Creating Positive Outcomes for Children & Families When Eating is NOT Fun!

artzcenter

DEVELOPMENTAL HEALTH | AUDIOLOGY

(Formerly the Hearing and Speech Institute)

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OBJECTIVES

- Have a better understanding as to why children won't/can't eat.
- Consider all aspects of feeding (Oral motor, sensory, physical, and behavioral.
- Take away at least one new strategy or activity idea to add to your "bag of tricks."
- Help families develop a network of support.

EATING

It's Not As Easy As it Looks!

The Most Difficult Task We Will Ever Do

- All Organs
- All Muscles
- All Senses
- Learning Style
- Learning Capacity
- Nutritional Status
- Environment
- Learning & Development History

Factors that can contribute to Feeding Challenges

- Reflux
- Respiratory / Upper airway issues
- GI issues
- Food Allergies / Sensitivities
- Motor deficits
- Praxis challenges
- Dysfunction in Sensory Integration

Eating as a Developmental Approach

- Need to consider all aspects associated with feeding:
  - Oral-Motor
  - Motor
  - Sensory
  - Psyche/Social
  - Biomedical

Essential Motor Milestones for Feeding:

- Steady Head Control (2.5 - 3.5 months)
- Beginning Hand-to-Mouth play and reaching skills (4 - 6 months)
- Trunk Control For Independent sitting for 3-5 seconds (6 - 7 month

Essential Motor Milestones for Feeding:

- Trunk Rotation, weight shift, beginning transitional movements, voluntary release patterns (8 - 10 months)
- Independent sitting in a variety of positions, emerging pincer grasp (10 - 12 months)

Essential Motor Milestones for Feeding:

- Efficient finger feeding, practicing utensil use VS effective use for volume (14 - 16 months).
- Most oral-motor skills have been achieved. Continued practice with utensils, however, not mastered (18 - 24 months).

Key Oral-Motor Milestones for Feeding

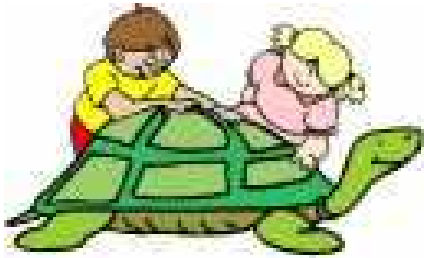
- Coordination of suck-swallow-breath pattern emerges (34 - 42 weeks).
- Learned motor patterns = active sucking VS reflexive sucking. Active forward and backward movement without changes in pressure (-/+ pressure) (4 - 6 months).

Key Oral-Motor Milestones for Feeding

- Emerging tongue lateralization begins, Munching begins, lip closure supports swallow (7 - 9 months).
- Active tongue lateralization, Rotary chew emerges (12 - 14 months).
- All oral-motor skills needed to eat table food are present (18 - 24 months).

Sensory Processing: 7 Senses

- Touch
- Taste
- Smell
- Auditory
- Vision
- Proprioception
- Vestibular



Tactile/Touch

HYPO

- Decreased awareness of tactile stimuli

HYPER

- Increased awareness of touch

Tactile Implications on Eating

HYPER

- Avoids touching food
- Needs hands wiped immediately if "messy."
- Won't tolerate different textured foods in mouth.
- Increased challenge with tooth brushing.

Tactile Implications on Eating

HYPO

- Very messy eater
- Intense need to mouth or lick food or nonfood items.
- Doesn't notice/attend to food left on face
- Doesn't discriminate temperatures
- May swallow things without adequately chewing them first

Vision

HYPO

- Does not seem to pick up/interpret all visual input present.

HYPER

- Overreacts to visual input.
- May look away from food.

Visual Implications on Eating

HYPER

- Inspects food and/or containers intensely.
- Gags or becomes upset in response to sight of foods or if foods are touching.
- Notices any subtle alteration in color, shape, size, etc.

Visual Implications on Eating

HYPO

- May not attend to all foods on plate.
- Misjudge placement of utensils/cups.
- May prefer brightly colored foods or plates/utensils.

Auditory

HYPO

- Does not respond to noises/misses auditory cues in environment.

HYPER

- Highly sensitive to noises in environment. May cover ears to block out sounds. (Sounds of chewing may also be bothersome.)

Auditory Implications on Eating

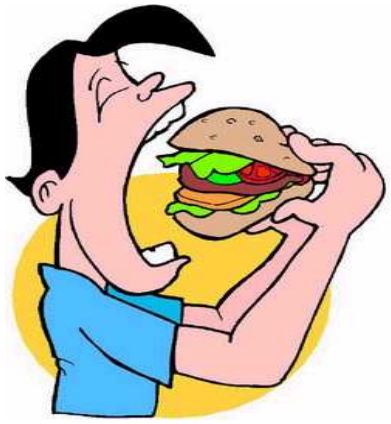
HYPER

- Avoids "loud" foods (crunchy/crispy textures, etc.)
- Difficulty staying at table with family or peers.
- Difficulty eating in loud environments (restaurants, cafeterias, etc.)

Auditory Implications on Eating

HYPO

- May have difficulty following directions during mealtime.
- May prefer "loud" foods.
- May have tendency to grind teeth.



Taste

HYPO

- Seeks out big flavors.
- Needs more flavor to process foods.
- Prefers extreme temperatures.

HYPER

- Can not tolerate foods with specific flavors.
- Flavor specific/notices ANY Changes no matter how small.

Smell (Small receptors also located on the roof of your mouth)

HYPO

- Does not respond to smells or smells everything.

HYPER

- Can not tolerate smells, gags in response to, or avoids smells.

Smell Implications on Eating

HYPER

- Gags in response to specific smells.
- Avoids activities around the kitchen, especially during meal preparation.

HYPO

- Smells everything even nonfood objects.
- Attracted to foods with strong smells.

Proprioception

HYPO

- Seeks input to the joints.

HYPER

- Avoids intense movements/does not tolerate input to joints.

Proprioceptive Implications on Eating

HYPER

- Avoids chewy foods

HYPO

- Difficulty grading the amount of force used to bite specific foods or how far to open/close mouth.
- Difficulty with open cup drinking due to challenges bringing cup to mouth and grading the flow of liquid.

Proprioceptive Implications on Eating (Cont.)

Hypo

- Difficulty holding and using utensils with too little or too much force.
- Difficulty maintaining upright posture in chair.
- Overall clumsy with eating / Spills frequently.

Vestibular

HYPO

- Does not process vestibular input.
- Seeks intensity/"Thrill Seeker."

HYPER

- Very Sensitive to vestibular input.
- Anxious with changes in body position
- Intolerant of movement

Vestibular Implications on Eating

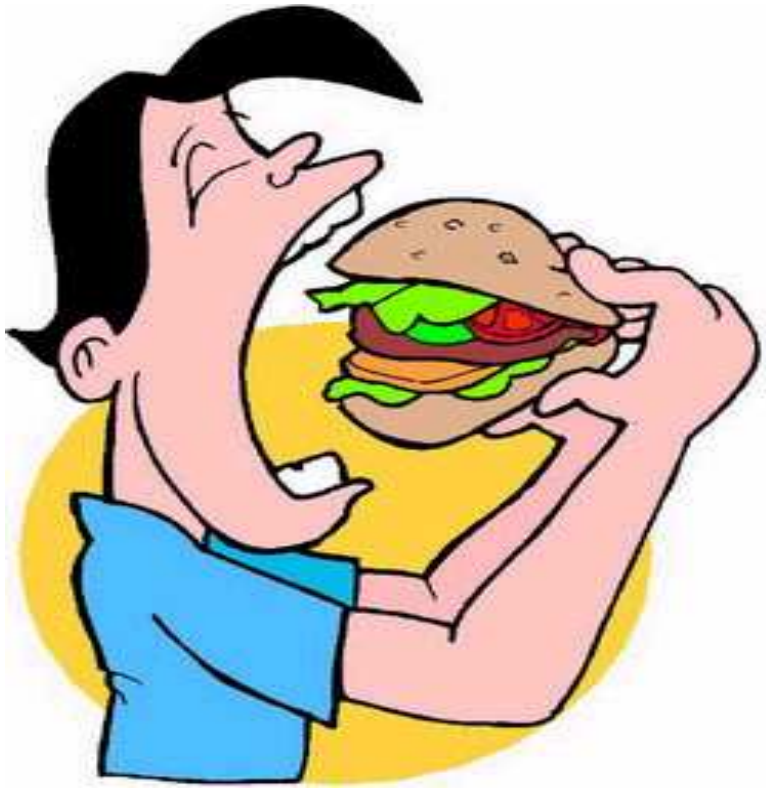
HYPER

- Constantly alerted to his/her body's position in space or how he/she is moving, which takes attention away from eating.
- Increased anxiety when lifted into highchair.

HYPO

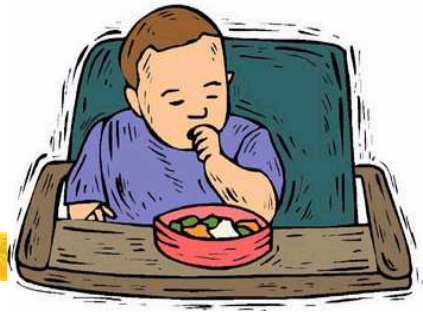
- Difficulty staying seated at table, continually moving or fidgeting in seat.

EXPERIENTIAL



Introducing New Foods

Progressing Foods



- The continuum for learning to eat various food textures requires advancing both oral-motor & sensory processing.
- Anytime you normalize development children may back up to experience all of those stages.
- Think about the Developmental stages of Eating

Considering the Multiple Steps of Eating

- Tolerate Proximity
- Interacts with
- Smells
- Touch
- Taste
- Eating…..Incorporate into food repertoire

ALWAYS GO BACK TO THE STEP THE CHILD IS SUCCESSFUL AT IF CHALLENGES OCCUR. KEEP INTERACTIONS POSITIVE/FUN!

TOLERATES

1. Being in the same room.

2. Being at the table.

3. Having food on the Plate.

Examples of how to increase Tolerance

- Have child be in kitchen during food prep tasks.
- Sitting at table with family during meals.
- Allowing new food to be on the same plate as preferred foods or on a separate plate nearby.

INTERACTS WITH

1. Assists with preparation/Set up of food.
2. Uses utensils/containers to stir pour food into other containers.
3. Uses utensils to serve food.
    * Child is the food server for family
    * Serving food family style, passing plates around.
4. Child assists with clean up in some capacity.

Smells

1. Tolerates odor in room.
2. Tolerates odor at the table.
3. Picks up and smells the food.
4. Tolerating other non-food smells (scented markers, scented bubble bath..)
5. Smell Bingo / Scratch & Sniff Stickers
6. I.D. smells (sweet, spicy, stinky) Child in control of whether they like or dislike smell.

TOUCH

1. Exploring foods through a progression.
   *finger tips, finger pads
   *Whole hand exploration
   *Chest, Shoulder
   *Top of Head
   *Chin, Cheek
   *Nose
   *Lips
   *Teeth, Tongue

Touch

Exploring foods through touch enables a child to learn the physics of food, which helps them better understand/predict how to manage the food in their mouth.

SO GET MESSY!

Things to Consider with Touch:

- Work Distal to Proximal (fingers to body)
- Work Static first….then dynamic.
- Incorporate deep pressure touch.
- Predictable touch.
- Whole hand VS digital touch. (whole hand better able to tolerate)

Things to Look for w/Touch

- Watch for finger splay
- High guard posture (hands up in air with fixed shoulders)
- Shaking
- Fisted hands

Touch

- Finger painting with a variety of foods.
- Using foods as tools to draw (carrot stick drawing in ranch dressing).
- Driving cars through purees (pudding, ranch, Jello..)
- Food "make-up" or making funny faces (fruit leather moustaches…etc.)
- Body painting in bathtub with food.

TASTE

1. Licks lips, tongue licks food.
2. Kisses food "good-bye."
3. Making Teeth designs (Food Art).
4. Licorice straws/chewy food tug-o-war.
5. Bites off and spits out (give permission to spit out but designate a location).

TASTE (continued)

6. Bite..Consecutive chew..spit out.
7. Food bite "basketball."
8. Breaking foods into pieces with teeth.
9. Making "food water" (carrot water, licorice water..)
10. Bobbing for fruits/veggies.

EATING

1. Chews, swallows with drink.
2. Chews and swallows independently.

Strategies to Prepare the Body & Mouth for Eating

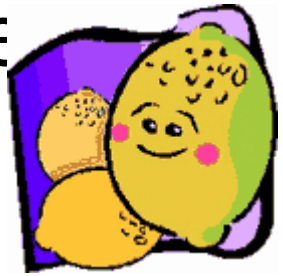
- Whole body movement activities (Deep pressure & Proprioception).
- Oral Motor Facial Play.
- Deep pressure facial stimulation.
- Intra-oral stimulation with sucker, toothbrush, NUK.

Strategies to Prepare the body & Mouth for Eating (cont.)

- Introduce alerting flavor/resistive chew/crunch to ready the mouth for eating.

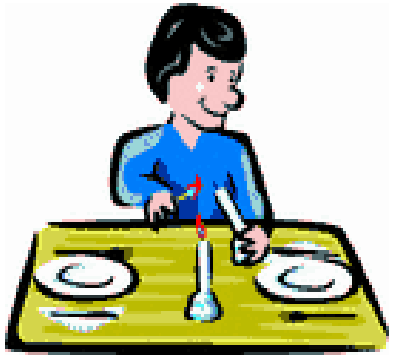
* lemon, sour, cold, spicy, chewy tube

- Oral "fun bucket" presented to child before meal. (Mouthing toys, whistle bubbles, flavors..etc)



"Ground Rules for Meals"

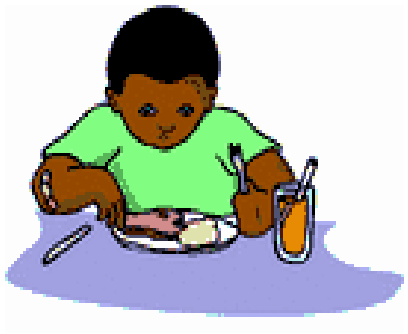
- Structure to mealtime / child sits at table.
- 2-3 snacks & 3 meals
- No snacking/grazing
- Present food then liquid



- 1 preferred and 1 non-preferred food presented (appropriate portions of each).
- Present one new food at a time

"Ground Rules for Meals" (cont.)

- Child is not the direct focus of meal - only part of group eating.
- What goes in their mouth….goes in yours.
- Limit time at table to no more than 20-25 minutes.



Create Routine to Mealtimes

- Routines help create predictability.
- Wash hands before meal (Excellent transition activity, also a nice way to introduce new sensory experiences).
- Serve food "family style."
- Have child assist in clean-up (Pick up food, blow food into garbage/container or kiss food "good-bye").
- Wash hands/Clean up away from table.

Mealtimes as a Working Lab

- Social Modeling (modeling good feeding behavior).
- Everything that goes into the child's mouth goes into yours.
- Reinforce the positive of efforts ("I like how you licked that carrot").
- Use positive language ("You can keep the carrot on the plate").

Mealtime as a Working Lab (cont.)

- Keep conversation positive…food focused.
- Discuss the sensory properties of the food (This food has a "big" crunch) Keep food descriptors neutral.
- Over-exaggerate the motor/show food in you mouth.

Introducing/Incorporating New Foods

- Be flexible through the steps
- Keep sensory properties similar between preferred food & non-preferred food.
- Help children understand the properties with their hands so that they will know what the food is going to do in their mouth.

Introducing/Incorporating New Foods (cont.)

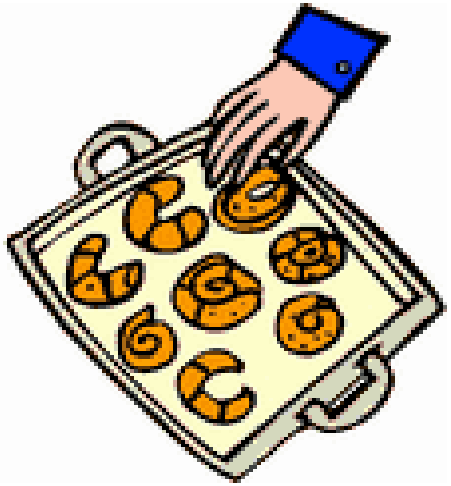
- Intro foods during social events (party, school, play date, etc.)
- Have occasional "special" cooking events with peers (emphasis is not on eating, just cooking).
- Present food so that it is the main attraction (plain plates, few distracters)

Introducing/Incorporating New Foods (cont.)

- Plain containers (zip lock, plastic bags) especially for children with Autism Spectrum Disorder. (Brand specific eaters)
- Make the "just noticeable difference" with foods incorporated into food repertoire.

"Just Noticeable Difference"

- Change the presentation (bowl VS plate)
- Change the shape (Have the child be a part of this change)
- Change color
- Change the consistency/texture
- Change the taste



Increasing Food Variety Fruits & Vegetables

- Consider preferred texture

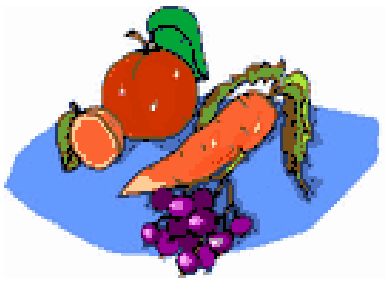
*Crispy/crunchy: snap pea crisps, dried bananas, potato sticks, dried peas, carrot sticks..etc

*Chewy: dried fruits, fruit leather..etc

*Smooth: pureed fruit, veggies, squash, sweet potato, soups-blended, smoothies

Increasing Food Variety Fruits & Vegetables (cont.)

- Consider child's preferred flavors (salty, sweet, spicy, sour)
- *Salty/savory: add butter, garlic, seasoning salt
- *Sweet: add sugar, cinnamon, brown sugar
- Add Pureed fruits/veggies to baked goods (pancakes, muffins, etc)
- Blanch vegetables



Increasing Food Variety Fruits & Vegetables (cont.)

- Play with temperatures (frozen fruits/veggies, berry/frozen fruit in ice cube or fruit juice ice cube in water, milkshakes, smoothies)
- Use food as tools (Dipping parties, use carrot or celery stick to spread with)

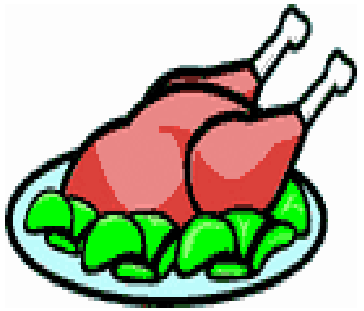
Increasing Food Variety Proteins

- Peanut or other nut spreads
- Yogurt
- Blending in Tofu (silken) with baked products or smoothies
- Add Protein powder to potatoes, etc.
- Continue to consider the sensory properties of the foods your child is already eating. (Taste/texture)

Increasing Food Variety Proteins

- Try different brands to begin to expand tolerance to different textures (chicken nuggets try different shape/size, remembering the "just noticeable difference) Present with the known chicken nugget.

- Jerky, Bacon, Cheese, Eggs



Questions/Discussion

Thank you very much for Joining Us. Bon Appetite!