



NCCOR Member Call

August 19, 2026 | 2:00 p.m. ET



Building Evidence and Advancing Practice for Healthy Children, Families, and Communities

Agenda

- Steering Committee updates
- Spotlight: NCCOR Rapid Infant Growth Workshop Preview
 - *Olivia Giordano Kean, FHI 360*
- Workgroup and communication updates
- Emerging opportunities for NCCOR
- Calendar reminders

Steering Committee Updates

- NCCOR is pleased to welcome two new Steering Committee Members!
 - Jane Simoni, PhD, Director, Office of Behavioral and Social Sciences Research, NIH
 - Sydney O'Connor, PhD, Health Scientist Administrator, OBSSR, NIH
- NIH OBSSR is actively working on a 6-month extension for the NCCOR contract for October- March.

Steering Committee Updates

- September Member Meeting
 - **Wednesday, September 16** | Washington, DC and virtual
 - Theme: Exploring the evidence to action pipeline with CORD 3.0
 - Featuring:
 - Research Panel: CORD researchers will discuss intervention development, trial outcomes, and key lessons learned.
 - Lauren Fiechtner, MD, *Massachusetts General Hospital*
 - Denise Wilfley, PhD, *Washington University in St. Louis*
 - Kate Heelan, PhD, *University of Nebraska Kearney*
 - CDC Grantee Panel: DNPAO grantees will share experiences implementing CORD interventions, including barriers, facilitators, and ongoing technical assistance needs.
 - Barbara Mintz, MS, RD and Kerri Likakis, MS, RD, *RWJ Barnabas Health*
 - Twarnisha Stokes, *Prince George's County Health Department*
 - Anne Lee, MEd, RD, CDCES, *Touro University California*

Spotlight: NCCOR Rapid Infant Growth Workshop Preview

Olivia Giordano Kean

NCCOR Coordinating Center

Background

- There is strong and growing clinical and public health interest in identifying growth that is either faster or slower than expected during the first two years of life, given evidence linking early growth trajectories to later obesity and chronic disease risk.
- There is currently no consensus on how best to define, measure, and longitudinally track rapid infant growth using existing growth standards, nor clarity about which specific period of rapid weight gain in infancy is most predictive of later risk.

Rationale

- A measure of rapid infant growth may improve clinical care and research in several ways:
 - The measure may serve as an intermediate outcome in evaluations of obesity prevention interventions. For example, a measure could allow earlier evaluation of the potential effectiveness of an intervention on long-term obesity and associated adverse health outcomes.
 - The measure may serve as predictor of longer-term outcomes. For example, improved understanding of genetic and environmental predictors of long-term outcomes can inform strategies for intervention.
 - The measure may serve to prioritize interventions targeted at children at high risk for obesity or related adverse health outcomes.

Target Population

- This workshop is specifically focused on term infants who were born at an appropriate weight for gestational age (AGA). In other words, we are focused on children who are born in a typical range and then have rapid growth, rather than catch-up growth as the term is currently commonly used.

Workshop Goals

- The workshop aims to:
 - Assess what existing measures of infant growth can and cannot tell us.
 - Evaluate which metrics are most appropriate for identifying and tracking rapid infant growth.
 - Define the critical unanswered questions needed to move toward consistent, evidence-based approaches for clinical practice, research, and population health surveillance.

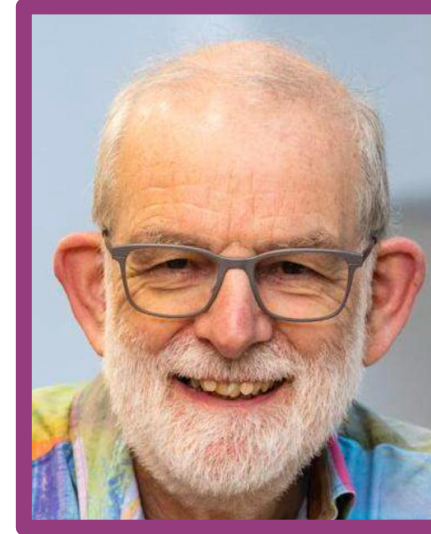
Pre-workshop Webinar

- Last week, NCCOR hosted a pre-workshop webinar which provided workshop participants with a shared understanding of growth standards and references, including their development, purpose, and appropriate uses, as well as to describe the workshop structure and breakout discussion questions.
- The webinar featured presentations on the development of growth standards and references, as well as the key evidence gaps and research questions around defining and measuring rapid infant growth.

Pre-workshop Webinar Speakers



Babette Zemel, PhD
Biological Anthropologist
Professor of Pediatrics
Children's Hospital of Philadelphia
The University of Pennsylvania
Perelman School of Medicine



Tim Cole, CBE FMedSci
Statistician
University College London
Great Ormond Street
Institute of Child Health

Webinar Takeaways

Dr. Zemel:

- There is a difference between growth standards (prescriptive) and growth references (descriptive).
- Feeding mode (breastfeeding vs. formula feeding) affects early growth patterns.
- The use of growth velocity standards is very sensitive to accuracy and timing of the measurements used to estimate growth increments.
- The use of weight-for-length vs BMI in early infancy may over-diagnose infants at risk for high BMI by age 24 months.

Webinar Takeaways

Dr. Cole:

- Growth charts are useful for assessing weight but not for assessing weight gain.
- There is an important need for useful and accessible quantitative methods.
- Three current methods have pros and cons:
 - WHO growth velocity standard: gives valid z-scores but cumbersome, many exclusions, and little used in practice
 - Rapid weight gain: simple to calculate but hard to interpret, and poorly correlated with weight velocity z-score
 - Generalised conditional gain: conditional velocity z-score, simple to calculate, no time interval restrictions
 - Also has limitations: notably access to correlation surface
 - But has potential to be used more widely

Workshop Agenda

- The two-day workshop will feature three sets of presentations featuring international experts in rapid infant growth and early-life obesity risk, including clinical and applied researchers and statisticians
- Each presentation is followed by breakout discussions designed to generate discussion around the following overarching question:
 - What are the key research questions that, if answered, could inform future prevention-focused guidance on early-life growth assessment and help establish a clearer path forward for research related to rapid infant growth and long-term obesity risk?

Panel 1: Researchers in Rapid Infant Growth & Early-Life Obesity Risk - Biological Perspective



Moderator: **Carrie Daymont, MD, MSCE, FAAP**
Penn State College of
Medicine



Ken Ong, PhD
Cambridge University



Ellen Demerath, PhD
University of Minnesota
School of Public Health



Julie Lumeng, MD,
University of Michigan

Panel 1 Breakout Discussion Questions

1. Which time periods are most useful for evaluation of rapid infant growth?
 - a) Are there particular time periods that should be most prioritized, given stronger associations with long-term outcomes?
 - b) Are there particular time periods that should *not* be used to infer appropriate vs. inappropriate growth?
2. Given what we know about biology, how do we know when infants are exceeding or fulfilling their growth potential? In some term AGA infants, could rapid growth represent a transition to their extrauterine growth potential?
3. What adiposity measures/proxies are available? How do their strengths and weaknesses align with what is needed to evaluate infant growth?

Presentation 2: Research in Rapid Infant Growth & Early-Life Obesity Risk - Statistical Perspective



Moderator: **Charles Wood, MD,
MPH, FAAP**
Duke University School of Medicine



Ahmed Elhakeem, MPH, PhD
University of Bristol

Presentation 2 Breakout Discussion Questions

1. How do we balance model accuracy and feasibility in research and clinical settings based on density of data, interpretability, etc.?
 - a) Are there simpler measures that would be feasible and meaningful in clinical settings?
 - b) Do different types of studies need different approaches?
2. What data are needed to further evaluate existing methods or develop new methods?
3. While we wait for additional research, what are the benefits and risks of using an increase in WFAz or WFLz >0.67 for research or clinical purposes?

Panel 3: Clinicians & Applied Researchers: Use of Rapid Infant Growth Measures in Practice



Moderator: **Kirsten Herrick, PhD, MSc**
National Institutes
of Health



Ian Paul, MD, MSc
Penn State College
of Medicine



Cynthia Ogden, PhD, MRP
Centers for Disease Control
and Prevention



Sandy Hassink, MD
American Academy of
Pediatrics

Panel 3 Breakout Discussion Questions

1. What features of a measure or measures are needed to support the following uses:
 - a) Clinical research?
 - b) Population surveillance?
 - c) Clinical care?
2. At what age(s) should we evaluate longer-term outcomes for which rapid infant growth may be a predictor? How do we balance the practical need for evaluation at younger ages and the potential lack of durability of effects from weight- or obesity-related interventions?

Final Breakout Discussion Questions

- A final breakout session organized by perspectives (clinical research, research, and methods) to prioritize the questions discussed during the previous breakouts and discuss features of feasible studies to address the questions
 1. What are the key *answerable* research questions needed to support further development of one or more measures of rapid infant growth?
 2. What are features of 1-3 feasible studies that would address these questions?

If you are interested in attending the workshop, please email Olivia at ogiordanokean@fhi360.org.

Workgroup and Communication Updates

Meher Din

NCCOR Coordinating Center

Workgroup Updates

- **Obesity-Related Policy Research in the U.S. (OPUS) Learning Network:** The next meeting of the OPUS Learning Network will be on Thursday, August 27 where grantees will discuss how to create meaningful outputs. The group is preparing for its retreat in September.
- **Research Gaps in Treatment of Pediatric Obesity with Obesity Medications:** The white paper is being designed in the next few weeks. The CC is aiming for a September release.

Workgroup Updates

- **Sport and Youth Well-Being:** This workgroup is working to finalize the July workshop summary and incorporate participant feedback into the youth sports quality framework.
- **Rapid Infant Growth:** This workgroup is meeting with speakers and developing materials in preparation for the September workshop. They held the pre-workshop webinar last week.

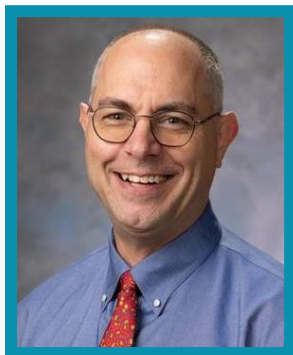
Communications Updates

- NCCOR Youth Sport Workshop
 - The recordings and slides from NCCOR's recent Youth Sport Workshop are now available online. The workshop introduced a draft framework for quality youth sports, showcased programs that reflect its key dimensions, and gathered input to refine the framework and inform future research and practice.

**DEFINING QUALITY YOUTH SPORTS ENVIRONMENTS:
A Conceptual Framework and Examples from the Field**

Communications Updates

- The TEAM UP panel discussion from the February Member Meeting is now available on the Member Hub. Their results were recently published in *JAMA Pediatrics*. Panelists shared findings from a randomized trial comparing Family-Based Treatment with Enhanced Standard of Care for children ages 6–15 with obesity, highlighting outcomes from a family-centered obesity treatment approach evaluated across four states from 2019–2024.



**Stephen R. Cook, MD,
MPH, FAAP, FTOS**
Nationwide Children's Hospital



Jeanne Lindros, MPH
AAP Institute for Healthy
Childhood Weight



**Amanda Staiano, PhD,
MPP, FTOS**
Pennington Biomedical
Research Center



Denise E. Wilfley, PhD, FTOS
Washington University School of
Medicine



Emerging Opportunities for NCCOR

Calendar Reminders

September	October	November	December
9/1-9/2 Rapid Infant Growth Workshop 9/14* Obesity Treatment Whitepaper on NCCOR website 9/16 NCCOR Member Meeting 9/17 Steering Committee Retreat 9/18 OPUS Grantee Learning Network Retreat	10/2 Innovations in Obesity Prevention, Assessment, and Treatment Forum at the American Academy of Pediatrics Annual Meeting 10/21 NCCOR Member Call	11/14 Symposium at ObesityWeek: From Gaps to Guidance: Advancing Clinical Research in Pediatric Obesity Pharmacotherapy 11/16 TOS/NCCOR Collaborative Symposium at ObesityWeek: Assessing Capacity to Address Obesity Using Whole of Systems Approaches for Cancer Prevention and Control 11/18 NCCOR Member Call	12/16 NCCOR Member Call

* Tentative release



Questions?