

Denver Students Try Out Anti-Obesity Video Game

Kaiser Permanente Teams Up With Schools To Fight Obesity

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Reporting

(CBS4) DENVER A Denver elementary school tried out a new health-focused video game for children on Wednesday. The video game was designed by health care provider Kaiser Permanente to combat the growing childhood obesity rate in the U.S.

The game is titled "The Amazing Food Detective." In it, a cartoon female detective has open case files on children with bad eating habits. It is the player's objective to find a healthier eating alternative for each case.

Kaiser Permanente hopes the game will educate children about better food choices and motivate them to exercise.

"The goal is to do everything we can to fight childhood obesity," said Brian Harper, a health educator with Kaiser Permanente. "We want to motivate and inspire people to live healthier lives."

The company has planned to launch the video in over 5,000 schools nationally. A total of 500 of them would be in Colorado.

Davene Cervantes, a fifth grade teacher at Kaiser Elementary School, found Food Detective to be a great method for teaching her students.

"Incorporating technology in the curriculum is excellent. It's a medium the kids deal with all the time. Simply put, it's something they can relate to," said Cervantes.

The characters depicted in Food Detective are intended to be the same age as the players: 9 to 11. Kaiser Permanente hopes players will identify with the characters' problematic consumption habits and recognize the ways to correct such behavior. In the game, a child would have to decrease the size of the food eaten to move on to the next level.

Kaiser Permanente also designed pop-up windows with additional information that appear throughout the game. For example, a picture of a chicken drumstick would remind the player to take off the fatty skin before eating.

Some of the students found the game entertaining, as well as informative.

"It's a cool program. It could teach kids what they are doing wrong," said Gabby Gile, a fifth grader at Kaiser Elementary.

The video game manufacturers also implemented a shutdown mechanism after 20 minutes of play. Children are advised to get up and do 60 minutes of exercise at that point.

According to the Centers for Disease Control, childhood obesity has doubled in the past 20 years. In 1980, only 7 percent of children ages 6 to 11 were obese. In 2004, the number of obese children skyrocketed to 18.8 percent.

Additional Resources:

- Visit the [Amazing Food Detective Web site](#). For more information on how Kaiser Permanente aims to deal with child obesity, visit their Web site at www.kaiserpermanente.org.
- For information about the U.S. national statistic on child obesity, visit the Centers for Disease Control at www.cdc.gov.