

„Przybij Piątkę!”
„High five!”

Overweight and obesity
- a prevention programme for children in
grades I-III

Why overweight and obesity in children?

- Health and social consequences (i.a.: lower academic performance, low self esteem / mental health problems, ongoing discrimination)
- They are preventable!

Why in schools?

- It's where the problem manifests
- Good quality data is available

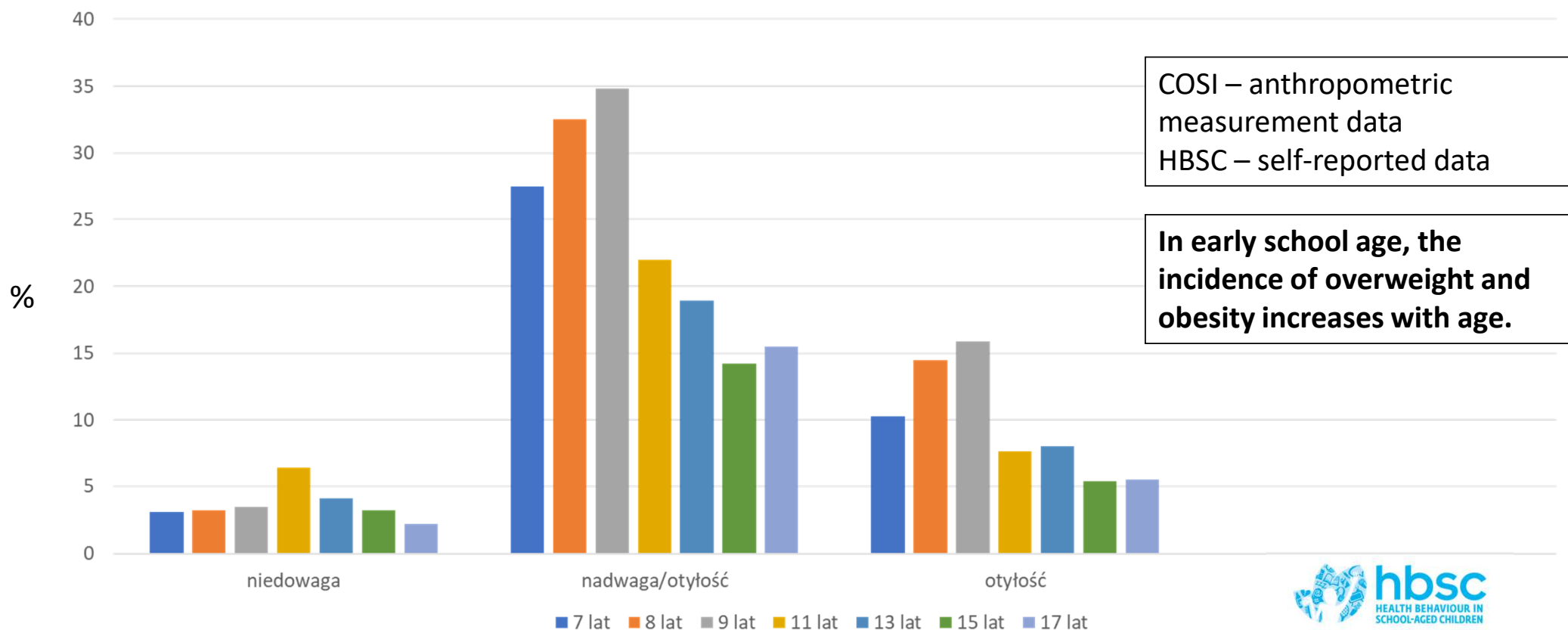
Children should enjoy
a special right to
health care



The growing incidence of
overweight and obesity
in children

Overweight and obesity in
children can lead to various
health and social problems,
both in the short-term and
long-term

Prevalence of underweight, overweight, and obesity among children and adolescents in Poland (COSI PL 2022/23, HBSC 2021/2022)





“High five!” 2023/2024 (a trial)

• **Study design:** Randomized controlled cluster trial

• **Sample:** N=402 students in grades 1-3 from 21 schools (N=175 experimental group/ N=227 control group)

• **Intervention strategy:** Family-Individual-School (FIS) model – emphasizes key interactions between the family, individual, and school contexts in shaping children's health behaviors. Targeted at the general population in early school years (universal level)

• **Program structure:** 5 scenarios for 2-hour classes + brochure and tasks for parents

• **Involvement:** school coordinator (usually the principal or school counselor, class teacher, nurse – cooperation + parents (tasks to be performed at home with the child))

• **Overall objective of the program:** to reduce the risk of overweight and obesity in early school age children and improve children's health behaviors by familiarizing children and parents with recommendations for a healthy lifestyle.

• **Overall expected effect in terms of biological parameters:** No negative change (percentile value) in relation to BMI

Physical activity fizyczna

Screen time control

Higiena Sleep hygiene

Proper nutrition

Strengthening positive
self-esteem and the ability
to recognise one's
strengths



• **Feedback from organizers:**

• “A very valuable program that should be continued in the coming years.”

• “The topics covered by the program are extremely necessary and important.”

• “A fantastic program for children that engages parents.”

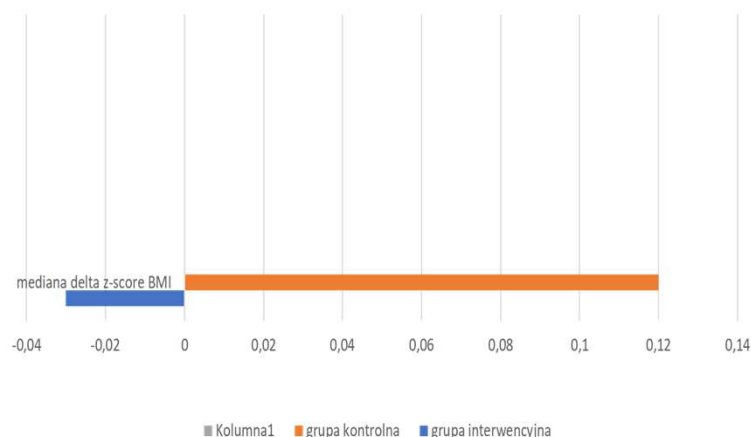
• “More educational materials for children and parents.”

• “Great program, the children are happy, knowledge combined with practice—100% absorbed ;)”

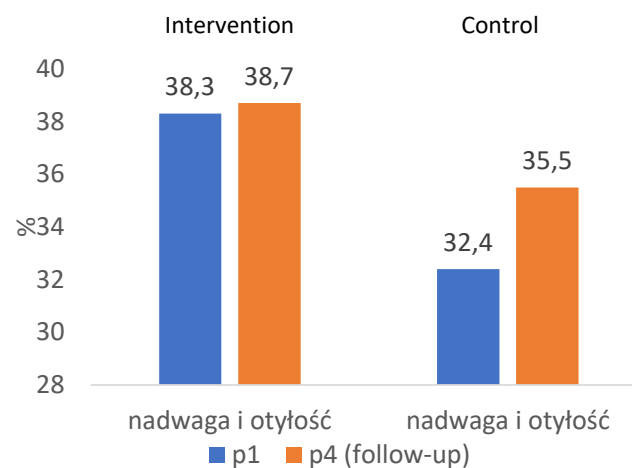
• “Very short time to conduct the classes.”



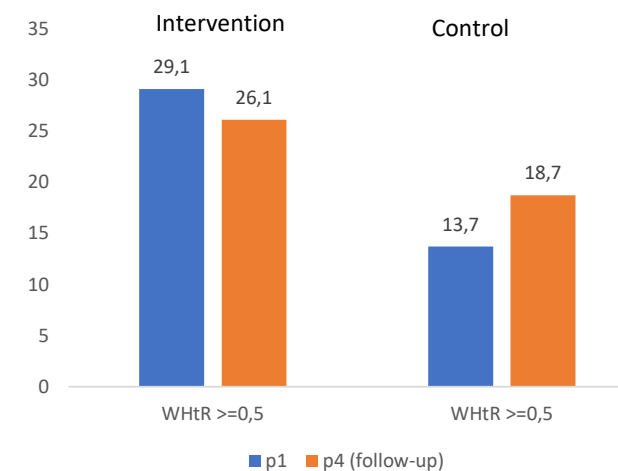
Change in BMI (delta z-score) after 6 months of intervention vs. control



Participants in the intervention group showed a statistically significant reduction in BMI z-score compared to the control group



Increase in the prevalence of overweight and obesity in the control group



Increase in the incidence of elevated WHtR in the control group
*WHtR (waist-to-height ratio: waist circumference (cm)/height (cm))

Implementation of the program in 2025 – a revised trial

- More schools and students (N=36 schools and approximately N=700 children)
- Addition of a summary scenario
- More activities for parents
- Greater emphasis on monitoring the school's strategy for promoting healthy behaviors
- Modification of evaluation among children
- Longer intervals between classes
- Results in October 2025

What next?

- Scale it up! – Evidence-Based Public Policy
- New National Health Programme 2026-2030 – goal to reach up to 10% (20%?) of school children (in I-III grade)