Family Advisor Role Play

Scenario: A parent and a child arrive for a scheduled exam. The child is anxious about the visit to the doctor and the family has had to wait an hour to see the doctor. The parent has tried to prepare for the visit in their own way. It is the end of the day, and the doctor has limited time to spend with the family.

Doctor’s visit that does not go well – Doctor
Doctor – “So, what brings you here?” While waiting for the parent’s response, the doctor begins to flip through the charts and does not make eye contact with the parent or the child. After a minute, the doctor gets impatient with the parent and the behavior of the child, and abruptly leaves the room.

Doctor’s visit that does not go well – Parent
Once the doctor asks, “So, what brings you here?” the parent begins to look for the questions she wrote down. The parent fumbles around with the paperwork that they have, is unresponsive to the child’s behavior, and the parent becomes flustered with the situation.

Doctor’s visit that does not go well – Child
The child is anxious about entering the doctor’s office. They become overwhelmed by the bright lights in the room and scramble to hide under the desk.

Doctor’s visit that goes well – Doctor
“So what brings you here?” While waiting for the parent’s response, the doctor begins to flip through the charts, and looks up periodically and looks at the child and the parent while waiting for the parent to find the questions in their folder. The doctor patiently waits for the parent to address their child’s needs and then asks follow up questions to the parents concerns.

Doctor’s visit that goes well – Parent
Once the doctor asks, “So what brings you here?” the parent begins to look for the questions they wrote down. The parent realizes that the child is overwhelmed and asks the doctor for a minute to calm the child. The parent offers comforting words, pulls out sunglasses for the child and shows them a new toy to keep them occupied. The parent finds their list of questions and proceeds to have a conversation with the doctor.

Doctor’s visit that goes well – Child
The child is anxious about entering the doctor’s office. They become overwhelmed by the bright lights in the room and scramble to hide under the desk. Once the parent calms the child by offering sunglasses and the new toy, they are relatively calm while the parent and the doctor get through a few questions.

© 2011 The Autism Program of Illinois