



# ECHO

Environmental influences  
on Child Health Outcomes

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**IDeA States  
Pediatric Network**

## **Study Summary**

### ***Rural Family Satisfaction with Telehealth Delivery of an Intervention for Pediatric Obesity and Associated Family Characteristics***

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#### **Why was this study conducted?**

Childhood obesity is a serious health problem in the United States and affects more children from rural areas. Experts recommend treating children with obesity within family-based behavioral groups. However, rural areas often don't have access to these programs. Telehealth is a way to deliver these programs to rural families, but few studies have looked at family satisfaction with behavioral programs delivered this way or who might benefit most from these visits. This study looked at how parents of children living in rural communities rated their experience with telehealth visits to help their child make healthy lifestyle changes, as well as family characteristics associated with satisfaction.

#### **What was done?**

A study was conducted with families of children aged 6 to 11 years with overweight or obesity living in rural areas. Half of the children received the telehealth program and a health newsletter, while the other half received only the health newsletter. After the study, parents of children who received the telehealth visits rated the visits in four areas:

- The telehealth technology experience
- The comfort and privacy they felt with telehealth
- The speed and ease of getting care with telehealth
- Their overall satisfaction with telehealth

#### **What was found?**

Parents were overall very satisfied with the telehealth visits noting they felt comfortable with the technology and satisfied with the privacy. Parents with lower education and income levels reported the highest levels of satisfaction. Race, ethnic group, and in-home internet access did not affect satisfaction ratings.

#### **What do the results mean?**

These results show that families from rural areas like telehealth visits and that telehealth might be a good way to increase access to treatment for children with overweight or obesity, especially among disadvantaged communities. There are still barriers to overcome, such as health literacy

and access to broadband internet and devices. Larger studies are needed to better understand who might benefit most from telehealth.

#### Who sponsored this study?

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