

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

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



"No human activity has greater biological and social significance than feeding"

Karen Budd, 1998

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



When eating doesn't go well...

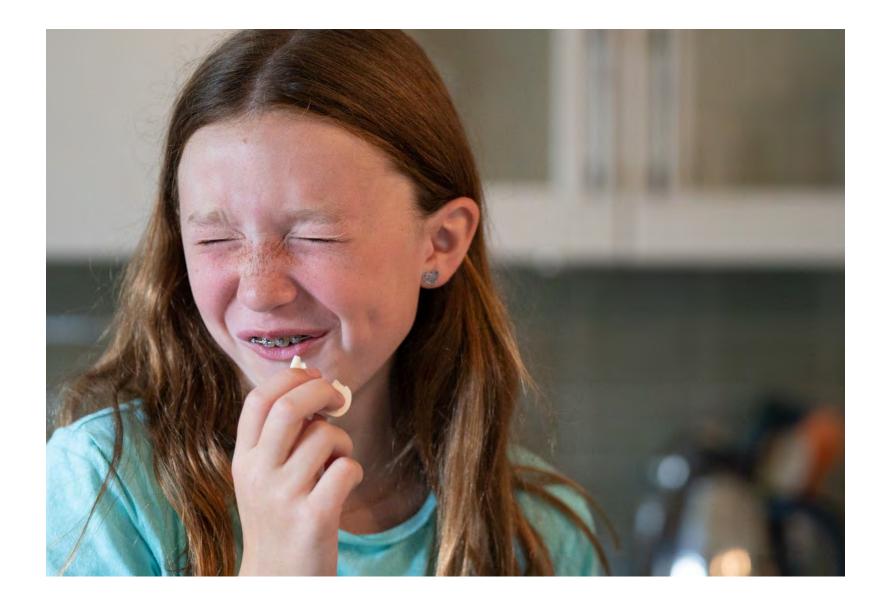
- Increased parental stress
- Feelings of inadequacy in parenting skills
- Personal rejection
- Negative parent-child relationships



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





Eating is a learned behaviour! If eating habits are learned they can also be re-learned!



Prevalence of Feeding Problems:



An estimated 50% of neurotypical children experience some form of mealtime difficulty during childhood Reported to occur frequently in young children with developmental disabilities

N

Studies have reported prevalence figures ranging from 33% to 90% **ATAT**

Among children with ASD studies have found the prevalence of selective eating ranging from 46-89% (Ledford & Gast, 2006)

Why do individuals with ASD commonly experience feeding problems?

- Medical Factors (GERD, food allergies, constipation, oral motor delay)
- Biological Factors (super tasters, anxious temperament, sensitivity to bodily sensations, hormones)
- <u>Rise of kids' menus and child targeted</u> <u>food products – homogenized foods</u>
- Behavioural Rigidity and Sensory Sensitivity
- Disrupted Parent-child interactions









extremwly smart genius @punished_picnic ...

here's the problem with fruit: it's inconsistent. some apples are delicious, some taste bad. sometimes blueberries are great, sometimes they are disgusting. you know what's the same every time? doritos

 $\bigcirc \bigcirc \bigcirc \land \blacksquare$

Liked by cgandreaa and others

feedinglittles It makes sense if you think about it is ... more

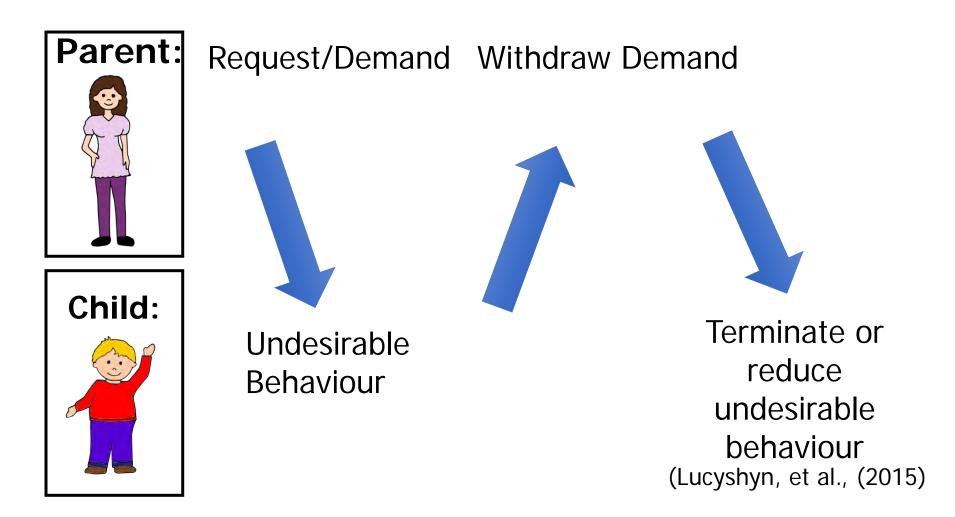
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Disrupted Parent-Child Interaction



What is selective eating?

Picky Eater

- "jag" on foods
- Normal growth
- Eat a balanced diet but only a few examples from each food group

Severely Selective

- Eat under 10 foods
- Eliminate food groups
- Not growing as expected
- Nutritionally deficient
- Supplement needed

Avoidance Restrictive Food Intake Disorder (ARFID)

- New eating disorder (2013)
- Changes in diagnostic criteria capture feeding disturbances across the lifespan
- Children/teens/adults no longer require to be malnourished to be diagnosed
- Takes into account the psychosocial concerns surrounding feeding disturbances

ARFID

Has four diagnostic criteria:

- Significant weight loss (or failure to achieve expected weight gain or faltering growth in children).
- 2. Significant nutritional deficiency.
- 3. Dependence on enteral feeding or oral nutritional supplements.
- 4. Marked interference with psychosocial functioning.

ARFID

- Three exclusions:
 - 1. Eating disturbance is due to a lack of available food
 - 2. No evidence of a disturbance in the way in which one's body weight or shape is experienced
 - 3. Eating problem is the result of a current medical condition

ARFID Characteristics

What Does it Look Like?

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.



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



Eating very little can:

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



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).



Possible Reasons for Sensory Sensitivities



Flavor preferences are partly genetic



Supertaster

Neophobia

Fruits, vegetables and meats most likely to be poisonous to our ancestors when hunting and gathering



Hypersensitive to Texture

may show visceral disgust for food, gag and shudder

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

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.



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!





So how do l expand my child's diet?

Repeated Taste Exposure

 Food preferences are learned by tasting a new food repeatedly



Taste Exposure

- Research shows 15-20 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.



Taste Exposures Work!

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



What is a behavioural approach to addressing food selectivity?

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

Antecedent Strategies

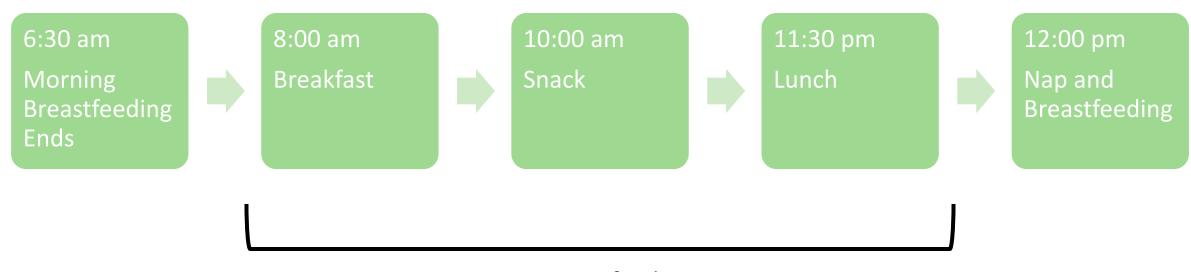
How do we set your child up success?

Strategy #1: Establish a structured 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



Emily's New Meal Routine



No Breastfeeding

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



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

Food Fear Rating Scale					
Ø					
3	Thinking about eating this food makes me feel worried and anxious, I might be able to try it but I'm not sure. -				
2	 Thinking about eating this food makes me feel concerned and a little worried, but I could probably try it. Mr Noodles (Chicken Flavour) Blueberries Avocado Fresh peach 				
1	Thinking about eating this food makes me feel comfortable and calm. I could definitely try it! - Cheese pizza (Panago) - Regular chips - Banana - Green grapes - Peach cups - Chicken nuggets (McDonalds) - Strawberry - Pancake				

Food Fear Rating Scale

5	Thinking about eating this food makes me feel terrified. I could						
	never try it!						
	 Other kind of cheese pizza 						
	- Scrambled egg						
C 🕞 🕤 🖉	- Red grapes						
	 Other kind of nuggets 						
	- Other kinds of fries						
	- Strawberry jam						
	- Ham sandwich						
	- Cucumber						
	- Carrots						
	- Broccoli						
	- Green beans						
	- Com						
	- Apple						
	- Pear						
	- Orange						
	- Rice						
	- New bread						
	 Wrap/taco shell 						
	- Popcorn						
	- Potato						
	- Chicken						
	- Fish						
	- Prawns						
	- Sausage						
	- Ground turkey						
	- Cheese string						
	- Babybel cheese						
	- Smoothie						
	- Тасо						
	- Stir fry						
	Thinking about eating this food makes me feel fearful and scared. I						
4	don't think I could try it.						
	- Yogurt						
	- Annies mac & cheese						

Strategy #3: Visual Schedule

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10)
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- 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
- <u>https://www.westcoastfbs.co</u> <u>m/parentportal/visual-</u> <u>contingency</u>

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
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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





Strategy #4: Offering Choices

<u>https://www.westcoastfbs.com/parentportal/offering-choices-m6thy</u>

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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.

Strategy #5: Modeling

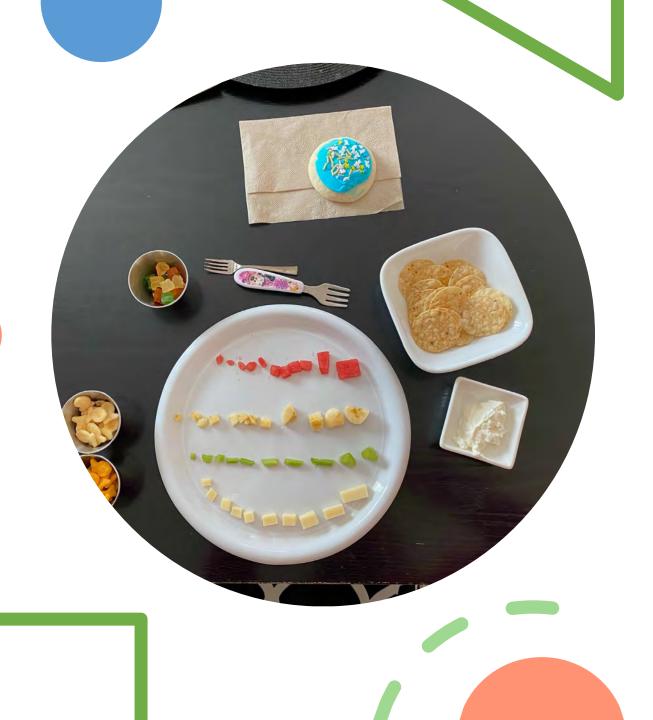
- Studies have shown that children are more likely to eat a food if it's first modeled by the parent
- Modeling is active: try to be enthusiastic when eating a new food
- Modeling happens constantly: the more often you eat healthy foods the more likely your child will eat healthy foods
- Avoid negative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

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
- <u>https://www.westcoastfbs.com/parentportal/phrasing-demands-as-statements-1-ep94s</u>





Strategy #6: Demand Fading

Size of bite is not important!

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



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?"

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.

Video Demonstration: Pairing

 <u>https://www.westcoastfbs.com/pa</u> <u>rentportal/simultaneous-</u> reinforcement-pairing

Consequence Strategies

How do we strengthen desired behaviours? How do we ensure unwanted behaviours are not rewarded?

Strategy #9: Reinforcement (Rewards or Incentives)

- Widely researched as one of the most effective strategies
- Also the most controversial...
- "Why do I need to reward my child? They should just be eating new foods on their own"
- "Is the iPad now part of family meals?"



Strategy #9: Reinforcement (Cont'd)

 Each time your child responds appropriately (e.g., licks the food, eats a small bite), give reinforcement

Reinforcement may include one or more of the following:

- Praise
- Preferred foods (e.g., snack foods, treats)
- Familiar foods (e.g., foods the child regularly eats)
- Toys (e.g., simple cause and effect toys)
- Activities (e.g., video games, videos, colouring, music, games, reading books)



Strategy #9: Reinforcement (cont'd)

Choose appropriate items

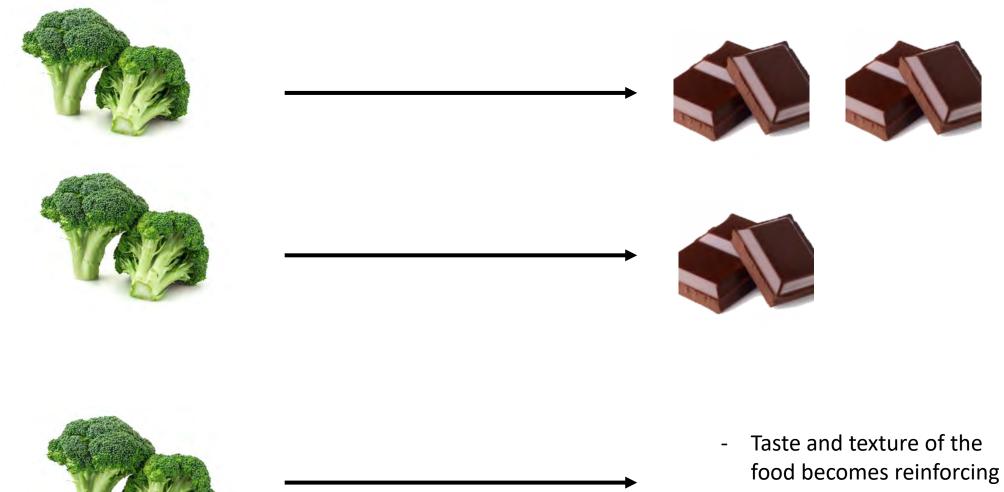
Contingent

Limit access to only tasting sessions

Vary items often

Make sure the quantity matches the effort

Fade the reinforcement over time



 Comforting feelings of being satiated

Strategy #9: Reinforcement (Cont'd)

• Point System

- Earn points to be later exchanged for items/time with video games, screens etc.
- 1 point per bite 10 points = \$1.00
- Delayed reinforcement
- Older, highly verbal children

Parker's Token System

How to Earn Tokens

Eating a portion of fruit	+1
Eating a portion of veggies	+2
Eating a portion of a protein	+2
Eating a portion of dairy	+1
Eating a portion of grains	+1
Trying a brand-new food (5 steps + 1 small bite)	+3
Practicing a new/challenging food (10 bites)	+2
Eating quickly (30 mins or less)	+1

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

Token Store

Dessert/special treat	10
Make a TikTok video	20
Buy a new iPad game (max \$5)	30
Buy a new stuffed animal (max \$10)	40
Go to the arcade	50
Go to the Catfe	50
Go to the fancy movie theatre	50

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

Warning: Rules are subject to change! Maybe you do some really amazing things that can earn bonus tokens, or maybe you do something that warrants tokens being removed... the choice is

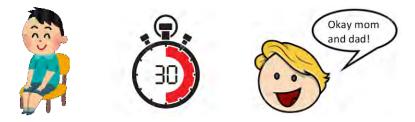
Vander's Sticker Chart

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

- 1. Stay in my seat
- 2. Eat my meal in 30 minutes
- 3. 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 2 warnings if I get out of my seat, try to change the meal or argue, or if it takes me longer than 30 minutes to eat I won't earn a sticker.





Strategy #10: Planned Ignoring

1. Planned Ignore

• Remain calm and neutral, do not comment on your child's behaviour and limit additional attention

2. Pause

• If your child has a toy, remove the toy and if your child is watching the iPad, pause the iPad

3. Wait

• Wait and persist with your demand for 1 minute

4. Reminders

During this time, remind your child what they are working for (ex. "Remember, after you eat carrot you will get an M&M and your train back!") and how many bites they have left

5. Re-evaluate

 Re-evaluate the reinforcer – see if your child wants to watch something different on the iPad or if they want a different treat after they eat the bite

6. Slice Back

 If your child is still not accepting the bite, slice back to an easier food and build momentum by feeding them a few bites before re-presenting the difficult food

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.