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Kids of working mothers more overweight

http://www.breakingnewsenglish.com/1102/110206-working_mothers.html

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6th February, 2011

THE ARTICLE

From http://www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com/1102/110206-working_mothers.html

A new report has found that children of mothers who work are more likely to be overweight. The study says that the more the mother works, the heavier their children could be. The research is from the Institute of Child Health and Human Development in the USA. It looked at data on 990 children related to the number of hours mothers worked and the BMI (Body Mass Index) of their children. The children lived in ten different cities across the USA. Lead researcher Dr. Taryn Morrissey wrote that for every 5.3-month period the mother was employed, her child had a slight increase in BMI over the expected normal weight gain for a child in that age group. She said: "For a child of average height, this is equivalent to a gain in weight of nearly one pound [0.45kg] every five months."

More than 70 per cent of American mothers with young children work. Dr. Morrissey stated she did not want working mothers to be alarmed at the research, saying: "This is not a reason for moms to feel guilty. It's not maternal employment per se that's the issue. It's an underlying environmental factor that leads to this association." She did not elaborate and say what these factors might be. One for older children could be that they eat too much junk food. Kids in grades five and six are more likely to choose what they eat and therefore have more fast food. One surprising finding in the research was that there was no link between weight gain and changes in the level of physical activity of children whose mothers worked and those whose mothers stayed at home.

WARM-UPS

1. BEING OVERWEIGHT: Walk around the class and talk to other students about being overweight. Change partners often. Sit with your first partner(s) and share your findings.

2. CHAT: In pairs / groups, decide which of these topics or words from the article are most interesting and which are most boring.

report / being overweight / institute / data / BMI / researcher / weight gain / height / young children / alarmed / feel guilty / environmental factors / junk food / links

Have a chat about the topics you liked. Change topics and partners frequently.

3. WORKING MOTHERS: Good or bad? Complete this table with your partner(s). Change partners and share what you wrote. Change and share again.

	For the mother	For the child
Income		
Food		
Discipline		
Love		
Independence		
Safety		

4. AT HOME: Students A **strongly** believe mothers should stay at home to raise their children; Students B **strongly** believe this isn't necessary. Change partners again and talk about your conversations.

5. HOME ALONE: What are the bad things about children being at home alone? Rank these and share your rankings with your partner. Put the worst things at the top. Change partners and share your rankings again.

- poor food
- accidents in the house
- watching TV all day
- strangers knocking on the door
- less family support
- boredom
- higher electricity bills
- lack of discipline

6. OVERWEIGHT: Spend one minute writing down all of the different words you associate with the word 'overweight'. Share your words with your partner(s) and talk about them. Together, put the words into different categories.

BEFORE READING / LISTENING

From http://www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com/1102/110206-working_mothers.html

1. TRUE / FALSE: Read the headline. Guess if a-h below are true (T) or false (F).

- | | |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------|
| a. A report says mothers who work are more likely to be overweight. | T / F |
| b. The report looked at information on just under 1,000 children. | T / F |
| c. The report looked at children in all U.S. states. | T / F |
| d. Children on average gain a kilo a month if the mother works. | T / F |
| e. Under three-quarters of American mothers of small children work. | T / F |
| f. The report author says mothers should not feel guilty. | T / F |
| g. The author discussed reasons why kids of working mums gain weight. | T / F |
| h. The report identifies a link between weight gain and physical activity. | T / F |

2. SYNONYM MATCH: Match the following synonyms from the article.

- | | |
|--------------|-------------------|
| 1. likely | a. considerations |
| 2. data | b. average |
| 3. slight | c. worried |
| 4. normal | d. information |
| 5. gain | e. connection |
| 6. alarmed | f. put on |
| 7. factors | g. probable |
| 8. elaborate | h. conclusion |
| 9. finding | i. explain |
| 10. link | j. small |

3. PHRASE MATCH: (Sometimes more than one choice is possible.)

- | | |
|-------------------------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1. more likely to | a. guilty |
| 2. It looked at data | b. of nearly one pound |
| 3. related to the number of | c. gain for a child |
| 4. the expected normal weight | d. of physical activity |
| 5. this is equivalent to a gain in weight | e. factor |
| 6. she did not want working | f. be overweight |
| 7. feel | g. in the research |
| 8. an underlying environmental | h. mothers to be alarmed |
| 9. One surprising finding | i. hours mothers worked |
| 10. changes in the level | j. on 990 children |

WHILE READING / LISTENING

From http://www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com/1102/110206-working_mothers.html

GAP FILL: Put the words into the gaps in the text.

A new report has (1) _____ that children of mothers who work are more likely to be overweight. The study says that the more the mother works, the (2) _____ their children could be. The research is from the Institute of Child Health and Human Development in the USA. It looked at (3) _____ on 990 children related to the number of hours mothers worked and the BMI (Body Mass (4) _____) of their children. The children lived in ten different cities across the USA. Lead researcher Dr. Taryn Morrissey wrote that for every 5.3-month (5) _____ the mother was employed, her child had a (6) _____ increase in BMI over the expected normal weight (7) _____ with for a child in that age group. She said: "For a child of average height, this is equivalent to a gain in weight of (8) _____ one pound [0.45kg] every five months."

slight

Index

heavier

gain

nearly

found

period

data

More than 70 per cent of American mothers with young children work. Dr. Morrissey (9) _____ she did not want working mothers to be alarmed at the research, saying: "This is not a (10) _____ for moms to feel guilty. It's not maternal employment per se that's the (11) _____. It's an underlying environmental factor that leads to this association." She did not (12) _____ and say what these factors might be. One for older children could be that they eat too much (13) _____ food. Kids in grades five and six are more likely to choose what they eat and therefore have more fast food. One surprising (14) _____ in the research was that there was no (15) _____ between weight gain and changes in the (16) _____ of physical activity of children whose mothers worked and those whose mothers stayed at home.

issue

link

stated

junk

level

reason

elaborate

finding

LISTENING – Listen and fill in the gaps

From http://www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com/1102/110206-working_mothers.html

A new report has found that children of mothers _____ to be overweight. The study says that the more the mother works, the heavier _____. The research is from the Institute of Child Health and Human Development in the USA. It looked at data on 990 children _____ hours mothers worked and the BMI (Body Mass Index) of their children. The children lived in ten different cities across the USA. Lead researcher Dr. Taryn Morrissey wrote that for every 5.3-_____ was employed, her child had a slight increase in BMI _____ weight gain for a child in that age group. She said: "For a child of average height, _____ a gain in weight of nearly one pound [0.45kg] every five months."

More than 70 per cent of American mothers with young children work. Dr. Morrissey stated she did not want working mothers _____ research, saying: "This is not a reason for moms to feel guilty. It's not maternal employment per se that's the issue. It's an underlying environmental _____ association." She did not elaborate and say _____ be. One for older children could be that they eat too much junk food. Kids in grades five and six are _____ what they eat and therefore have more fast food. One surprising finding in the research was that there was no link between _____ in the level of physical activity of children whose mothers _____ mothers stayed at home.

AFTER READING / LISTENING

From http://www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com/1102/110206-working_mothers.html

1. WORD SEARCH: Look in your dictionary / computer to find collocates, other meanings, information, synonyms ... for the words 'weight' and 'gain'.

weight	gain
---------------	-------------

- Share your findings with your partners.
- Make questions using the words you found.
- Ask your partner / group your questions.

2. ARTICLE QUESTIONS: Look back at the article and write down some questions you would like to ask the class about the text.

- Share your questions with other classmates / groups.
- Ask your partner / group your questions.

3. GAP FILL: In pairs / groups, compare your answers to this exercise. Check your answers. Talk about the words from the activity. Were they new, interesting, worth learning...?

4. VOCABULARY: Circle any words you do not understand. In groups, pool unknown words and use dictionaries to find their meanings.

5. TEST EACH OTHER: Look at the words below. With your partner, try to recall how they were used in the text:

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• likely• heavier• index• ten• slight• height	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 70• alarmed• issue• junk• surprising• level
--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

STUDENT BEING OVERWEIGHT SURVEY

From http://www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com/1102/110206-working_mothers.html

Write five GOOD questions about being overweight in the table. Do this in pairs. Each student must write the questions on his / her own paper. When you have finished, interview other students. Write down their answers.

	STUDENT 1 _____	STUDENT 2 _____	STUDENT 3 _____
Q.1.			
Q.2.			
Q.3.			
Q.4.			
Q.5.			

- Now return to your original partner and share and talk about what you found out. Change partners often.
- Make mini-presentations to other groups on your findings.

BEING OVERWEIGHT DISCUSSION

STUDENT A's QUESTIONS (Do not show these to student B)

- a) What did you think when you read the headline?
- b) What springs to mind when you hear the word 'overweight'?
- c) Do you ever worry about putting on too much weight?
- d) What do you think of the research in this story?
- e) Do you think this research is also true in other countries?
- f) What do you think of studies and findings like this one?
- g) How big is the problem of overweight children in your country?
- h) Do you think this study could change the way working mothers organize their life?
- i) What impact might a working father have on children's weight?
- j) Do you do anything to control your weight?

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BEING OVERWEIGHT DISCUSSION

STUDENT B's QUESTIONS (Do not show these to student A)

- a) Did you like reading this article?
- b) What do you think of 70% of American mothers with young children working?
- c) Should alarm bells be ringing for working mothers because of this study?
- d) Should working mums feel guilty if their career is making their children overweight?
- e) Do you think working mums were aware of this problem?
- f) What can people do to reverse this problem?
- g) Do you think this situation will get better or worse?
- h) Why would kids of stay-at-home mothers be thinner?
- i) Should one parent stay at home?
- j) What questions would you like to ask Dr. Taryn Morrissey?

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LANGUAGE – MULTIPLE CHOICE

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More than 70 per cent of American mothers with young children work. Dr. Morrissey stated she did not want working mothers to be (7) ____ at the research, saying: "This is not a reason for moms to feel guilty. It's not (8) ____ employment per se that's the issue. It's an underlying environmental factor that (9) ____ to this association." She did not elaborate and say what these factors might be. One for older children could be that they eat too much junk food. Kids in grades five and six are more likely to (10) ____ what they eat and therefore have more fast food. One (11) ____ finding in the research was that there was no link between weight gain and changes (12) ____ the level of physical activity of children whose mothers worked and those whose mothers stayed at home.

Put the correct words from the table below in the above article.

- | | | | | |
|-----|---------------|---------------|----------------|---------------|
| 1. | (a) likeable | (b) liked | (c) liking | (d) likely |
| 2. | (a) heavy | (b) heavier | (c) heave | (d) heaviest |
| 3. | (a) related | (b) relation | (c) relates | (d) relatives |
| 4. | (a) point | (b) during | (c) period | (d) stop |
| 5. | (a) slights | (b) slightly | (c) slight | (d) slit |
| 6. | (a) pain | (b) gain | (c) main | (d) vain |
| 7. | (a) alarmed | (b) alarming | (c) alarms | (d) alarm |
| 8. | (a) matrimony | (b) maternity | (c) mothered | (d) maternal |
| 9. | (a) lead | (b) leads | (c) leading | (d) leaded |
| 10. | (a) choice | (b) chooses | (c) choosing | (d) choose |
| 11. | (a) surprise | (b) surprised | (c) surprising | (d) surmise |
| 12. | (a) in | (b) of | (c) at | (d) by |

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HOMework

1. VOCABULARY EXTENSION: Choose several of the words from the text. Use a dictionary or Google's search field (or another search engine) to build up more associations / collocations of each word.

2. INTERNET: Search the Internet and find out more about being overweight. Share what you discover with your partner(s) in the next lesson.

3. WORKING MOTHERS: Make a poster about working mothers. Show your work to your classmates in the next lesson. Did you all have similar things?

4. KIDS: Write a magazine article about kids whose mother works. Include imaginary interviews with them about what they think of their mothers working.

Read what you wrote to your classmates in the next lesson. Write down any new words and expressions you hear from your partner(s).

5. LETTER: Write a letter to Dr. Taryn Morrissey. Ask her three questions about being her research. Give her three of your opinions on working mothers. Read your letter to your partner(s) in your next lesson. Your partner(s) will answer your questions.

ANSWERS

TRUE / FALSE:

- a. F b. T c. F d. F e. T f. T g. F h. F

SYNONYM MATCH:

- | | |
|--------------|-------------------|
| 1. likely | a. probable |
| 2. data | b. information |
| 3. slight | c. small |
| 4. normal | d. average |
| 5. gain | e. put on |
| 6. alarmed | f. worried |
| 7. factors | g. considerations |
| 8. elaborate | h. explain |
| 9. finding | i. conclusion |
| 10. link | j. connection |

PHRASE MATCH:

- | | |
|-------------------------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1. more likely to | a. be overweight |
| 2. It looked at data | b. on 990 children |
| 3. related to the number of | c. hours mothers worked |
| 4. the expected normal weight | d. gain for a child |
| 5. this is equivalent to a gain in weight | e. of nearly one pound |
| 6. she did not want working | f. mothers to be alarmed |
| 7. feel | g. guilty |
| 8. an underlying environmental | h. factor |
| 9. One surprising finding | i. in the research |
| 10. changes in the level | j. of physical activity |

GAP FILL:

Kids of working mothers more overweight

A new report has (1) **found** that children of mothers who work are more likely to be overweight. The study says that the more the mother works, the (2) **heavier** their children could be. The research is from the Institute of Child Health and Human Development in the USA. It looked at (3) **data** on 990 children related to the number of hours mothers worked and the BMI (Body Mass (4) **Index**) of their children. The children lived in ten different cities across the USA. Lead researcher Dr. Taryn Morrissey wrote that for every 5.3-month (5) **period** the mother was employed, her child had a (6) **slight** increase in BMI over the expected normal weight (7) **gain for** a child in that age group. She said: "For a child of average height, this is equivalent to a gain in weight of (8) **nearly** one pound [0.45kg] every five months."

More than 70 per cent of American mothers with young children work. Dr. Morrissey (9) **stated** she did not want working mothers to be alarmed at the research, saying: "This is not a (10) **reason** for moms to feel guilty. It's not maternal employment per se that's the (11) **issue**. It's an underlying environmental factor that leads to this association." She did not (12) **elaborate** and say what these factors might be. One for older children could be that they eat too much (13) **junk** food. Kids in grades five and six are more likely to choose what they eat and therefore have more fast food. One surprising (14) **finding** in the research was that there was no (15) **link** between weight gain and changes in the (16) **level** of physical activity of children whose mothers worked and those whose mothers stayed at home.

LANGUAGE WORK

- 1 - d 2 - b 3 - a 4 - c 5 - c 6 - b 7 - a 8 - d 9 - b 10 - d 11 - c 12 - a

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