

# Ambrosia Kennedy, Nutrition & Hospitality Management and Dietetics

---

**University:** Alabama Agricultural & Mechanical University

**Year in School:** Senior

**Hometown:** Sacramento, CA

**Faculty Mentor:** Dr. Sara Gable, Human Development & Family Studies

**Funding Source:** Emerge Summer Internship and Graduate School Prep

## Childhood overweight, food intake, and physical activity among Whites, Blacks, and Hispanics

*Ambrosia Kennedy and Sara Gable*

Childhood overweight has tripled in the last three decades for children 6-11 years of age. Overweight children are at higher risk for health problems and psychosocial issues. Although studies show Black and Hispanic children more likely to be overweight than White children, behavioral and environmental factors are examined in this study for further comparison. The objective was to observe if food intake and physical activity are associated cross-sectionally with childhood overweight in 5th graders. Subjects were participants in the Early Childhood Longitudinal Study-Kindergarten Cohort. Children who were not in fifth grade and children without complete height and weight data were excluded. 8708 children participated in the current study. Children were directly weighed and measured and categorized as not overweight (BMI < 95th percentile) or overweight (BMI ≥ 95th percentile). Six groups of children were identified: White-not overweight (n=4815), White-overweight (n=1052), Black-not overweight (n=711), Black-overweight (n=274), Hispanic-not overweight (n=1342), and Hispanic-overweight (n=514). Children reported their weekly consumption of healthy and unhealthy foods, parents reported activity that occurred outside of school, and teachers reported activity at school. Results indicated differences in foods consumed and physical activity among the groups. Although child race by weight status effects were found for the amount of soda and fast foods consumed, differences were in an unexpected direction. Conversely, race and weight status effects for family meal frequency, child aerobic activity, and child television viewing were in the anticipated direction. For example, overweight Black, White, and Hispanic children watched more television than their non-overweight peers.