Revisiting Rapid Infant Growth: Assessing Growth in Children Under Age 2

NCCOR Workshop Speaker Bios
September 1–2, 2026

Co-Chairs

Carrie Daymont, MD, MSCE, FAAP, is an associate professor of pediatrics and public health sciences at Penn State College of Medicine and practices as a hospital pediatrician at Penn State Golisano Children's Hospital. Her research centers on growth assessment in young children, anthropometric data quality, and developing tools to improve growth research. She developed the growthcleanr software package, which automates preparation of anthropometric data for analysis. She studies children with multiple types of atypical growth, including obesity, growth faltering, and macrocephaly. She has a particular interest in how the use of different growth charts and methods of analyzing growth trajectories can affect growth assessment for individual children and populations.

Charles Wood, MD, MPH, FAAP, is an associate professor of pediatrics and population health Sciences at Duke University, where he practices as a general pediatrician. His research focuses on primary care-based interventions to prevent obesity during early childhood. His approaches include behavior change strategies, clinical risk prediction tools, and electronic health record clinical decision support. He examines the interactions between appetitive behaviors, feeding strategies, and childhood adiposity to develop pragmatic interventions in the primary care setting. Dr. Wood is involved in teaching and clinical care in the primary care and inpatient newborn settings. He maintains broad engagement in both observational and interventional research relevant to the practice of evidence-based pediatric primary care.

Revisiting Rapid Infant Growth: Assessing Growth in Children Under Age 2

Speakers

Ahmed Elhakeem, MPH, PhD, is a statistical epidemiologist and senior research fellow at Bristol Medical School, University of Bristol. His research develops and applies statistical methods for describing physical and mental health trajectories across the life course, including the role of early life factors and the effects of trajectories on later health outcomes. He currently leads work on methods for analyzing pubertal growth, supported by an MRC New Investigator Research Grant. Dr. Elhakeem also leads a multinational cohort collaboration within the Assisted Reproductive Technology and Health (A.R.T-Health) Partnership, investigating the effects of assisted reproductive technology on offspring health. He previously worked on the LongITools project (environmental exposures and health trajectories) and the LifeCycle project, helping to establish the EU Child Cohort Network.

Ellen Demerath, PhD, is a researcher at the interface of nutrition, human biology, and child development, and seeks to understand how maternal and early-life nutritional factors alter health trajectories across the life course. Dr. Demerath's current studies focus on maternal nutrition and gestational diabetes in shaping lactation and human milk composition and identifying nutritional indicators of preterm infant growth that predict neurodevelopmental outcomes. She is a senior investigator with nationally and internationally recognized expertise in the developmental origins of health and disease. She has published over 200 peer-reviewed articles and book chapters on nutrition, obesity, breastfeeding, and child growth and development. Dr. Demerath's research has been continuously funded by the National Institutes of Health since 2005. She has served on federal expert panels on nutrition during pregnancy, breastfeeding and human milk, and infant adiposity sponsored by the National Institutes of Health and the National Academy of Sciences.

Revisiting Rapid Infant Growth: Assessing Growth in Children Under Age 2

Alyson Goodman, MD, MPH, is Chief of the Obesity Prevention and Control Branch in the Division of Nutrition, Physical Activity, & Obesity at CDC. She is a board-certified pediatrician and medical epidemiologist, and a Captain in the U.S. Public Health Service Commissioned Corps. In Dr. Goodman's 16 years of experience at CDC, she has authored over 65 strategic papers in applied epidemiology of obesity, nutrition, and child health. She oversees a multidisciplinary branch that focuses on national, state, and local surveillance, including analyses of electronic health record data, applied research, and public health practice. Dr. Goodman's work focuses on increasing access to evidence-based interventions for child obesity, with special interest in clinical quality improvement and implementation science.

Sandy Hassink, MD, has devoted her professional career caring and advocating for children with obesity and is the current medical director of the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) Institute for Healthy Childhood Weight, which focuses on translating research into practice for pediatric health care providers, families, and children and advancing the field of pediatric obesity. Dr. Hassink has testified before Congress on childhood obesity, food insecurity and hunger, focusing on supporting the foundations of child health. She is a past board member and former president of the AAP and the past chair of the Institute for Medicaid Innovation Child and Adolescent Subcommittee, and a past member of the National Advisory Board. Dr. Hassink was the vice chair of the writing committee for the 2023 AAP Clinical Practice Guidelines on Evaluation and Treatment of Obesity in Children and Adolescents. Dr. Hassink began the weight management clinic at Nemours/AI DuPont Children's Hospital in 1988. She has collaborated in basic research efforts to identify pathophysiologic mechanisms of obesity, centering on the role of leptin, and has lectured widely in the field of pediatric obesity. In addition, she has authored *A Parent's Guide to Childhood Obesity*; *Pediatric Obesity: Prevention, Intervention, and Treatment Strategies for Primary Care*; and *Clinical Guide to Pediatric Weight Management and Obesity*.

Revisiting Rapid Infant Growth: Assessing Growth in Children Under Age 2

Kirsten Herrick, PhD, MSc, is a program director in the Health Behaviors Research Branch of the Behavioral Research Program in NCI's Division of Cancer Control and Population Sciences. In this capacity, she leads a portfolio focused on the role of nutrition, alcohol use, obesity, and contextual measures from cancer prevention through survivorship. Her portfolio leverages innovative measurement methods and analytic approaches, including AI-enabled dietary assessment, biomarkers, mobile tools, and wearables, to improve the rigor and reach of cancer-related behavioral research. Dr. Herrick oversees the Automated Self-Administered 24-h Dietary Assessment Tool (ASA24). This free web-based tool enables multiple, automatically coded, self-administered 24-hour recalls and/or single or multi-day food records. She also oversees the Diet History Questionnaire and serves as project scientist for the NIH Common Fund's Nutrition for Precision Health.

Julie Lumeng, MD, is the Thomas P Borders Family Research Professor of Child Behavior and Development in the Department of Pediatrics at the University of Michigan Medical School and Professor of Nutritional Sciences at the University of Michigan School of Public Health. She trained as a developmental-behavioral pediatrician. Her research focuses on the development of eating behavior in early childhood and infancy. Her work has been funded continuously by the NIH since 2005; she has also been funded by the American Heart Association and the US Department of Agriculture. Dr. Lumeng has led multiple large interdisciplinary teams, which have conducted observational studies, behavioral experiments in the laboratory, and randomized controlled trials in the community. She also serves as the principal investigator for the University of Michigan's NIH Clinical and Translational Science Award, which facilitates the quality, efficiency, and innovation of clinical and translational research across the university. She also serves as the associate dean for clinical research and associate vice president for clinical and human subjects research at the University of Michigan.

Revisiting Rapid Infant Growth: Assessing Growth in Children Under Age 2

Cynthia Ogden, PhD, MRP, has spent over two decades in the NHANES group at CDC. Dr. Ogden has become an internationally recognized expert in nutritional and obesity epidemiology. She was a member of the team that developed the 2000 CDC pediatric growth charts that are used to define obesity in US children and oversaw the development of the CDC Extended BMI-for-age growth charts. She has published more than 200 papers, government documents, and book chapters on topics in nutrition, diet, obesity, growth, and physical activity. For four years, Dr. Ogden was an associate editor for *Obesity* and is currently on the editorial board of the *Journal of the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics*. She joined CDC as an EIS Officer after a post-doctoral year in the Nutrition Division at the New York State Department of Health. She has worked on nutrition-related projects for the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations. Currently, she is an adjunct professor at the George Washington University Milken Institute School of Public Health, advising students and teaching courses on nutritional and obesity epidemiology.

Ken Ong, PhD, is professor of pediatric epidemiology at the Institute of Metabolic Science (IMS) Epidemiology and Department of Paediatrics, University of Cambridge, UK. His PhD studies in Oxford and Cambridge investigated genetic and environmental influences on infant and childhood growth and their relevance to later obesity and cardio-metabolic disease risks in large birth cohort studies. His research has identified trajectories of rapid infant weight gain, growth and early pubertal timing as determinants of obesity and related disease and now examines the genetic, endocrine, and behavioral mechanisms that underlie these links. He works closely with other research teams in Cambridge and beyond, developing and testing early life interventions to prevent childhood obesity. He is also a consultant pediatric endocrinologist, leads a regional service for childhood obesity at Cambridge University Hospitals NHS Trust, and chairs the UK Scientific Advisory Committee on Nutrition's Subgroup on Maternal and Child Nutrition.

Revisiting Rapid Infant Growth: Assessing Growth in Children Under Age 2

Ian Paul, MD, MSc, is university professor of pediatrics and public health sciences at Penn State College of Medicine and serves as chief of the Division of Academic General Pediatrics and vice chair of Faculty Affairs at Penn State Health Golisano Children's Hospital. He earned his BA from Franklin & Marshall College, received his medical degree from Penn State College of Medicine, and completed his pediatric residency at Duke University. A general pediatrician and nationally recognized clinical and health services researcher, Dr. Paul has maintained more than 25 years of continuous federal research funding. His work focuses on primary preventive interventions for infants and families, childhood obesity prevention, maternal-child cardiovascular health, newborn care, breastfeeding, and pediatric therapeutics. He led pioneering studies demonstrating that early behavioral interventions can reduce infant weight gain and improve long-term health outcomes and developed foundational research on newborn weight loss patterns and breastfeeding. Dr. Paul is also internationally recognized for his research on pediatric cold treatments, cough and cold medications, and fever management. In recognition of his contributions to maternal and child health, he received the U.S. Maternal and Child Health Bureau Director's Award in 2019 and the Academic Pediatric Association's Research Award in 2022.