

Studies shows extra pounds may help later in life

Children who keep their baby fat longer may avoid obesity as adults

By Brenda C. Coleman
The Associated Press

CHICAGO — The earlier children lose their baby fat and reach the leanest point of their adolescent years, the more likely they will become obese, suggests a

study released Monday.

The finding held true regardless of whether children's parents were overweight, which is already known to be a strong indicator of a child's future size, researchers reported in the March issue of Pediatrics.

The new finding suggests something biologically important may be happening at about age 6, re-

searchers said.

In the report, researchers found that children who lose their baby fat and reach their thinnest point of childhood before age 5 are more than twice as likely to be obese adults as children who reach the thinnest point after age 5.

All children grow leaner after the first year of life until age 5 or 6, when they become fatter again,

noted researchers led by Dr. Robert D. Whitaker, a pediatrician at Children's Hospital Medical Center in Cincinnati.

"We don't know for sure, but ... it would be reasonable to expect that's a critical developmental period, just as it is for language development or capacity for listening to music or any of a number of things," Whitaker said.

Measure may loosen rules for church schools

The Washington bill would allow churches to staff schools with uncertified teachers

By Hal Spencer
The Associated Press

OLYMPIA — Churches could set up schools staffed by uncertified teachers who would be under no duty to teach basic skills if the governor signs a measure sent to him Monday.

Republican Senate passage came over objections that the bill would leave children vulnerable to bad teachers and extremist groups that might set up schools under the guise of religion.

But backers of the measure, HB2330, said church schools, including parochial schools, have a long history of educational excellence in the United States and have proven they don't need state

oversight. Parents should have the choice to send their children to unregulated religious schools, backers said.

The measure would allow churches to create "religiously affiliated exempt schools" free of certain rules and regulations imposed upon other private schools.

The church schools could hire teachers who were neither certified by the state nor supervised by a certified teacher and could offer curricula that did not meet state standards requiring the teaching of "certain basic skills."

The schools would not be required to provide the state with enrollment figures, but would have to meet the same health and safety regulations required of non-church schools.

Fellow Republicans in the House passed the bill by a wide margin two weeks ago. Democratic Gov. Gary Locke has not said if

he favors the measure, but fellow Democrats can be expected to ask him to veto it.

Before the 30-18 Senate vote for the measure, opponents, mostly Democrats, argued that the state is creating a new class of schools that could damage children.

"I think we should understand that what we're talking about is creating a whole new type of school here. There are no academic requirements, no certified teachers," said Sen. Julia Patterson, D-SeaTac.

But several proponents scoffed at the concerns, saying parents should be given the freedom to make judgments about the suitability of schools. They also said church schools continue to turn out well-educated youngsters.

"This bill allows parents to consider the risks and make the choice," said Sen. Harold Hochstatter, R-Moses Lake.

COMMUNITY BRIEFS

Woman's body found in river

Eugene police identified the body of a woman found in the Willamette River on Sunday. A police report said the body has been identified as that of Maya Wolf, 55, of Eugene.

According to the report, Wolf's body and that of a German Shepherd were found in the river near the Valley River bike path. The police report stated that investigators learned from a citizen that a woman matching Wolf's description was walking a dog similar to the one found in the river in Alton Baker Park around 11:40 a.m.

The police report also stated that the witness said he saw the dog swimming in the pond at Alton Baker Park as he jogged through the area.

Both the bodies of Wolf and her dog were located in the river about an hour after the jogger spotted them in the park area. The report also noted that autopsy results indicate both the victim and the dog died of asphyxiation due to fresh water drowning. Police believe the manner of death appears accidental.

—Compiled by Michael Burnham

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