**DISCUSSIONS WITH PARENTS**

Doctor:

Okay, so how are you today?

Mother:

Yeah, I’m okay.

Doctor:

Yeah? Just okay. Alright. And you’ve brought James in today to be seen. We saw him the other day, and is there… is he unwell today?

Mother:

Well no, he’s not sick. I mean I… yeah. It’s just after you weighed and measured him last week, I’m a bit worried about his size actually.

Doctor:

Hmm mm. But you know we examined him and everything seemed to be sort of okay, you know, he seemed to be doing all the right things for a toddler age. And you said he was going to start crèche next week, is that right?

Mother:

Yeah, well that’s just it. I, I’ve noticed that most of the kids his age are much bigger than him, and I’m just not sure if we’re doing something wrong. I mean, he, he doesn’t seem to be eating enough –well, less than he used to anyway.

Doctor:

Yeah. And anything else about him? Like his behaviour seems okay, and his sleep patterns?

Mother:

Well no that’s all pretty much the same. He’s still ratty in the afternoons,… it’s just my mother-in-law said that she thinks that he’s not eating enough.

Doctor:

Mmm.

Mother:

And she said that Damian was a really good eater. And when I told Damian that he was quite low on the growth chart, he was really worried. And I, I just… I’m just not sure… shouldn’t he be sort of average or bigger than, rather than so low?

Doctor:

Yep. Alright. Well probably the easiest thing to do is to, to look at those growth charts and see if I can try and explain them a bit more to you.

Mother:

Okay.

Doctor:

Okay? So we’ve got first of all the weight one here, and remember that we plotted those over time, because it’s really important to look at the growth over time, not just one point in time. And so I’ll just remind you that the chart is basically showing where all children will lie. Okay? So there are variations of normal, and so we’ve got 97th at the top, 3rd at the bottom. So you’ll have three percent of kids out there, three percent out there and the rest will lie in that region there.

Mother:

So it doesn’t matter that it’s so low?

Doctor:

No. So we will talk about that. We’ve basically got him in between the 3rd and the 15th centile here, so yes, he is smaller compared with all these other children that will be on those other ones, but fifty percent of children will be below this line, fifty percent of children will be above this line. So that is normal. So we have a huge variation in heights and weights of children. That’s what we expect. We don’t expect everyone to be the same. So as long as we can see over time that your child is not, dramatically losing weight or putting on too much weight that we’d be concerned, then we’re not so concerned. So he’s smaller than a lot of the other kids that will be up in this range, but normal. And there are a lot of factors that affect that. But first, the important thing is we always want to look at the length or height as well, okay?

Mother:

Okay.

Doctor:

Okay, and so here we go. We’ve got the same sort of chart but this time it’s for length – or it’s essentially how tall he is, okay? And so, we have plotted them over time again and you can see how they’re sort of tracking along pretty much ideally on the line, okay? A little bit of variation – that’s quite normal – but see how it’s in that same area between those two lines - as we had with the weight one. So that we’ve got in proportion the weight and the height of James there. Okay?

Mother:

Okay.

Doctor:

And as I was about to say, really there’s a lot of things that affect height and weight. And particularly it can be genetic factors, and I know that you and Damian, you’re not super-tall, are you? So…

Mother:

No.

Doctor:

Yeah. So we sort of do that and there’s, you know… so they’re, they’re the important other things as well.

Mother:

Okay.

Doctor:

And that’s why not every child is the same. And you go and visit your Health Nurse, don’t you?

Mother:

Yeah, she’s been a great help.

Doctor:

Yeah, and so you know if we do… we can continue to track that over time to make sure that we are going in the same area and that the… the eating habits are okay. And as we said, we talked about toddler eating and that it can be a bit fussy. But we’re obviously getting enough because we can see that the weight and the height are, are tracking in the… in that same area.

Mother:

Okay, so I’m just being paranoid.

Doctor:

No, I don’t think you’re being paranoid at all. You and Damian are doing a great job and he’s a really healthy little boy.

Mother:

Okay. Thank you.