

In this well child visit scenario, Oscar is waiting to get a physical for school.

His father has some questions about Oscar's weight, but he doesn't want to ask these questions in front of Oscar.

Mr. Torres asks his questions of Ms. Cadore, one of Northside's nurses, while Oscar is with Dr. Laskey.

She asks about Oscar's eating habits.

Mr. Torres explains that he would like his son to eat more fruit and vegetables.

Ms. Cadore reinforces Mr. Torres belief that his son needs to eat a healthier diet. A way to do this would be to include a variety of foods such as naturally low fat, high fiber fruits, vegetables, beans, and whole grains. She also recommended washing or peeling the fruits and vegetables as appropriate to remove pesticides and other harmful contaminant residue.

Ms. Cadore also recommended to Mr. Torres that his family should avoid meat and dairy products that are high in fat, but include nuts and vegetable oils higher in good fats. She gave Mr. Torres a Prescription for Prevention card from the Pediatric Environmental Health Toolkit regarding healthy eating for school age children to take home and read.

Mr. Torres also thinks Oscar could exercise more. He explains that Oscar mainly plays video games and does little activity outdoors.

Ms. Cadore asks if there are nearby parks and activities where Oscar could get involved in team sports such as baseball, soccer, or football.

Along with information on food safety and the importance of outdoor activity, the nurse also reminds Mr. Torres about the importance of Oscar using sunscreen when he goes outdoors.

Outdoor play time, especially unstructured, imaginative and exploratory play is increasingly recognized as an essential component of wholesome child development. Play in natural settings seems to offer special benefits.

Children are more physically active when they are outside, a plus at a time of sedentary lifestyles and an epidemic of children being overweight. Studies at the University of Illinois show that children with Attention-Deficit Disorder have fewer symptoms, and enhanced ability to focus, after outdoor activities. Children focus better when camping, exploring and fishing as compared to indoor activities such as watching t.v. and playing video games.

Unfortunately, safety issues, or an environment not conducive to outdoor play, may prevent children from receiving the health benefits of playing in natural settings.

This concludes this scenario. Click on the close window located in the bottom right hand corner of this screen to return to the Northside Pediatrics waiting room.