Mealtime Success: Establishing Routines & Making Food Fun!
Objectives

• Discuss feeding development and red flags for referral

• Explore strategies to promote positive interactions around mealtime

• Create an action plan to support an optimal mealtime environment and establish routines
Role of Feeding Skill Development

- Biologic Skill
- Interpersonal Relationship
- Learning about the Environment
- Social/Cultural Participation
Developmental Progression of Oral Motor Patterns

- Suckling
- Swallowing
- Sucking
- Munching
- Biting
- Basic Rotary Chewing
- Mature Rotary Chewing
Food Transitions

- Liquids
- Straining/Purees
- Junior/Ground
- Chopped Fine/Fork Mashed
- Coarsely Chopped/Soft Mechanical
- Regular Table Foods/ Mixed Textures
Self-Feeding Progression

- **9 months**
  - Demonstrates good sitting stability
  - Independent with finger feeding

- **18-24 months**
  - Gives up the bottle
  - Scoops food with spoon and brings to mouth

- **20-22 months**
  - Holds a small cup in one hand while drinking
  - Shows emerging interest in using fork

- **32 months**
  - Feeds self with little spilling
  - Pours liquid from small container

- **30-36 months**
  - Uses a fork to stab food
  - Demonstrates imitation of short sequences
Biomedical Factors Limiting Successful Feeding

- Prematurity
- Respiratory
- Cardiac
- Craniofacial/Genetic/Chromosomal
- Digestive
- Allergies

Environmental Factors Limiting Successful Feeding

- Stress
- Iatrogenesis
- Mealtime Setting/Routine/Structure
- Feeding Interaction/Management
- Caregiver Factors
Feeding Red Flags

• Red flags for referral

• Feeding Disorder:
  – *Deviations of ingestive behavior with significant clinical consequences*
  – Kedeskey & Budd, 1998
Mealtime Interactions

• What is mealtime behavior communicating?

• Consider child’s ability to communicate
  – Hunger/fullness
  – Wanting more/no more
  – Changing pace of eating
  – Discomfort

• Address predictability, social demands, interaction/communication
Establishing Mealtime Routines
Setting/Structure

• Social mealtime, with models
• Limited distractions
• In a chair, at a table
  – Designated for meals/snacks only, if possible
• Consistency is key!
• Allow independence
Seating/Positioning/Self-Feeding

• 90-90-90!
• Promote active participation
• Consider comfort and safety of child
• Decrease impact of specific motor challenges
Schedule/Routine

• Beginning and end routine
  – Ex. hand washing, sensory transitions
• Sensory transitions, if needed
• Mealtime at regular intervals
  – 2.5-3 hours apart, 5-6 times a day
• Allow 10-15 minutes for snack time and 15-30 minutes for meals
• Eliminate or minimize ‘grazing’
Food

- Age/skill level appropriate
- Exposure
- Offer at least 3 different foods
  - 1 fruit/vegetable, 1 carb, 1 protein
- Describe foods using sensory vocabulary
- Do not pressure the child!
- At least one preferred food always available
Bottles to Cups

- Introduce cup drinking at 6 months
- Introduce straw at 7-8 months
- Avoid sippy cups!!!
Make Food Fun

• Create pleasant beginning and end routine (movement break, meal prep, music, clean up, etc.)
• Make personalized placemats
• Use props as needed
• Describe food using all senses
• Positive reinforcement
  – Encouragement without coercion
• Descriptive naming
Food Exposure Outside of Mealtime

- Food art
- Food language
- Pretend play
- Food music, instruments
- Food science/math
- Food prep
- Food field trips
YouTube Video
The Teaching Loop
Sensory Feeding Issues

- Avoiding or Seeking
- Over-Responsive or Under-Responsive
- Sensory exposure or desensitization
- Sensory diet
# Creating an Action Plan

**Supporting Mealtime, Take Action!**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strategies (to support mealtime)</th>
<th>Strategy #1</th>
<th>Strategy #2</th>
<th>Strategy #3</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Available Resources</strong> (i.e. supplies, financial, staff)</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Resources Needed</strong> (i.e. supplies, financial, staff)</td>
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<td><strong>Potential Barriers</strong> (i.e. funding, administrative approval)</td>
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<td><strong>Timeline</strong> (i.e. immediately, over the course of the year)</td>
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Questions?
Helpful Resources

- www.schoolnutritionassociation.com
- www.crunchacolor.com
- www.funbites.com
- www.todayiatearainbow.com

- Just Take a Bite: Easy, Effective Answers to Food Aversions and Eating Challenges
- Baby Bites: Transforming a Picky Eater into a Healthy Eater, by Nonna Joann Bruso
- Nobody Ever Told me (Or My Mother) That: Everything from Bottles and Breathing to Health Speech Development, by Diane Bahr
- The Out-Of-Sync Child, by Carol Stock Kranowitz
References


TOGETHER, WE’RE BETTER.