



Improving Family Mealtimes One Bite at A Time

Presented by

Lauren Binnendyk, PhD, BCBA-D

Web Streamed from Vancouver, British Columbia

June 3, 2021

Co-Sponsored by



Event Schedule

All times are in Pacific Time

9:30 – 10:30	Session 1
10:30 – 10:45	Break
10:45 – 11:45	Session 2
11:45 – 12:30	Lunch
12:30 – 1:30	Session 3
1:30 – 1:45	Break
1:45 – 2:45	Session 4

Tips for Improving the Web Stream Experience:

- Be sure your speakers are on, or headphones are plugged in, and the volume is up.
- Note before the presentation and during breaks, the image and audio will be obscured.
- Close open 'tabs' in your browser. This will use your computer's memory and slow the connection.
- Check that your browser is up to date.
- If video is stuttering or jumpy, change the resolution by clicking on the 'gear' icon (bottom right corner of video).
- To go full screen, click on the 'box' icon in the lower right of the image.
- If you are having trouble with Internet Explorer or Safari, try [Google Chrome](#).

Acknowledgements

ACT – Autism Community Training offers our special thanks to Dr. Lauren Binnendyk for agreeing to present this important workshop on feeding strategies – an important topic for so many caregivers of neurodiverse children.

As we all struggle to keep our communities healthy, ACT is pleased to be continuing our presentations online while maintaining the safety of attendees, staff, and our presenters. Many thanks to the Sheraton Wall Centre, Encore Events and XE Live for supporting our work.

This free event has been made possible due to the generous support of our sponsor POPARD – the Provincial Outreach Program for Autism and Related Disorders, and our individual donors. We are very grateful for this collaboration, which has allowed us to web stream this presentation to families and professionals in British Columbia, across Canada and internationally.

Over the years, those who have attended ACT events know that we depend on community collaboration and support to sustain our work as we are a small not-for-profit. We deeply appreciate the many parents and professionals across British Columbia who volunteer their time, donate funds, and help spread the word - especially during these challenging times.

For registrants who have the ability, we would appreciate a donation of \$50 to ACT so that we may continue providing free or low-cost training opportunities for the entire community.

Support evidence-based resources – [Donate to ACT!](#)

Free Resources from ACT

ACT's Coronavirus (COVID-19): Resources for the Autism Community - ACT has gathered resources specific to those who are neurodiverse, and useful general resources related to COVID-19: www.actcommunity.ca/covid-19-resources

Autism Videos @ ACT (AVA) – Over 65 quality online videos available free – without a log-in, thanks to our sponsors. www.actcommunity.ca/videos

ACT's Autism Information Database (the AID) – Like Google for Autism but better! Keyword search nearly 1,400 curated AID records for evidence-informed, practical information resources useful to families and community professionals. www.actcommunity.ca/aid

ACT's BC Community Resources Database – Search by your postal code for professionals and service providers throughout BC. www.actcommunity.ca/aid-search/community

ACT's Autism Manual for B.C - 13 chapters! www.actcommunity.ca/autism-manual-for-bc -

ACT's Monthly News Round-Up & Event Alerts - Sign-up to keep in touch with developments affecting the special needs community. www.actcommunity.ca/updates

ACT's Facebook - ACT carefully sources interesting, insightful stories to inform our 8,000 plus followers. www.facebook.com/autismcommunitytraining

Improving family mealtimes, one bite at a time.

Lauren Binnendyk, PhD, BCBA-D
West Coast Feeding & Behaviour Specialists Inc
June 3rd, 2021
Autism Community Training Workshop

west coast
feeding & behaviour

1

Who is this workshop for?

Parents who would like their child learn to eat more variety in their diet

Parents who would like their child not to rely on supplements for calories and nutrients

Parents would like their child learn to eat regular meals

2

“No human activity has greater biological and social significance than feeding”

Karen Budd, 1998

3

When eating goes well, it's a synchrony of mutual satisfaction between the parent and child. ...

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When eating doesn't go well...

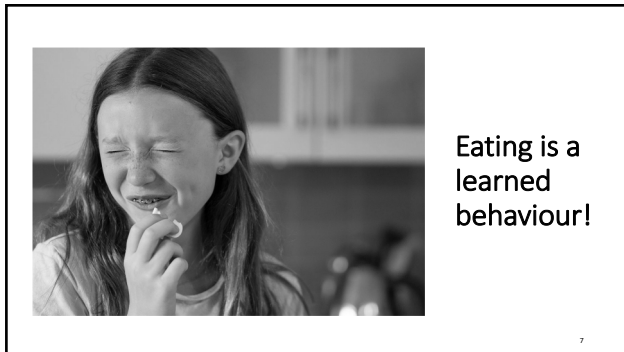
- Increased parental stress
- Feelings of inadequacy in parenting skills
- Personal rejection
- Negative parent-child relationships

5

Development of Feeding Skills

- Infant comes into the world ready to eat
 - Rooting and suck-swallow reflex
 - Fade at 3 to 4 months of age
- Replaced with mature feeding skills that have been shaped by experience with food
- Genetic inheritance – sensitivity to tastes and textures, appetite
- ANATOMY + EXPERIENCE = DEVELOPMENT OF FEEDING SKILLS

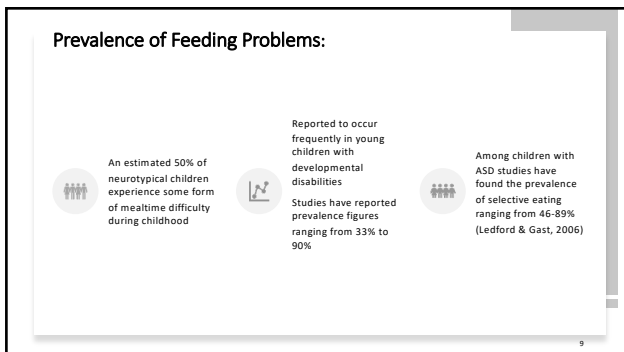
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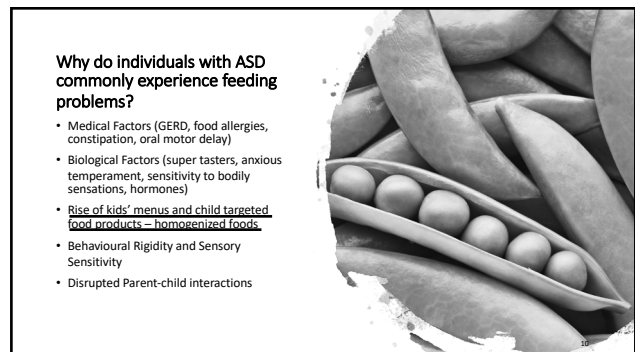
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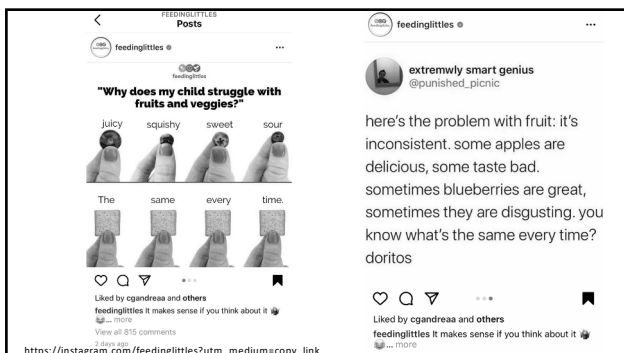
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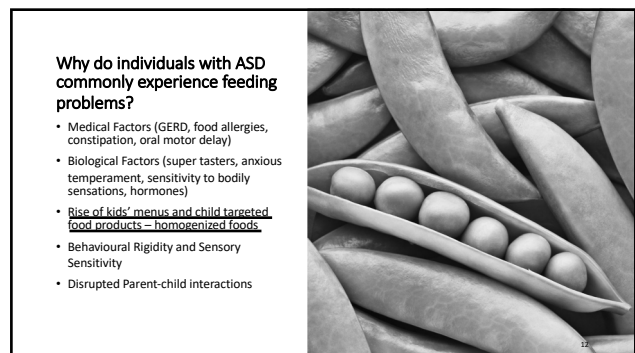
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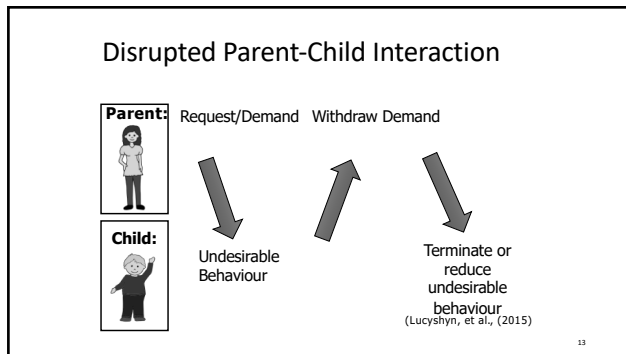
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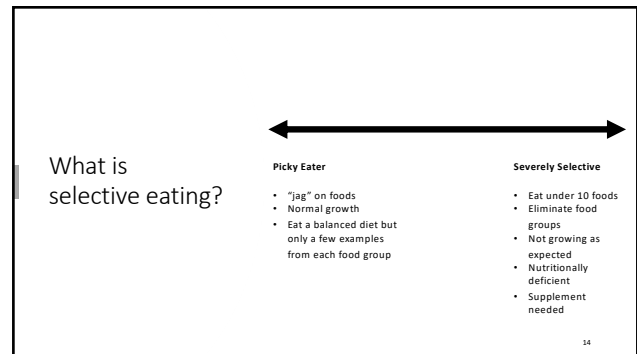
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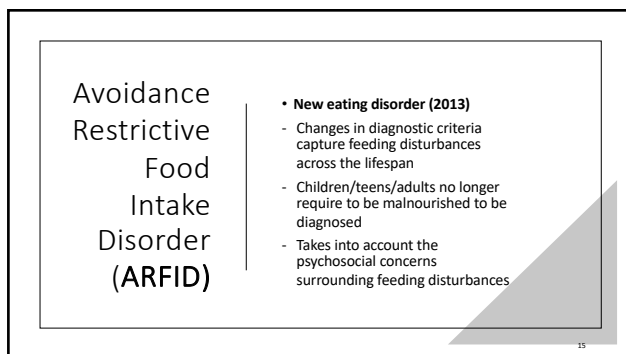
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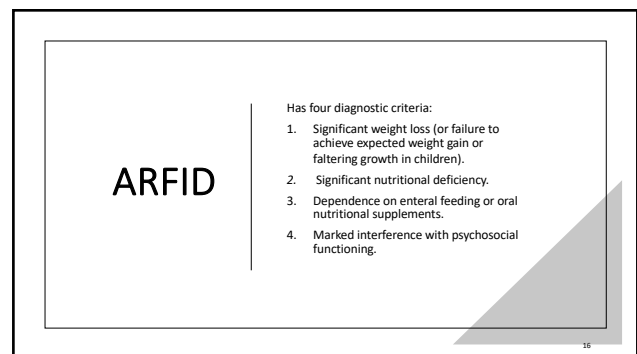
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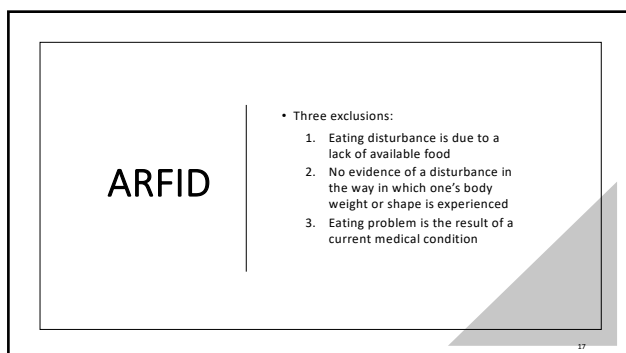
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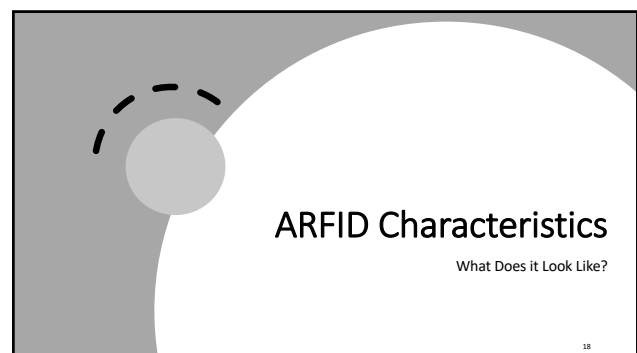
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Lack of Interest in Eating or Food

- Present with an apparent lack of interest in eating. That is, there is no motivation/enjoyment associated with the food.



19

When you eat a small volume of food:

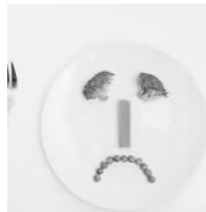
- Can make you feel full quickly even if you are not getting enough nutrients
- Eating without a scheduled meal time can dull hunger cues, especially if you go long periods without eating
- Can promote excessive fullness when you do eat an adequate amount
- Stomach capacity decreases with chronic food restriction



20

Eating very little can:

1	2	3	4	5
Further reduce appetite	Lead to boredom with certain foods	Make you feel • Depressed • Anxious • Hungry • Irritable • Overeating • Guilt • Shame	Cause Nutrient Deficiencies	Make you more at risk of developing health problems, such as diabetes, heart disease and cancer



21

Avoidance Based on Sensory Characteristics of Food

- Can be selective based on colour, texture, temperature and/or taste.
- The sensory characteristics of the food are very aversive.
- May be very rigid about how food is presented (i.e., may eat melted cheese but refuse a cube of cheese).



22

Possible Reasons for Sensory Sensitivities

	Flavor preferences are partly genetic
	Supertaster
	Neophobia <i>Fruits, vegetables and meats most likely to be poisonous to our ancestors when hunting and gathering</i>
	Hypersensitive to Texture <i>may show visceral disgust for food, gag and shudder</i>

23

Eating the same foods can:

Make new food taste even more different

Create nutritional deficiencies
This can change the way food tastes making new food less appealing

Make you tired of that food and stop eating it, and limit your diet further

Make it difficult to eat with other people
Miss out on opportunities to learn about new foods

24

Concern About Aversive Consequences of Eating

- Fears related to the consequences of eating:
- Gagging/Vomiting
- Choking
- Allergic reaction
- Pain associated with GI disturbances
- These fears may be a conditioned response to previous aversive experiences.



25

Avoiding certain foods can:

- Lead you start using "safety behavior" to prevent another traumatic experience from happening
 - Taking small bites
 - Chewing for too long
 - Only eating at certain restaurants
 - Not eating at all
- Prevent you from testing your negative predictions about eating
- The more you avoid eating, the scarier it becomes!



26

So how do I expand my child's diet?



27

Repeated Taste Exposure

- Food preferences are learned by tasting a new food repeatedly



28

Taste Exposure

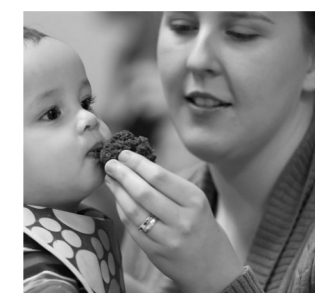
- Research shows 10-15 exposures to start
- With each new food introduced the threshold to liking decreases
- More exposures are required with age
- Parents often give up after one exposure if the child shows a dislike to the food.



29

Taste Exposures Work!

But what if my child won't taste the food?



30

What is a behavioural approach to addressing food selectivity?

- Behaviour therapy – only treatment with well-documented empirical support
 - Multicomponent (escape prevention, reinforcement, environmental arrangements, antecedent strategies)
 - Adult led
 - Expectation for behaviour change

31

Antecedent Strategies

How do we set your child up success?

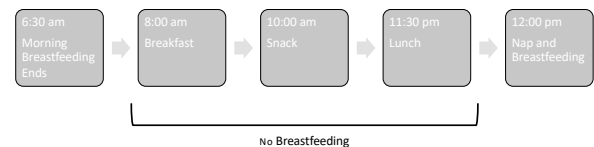
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Strategy #1: Establish a new meal routine

- Have structured meals (three meals and two snacks a day)
- 3-4 hours in between meals
- Eliminate grazing
- Reduce volume of milk and juice across the day
- Drinking water is fine

33

Emily's New Meal Routine



34

What about oral supplements?

- High in calories and sugar – eliminate appetite for actual food
- Don't teach the child to eat fruits and vegetables
- Risk of becoming more restrictive in eating
- If supplement is necessary – medical condition or underweight give at the end of meal or snack



35

Strategy #2: Selection of Foods


- Start with easy foods and progress to more challenging foods
- Easy foods: foods your child eats on occasion, has eaten in the past few months but recently dropped, or foods that closely resemble current foods
- Create a list from easy to more difficult (approx. 20 foods)
- Work through these foods before introducing more challenging foods

36

Food Fear Rating Scale	
5	Thinking about eating this food makes me feel... worried and anxious, maybe I'm able to try it but I'm not sure.
4	Thinking about eating this food makes me feel... uncomfortable and a little nervous, but I can probably try it.
3	Thinking about eating this food makes me feel... comfortable and I can try it.
2	Thinking about eating this food makes me feel... comfortable and I can try it.
1	Thinking about eating this food makes me feel... comfortable and I can try it.

37

Strategy #3: Visual Schedule



- Understanding what the expectations are can be difficult, especially in the beginning of intervention
- Visual supports can help
- Shows your child what is expected and when it will end
- <https://www.westcoastfbs.com/parentportal/visual-contingency>


38

Strategy #4: Offering Choices

- Motivational technique that can lead to greater cooperation
- Choices can be big or small
- Type of food your child wants to try,
- Size of bite
- Number of bites
- How your child wants to interact with the food
- Choice of reward

39

Strategy #4: Offering Choices



- <https://www.westcoastfbs.com/parentportal/offering-choices-m6th>
- <https://www.westcoastfbs.com/parentportal/offering-choices>

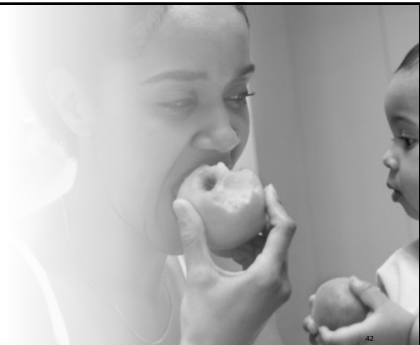
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Strategy #4: Offering Choices

Research shows that children will often eat a larger portion of food when an array of foods are offered rather than one food. If only one food is offered the desirability of that food will decrease and the child will get tired of eating.

41

Strategy #5: Modeling



- Studies have shown that children are more likely to eat a food if it's first modeled by the parent
- Modeling is active: try to be enthusiastic when eating a new food
- Modeling happens constantly: the more often you eat healthy foods the more likely your child will eat healthy foods
- Avoid negative comments about food
- Modeling takes time

42

Strategy #6: Demand Fading

Start with easy demands (e.g., smell) to create momentum for more challenging demands (eat a bite)

- Smell food
- Put food to lips
- Lick food
- Eat crumb sized bite
- Eat pea-sized bite
- Eat ¼ sized bite
- Eat ½ sized bite
- Eat ¾ sized bite
- Eat full sized bite

• <https://www.westcoastfbs.com/parentportal/phrasing-demands-as-statements-vs-questions>

43

Strategy #6: Demand Fading

Size of bite is not important!

44

Strategy #6: Demand Fading (Continued)

- If starting with a speck is too difficult for your child be patient...
 - Start with putting the food to lips
 - Licking the food
 - Licking the food repeatedly
 - Speck of food

45

Strategy #7: Statements vs Questions

"Take a bite" or "Let's eat!" or
"Time to eat!"

Rather than...

"Can you try a bite?" or
"Will you eat this for me?"

46

Strategy #8: Pairing

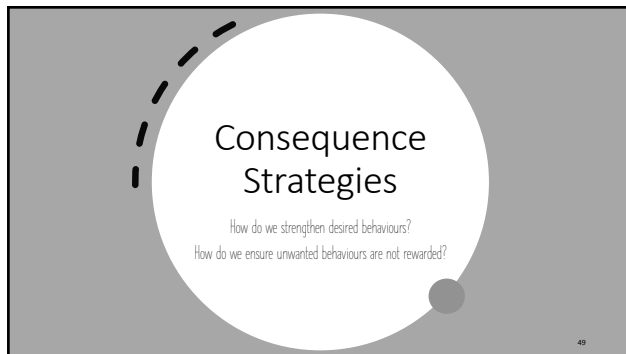
- To begin, present a small bite of the new food at the same time you are presenting a big bite of a highly preferred food. The expectation is for your child to eat both bites of food at the same time.
- This strategy is most successful if the bite size of the new food is very small to start (e.g., crumb size) so that the taste and texture is completely masked by the preferred food.
- After a few presentations, if your child's behaviour remains minimal, insert a delay between presentation of the new food and delivery of the preferred food.

47

Video Demonstration: Pairing

- <https://www.westcoastfbs.com/parentportal/simultaneous-reinforcement-pairing>

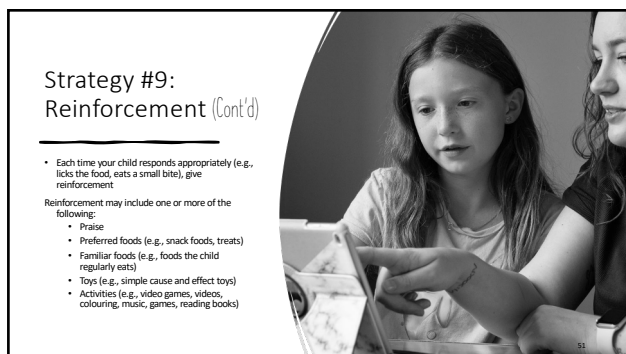
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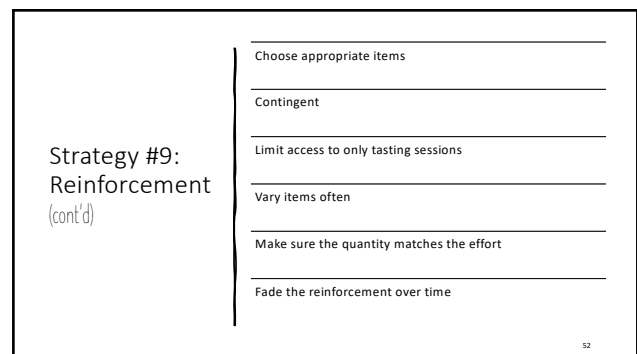
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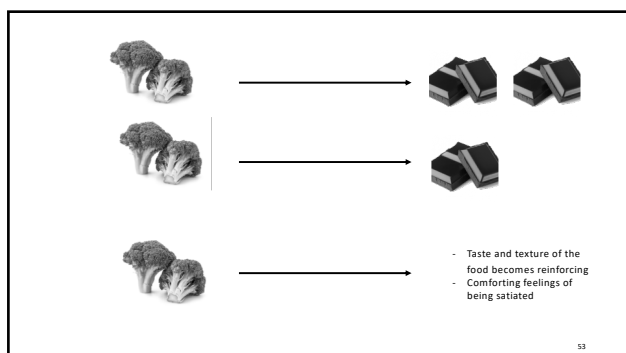
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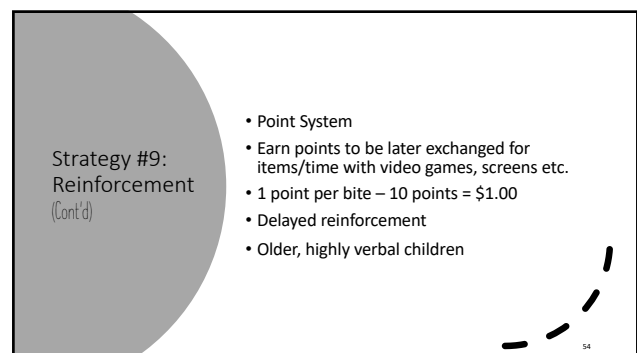
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52



53



54

Fisher's Token System

One to Five Tokens

Eating a portion of fruit	1
Eating a portion of veggie	1
Eating a portion of a protein	1
Eating a portion of grains	1
Eating a portion of dairy	1
Trying a brand new food 10 times	1 small token
Practicing a new challenging food 10 times	1
Eating weekly 10 times at home	1

*You have to eat all the food on your plate in order to cash in

Token Menu

Choose a special treat	10
Make a special cake	10
Buy a new pair of pants	10
Buy a new stuffed animal	10
Buy a new stuffed animal	10
Buy a new stuffed animal	10
Go to the New York City museum	10

*All prizes must be approved by mom
*You must check in with mom about scheduling outings

Warning: Rules are subject to change! Make you do some really annoying things that can earn items tokens, or maybe you do something that someone token being removed... the choice is yours!

55

Vander's Sticker Chart

I can earn stickers for having great meals with mom and dad! To have a great meal I need to...

- Stay in my seat
- Eat my meal in 30 minutes
- Listen to mom and dad (no trying to change the meal or arguing)

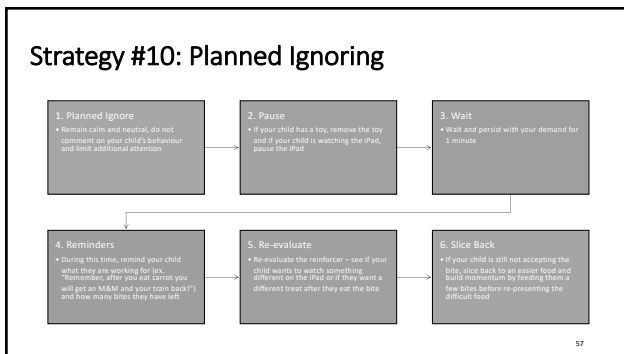
If I stay in my seat, eat quickly and listen to mom and dad I will earn a sticker!

When I earn all my stickers I can choose a special reward! I could choose a trip to Jungle Mania, going to Walmart to buy a new toy or going to Canadian Tire to buy a summer toy.

If I get out of my seat, try to change the meal or argue with mom and dad I will get a warning. After 3 warnings I'll get out of my seat, try to change the meal or argue, or if I takes me longer than 30 minutes to eat I won't earn a sticker.

I am working for _____

56



57

Important!

If your child engages in any major problem behaviours that could potentially cause injury to himself and/or others you need to directly address these behaviours with individualized strategies outlined by the behaviour consultant. It is imperative you do not ignore these behaviours.

58

Case Study #1:

59

Case Study #2:

60

Case Study #3:

61

61

Case Study #4:

62

62

Case Study #5:

63

63



Before You Start Tasting Sessions:

- Remember that teaching your child is to accept new foods is a process that will take time
- Focus on long term tastes rather than short term quantity
- Keep your expectations small to start – set yourself up for success!
- Allot 30 minutes a day for daily practice
- Enlist others to help with implementing strategies.

64

64



Common Mistakes:

- Presenting too big a bite to start
- Not having scheduled mealtimes – allowing your child to graze through out the day
- Giving up on a food too soon – not practicing it enough
- Fading strategies too soon – e.g., not offering a reward

65

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WHAT IF...

What if I've tried rewards but my child still won't take a bite?"

- The food is too difficult for your child
- Too high of expectations
- Need professional support

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WHAT IF...

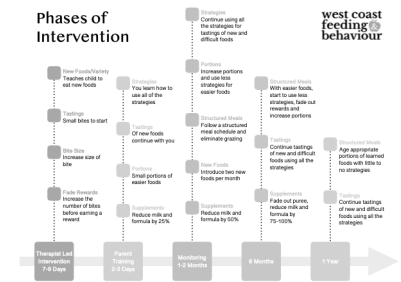
What if my child is now dependent on the iPad for meals?

- Systematically fade out the iPad
<https://www.westcoastfbs.com/parentportal/relinquishing-the-reinforcer>

67

WHAT IF...

- What if it never gets easier to feed my child?
- Focus on long term tastes rather than short term quantity



68

What if this doesn't work?



Not intensive enough
Not enough opportunities to practice



Need professional support to promote that initial change

69

QUESTIONS?



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70