GROWING UP DOESN’T SEEM TO HAPPEN FAST WHEN YOU’RE A KID, BUT TO PARENTS IT CAN SEEM TO HAPPEN IN A BLINK OF AN EYE. TURNS OUT THE PARENTS MIGHT BE ON TO SOMETHING.

RESEARCHERS AT THE UNIVERSITY OF MISSOURI FOUND THAT KIDS TODAY ARE GETTING TALLER QUICKER. BOTH BOYS AND GIRLS ARE REACHING THEIR ADULT HEIGHT FASTER THAN KIDS DID TWO GENERATIONS AGO.

DIRECTOR OF ORTHOPEDIC RESEARCH DANA DUREN EXPLAINED THAT BY STUDYING A GROWTH PROCESS CALLED FUSION IN THE HANDS AND WRISTS OF OVER 1,000 CHILDREN, RESEARCHERS COULD DETERMINE HOW FAST THEIR BONES WERE GROWING. COMPARED TO CHILDREN FROM THE 1920S, THERE WAS A BIG Difference.

“Those bones stopped growing six to ten months earlier in more recent children.”

THE FASTER GROWTH RATE DOESN’T MEAN THAT KIDS WILL BECOME SHORTER ADULTS OR HAVE NEGATIVE HEALTH CONSEQUENCES, BUT IT IS IMPORTANT DATA FOR DOCTORS TO KNOW. DOCTORAL STUDENT MELANIE BOEYER SAID THAT THIS RESEARCH COULD IMPACT WHEN DOCTORS SPOT SCOLIOSIS, LEG-LENGTH DIFFERENCES AND GROWTH HORMONE DEFICIENCIES.

“Clinicians working to treat those disorders, it’s critical to know how developed a child is. Now you may need to look at those kids at even earlier ages.”

I’M BRIAN CONSIGLIO, WITH A MIZZOU SPOTLIGHT ON SCIENCE.