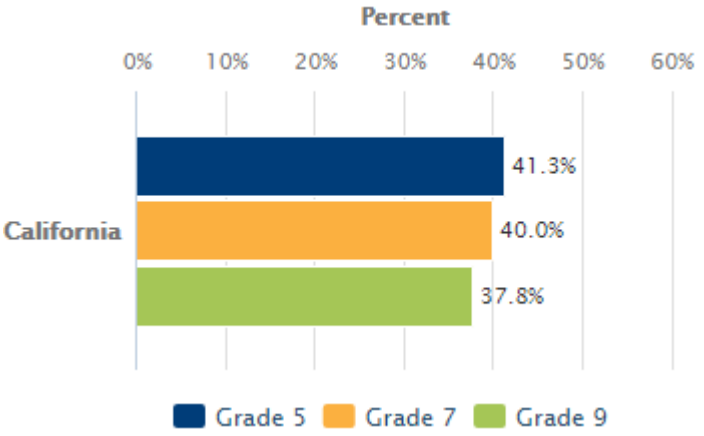
KidsData

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Childhood Overweight and Obesity in California

Students Who Are Overweight or Obese, by Grade Level: 2019



Definition: Percentage of public school students in grades 5, 7, and 9 with body composition above the "Healthy Fitness Zone" of the FitnessGram assessment, by grade level (e.g., in 2019, 41.3% of California 5th graders were overweight or obese).
Data Source: California Dept. of Education, Physical Fitness Testing Research Files (Jan. 2020).

5th Graders Who Are Overweight or Obese: 2019

Locations	Percent
California	41.3%
Alameda County	36.8%
Contra Costa County	36.5%
Fresno County	46.1%
Kern County	44.5%
Los Angeles County	45.6%
Orange County	36.6%
Riverside County	40.5%
Sacramento County	38.4%
San Bernardino County	43.3%
San Diego County	36.9%
Santa Clara County	34.5%

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5th Graders Who Are Overweight or Obese, by Race/Ethnicity: 2019

What It Is

Kidsdata.org's indicators of childhood overweight and obesity measure the percentage of public school students in grades 5, 7, and 9 scoring above the "Healthy Fitness Zone" on the body composition area of California's physical fitness test, the FitnessGram assessment. These data are available by grade level, gender, and race/ethnicity.

Why This Topic Is Important

More than one-third (35%) of U.S. children ages 2-19 are overweight or obese, according to a 2017-2018 survey from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. In recent decades the national childhood obesity rate has more than tripled, with persistent disparities by race/ethnicity and socioeconomic status.

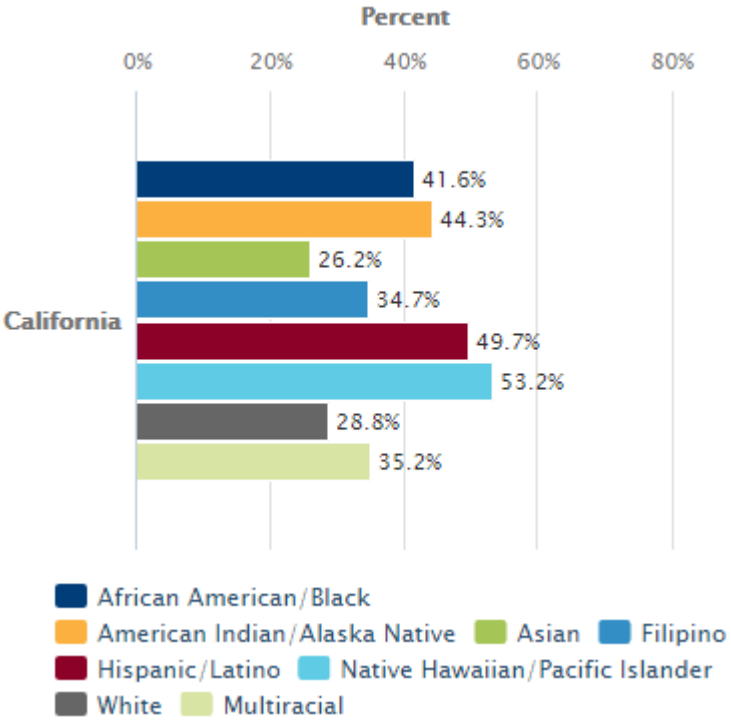
Compared with children at a healthy weight, children with obesity are at higher risk for a range of health problems, including asthma, high blood pressure, high cholesterol, and type 2 diabetes; they also are more likely to become obese as adults. In addition, childhood obesity is linked to social and emotional difficulties, such as anxiety, depression, stigmatization, bullying, and low self-esteem. Obesity's impact also extends beyond the individual. U.S. medical care costs related to adult obesity have been estimated at about $190 billion annually; in California, estimates indicate that a 5% reduction in average adult BMI could save more than $80 billion in obesity-related health costs by 2030.

Many factors contribute to childhood obesity and overweight. The rise has been attributed to changes in food environments that make non-nutritious "junk" food and beverages more available, affordable, and appealing, as well as social and environmental changes that have reduced physical activity among children—e.g., increased sedentary screen time, less physical education, neighborhoods that do not promote walking or riding bikes, and decreased safe places for children to play.

How Children Are Faring

In 2019, 41% of 5th graders, 40% of 7th graders, and 38% of 9th graders in California had a body mass index or body fat percentage higher than state standards for body composition, figures that have remained relatively stable since 2014. In each grade level, the percentage of boys statewide who are overweight or obese is consistently higher than the percentage of girls.

The share of students who are overweight or



Definition: Percentage of public school students in grades 5, 7, and 9 with body composition above the "Healthy Fitness Zone" of the FitnessGram assessment, by race/ethnicity and grade level (e.g., in 2019, 49.7% of Hispanic/Latino 5th graders in California were overweight or obese).
Data Source: California Dept. of Education, Physical Fitness Testing Research Files (Jan. 2020).

Students Who Are Overweight or Obese, by Gender and Grade Level: 2019

California	Percent		
Gender	Grade 5	Grade 7	Grade 9
Female	37.3%	37.7%	36.3%
Male	45.0%	42.1%	39.2%

Definition: Percentage of public school students in grades 5, 7, and 9 with body composition above the "Healthy Fitness Zone" of the FitnessGram assessment, by gender and grade level (e.g., in 2019, 37.3% of female 5th graders in California were overweight or obese).
Data Source: California Dept. of Education, Physical Fitness Testing Research Files (Jan. 2020).

obese varies widely by region and race/ethnicity. For example, the percentage of 5th graders who were overweight or obese in 2019 ranged from 24% to 55% across counties with data, and from less than 5% to more than 75% across school districts. In the same period, 50% of Hispanic/Latino 5th graders statewide were overweight or obese, compared with fewer than 30% of their Asian and white peers.

View references for this text and additional research on this topic:
https://kidsdata.org/topic/61/weight/summary