

A Qualitative Study on Exploring How the Home Environment Influences Eating and Physical Activity Habits of Low-Income Latino Children of Predominantly Immigrant Families

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Abstract : Purpose: Latino children in low-income families are at elevated risk of becoming overweight or obese. The purpose of this study was to examine low-income Latino parents' beliefs, parenting styles and practices related to their children's eating and physical activity behaviors while at home. Design and Methods: Qualitative study using focus group discussions with 33 low-income Latino parents of preschool children 2 to 5 years of age. Transcripts were analyzed using thematic analysis. Results: Data analyses revealed that most parents recognize the importance of healthy eating and physical activity for their children and themselves. However, daily life demands including conflicting schedules, long working hours, financial constraints, and neighborhood safety concerns, etc., impact parents' ability to create a home environment supportive of these behaviors. Conclusions: This study provides information about how the home environment influences low-income Latino preschool children's eating and physical activity habits. This information is useful for pediatric nurses in their health promotion and disease prevention efforts with low-income Latino families with young children, and for the development of home-based and parenting interventions to prevent and control childhood obesity among this population group. Practice Implications: Pediatric nurses can facilitate communication, provide education, and offer guidance to low-income Latino parents that support their children's development of early healthy eating and physical activity habits, while taking into account daily life barriers faced by families. Moreover, nurses can play an important role in the integration and coordination of home-visitation to complement office-based visits and provide a continuum of care to low-income Latino families.

Keywords : home environment, Latino, obesity, parents, healthy eating, physical activity

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