information about developmental milestones from birth to 8 years of age, and developmental enrichment and positive parenting tips.*

[Through the Looking Glass](http://lookingglass.org/) *Built on the philosophy that disability brings new perspectives that can engender creativity and new meanings – even playfulness and humor, the site includes* [*a nice chart*](http://lookingglass.org/pdf/Baby-care-products-chart-TLG-9-2016.pdf) *of activities that parents with disabilities or who have children with disability can use.*

And that’s today’s Developmental & Behavioral Pediatrics: IN THE NEWS!