

# EATING



- ✘ Eating is a multi-sensory activity that is more than “you pick up food, you eat it.” Several steps are involved to be successful at eating. Unfortunately, eating is not an intrinsic need for all.

# WHY WON'T MY CHILD EAT?!

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- ✘ Picky eater or problem feeder?
- ✘ Problem feeders: Have difficulty with the motor aspect of eating. This may include getting the food from the plate to their mouth and the actual management of chewing/swallowing food.
- ✘ Picky eaters: may be aversive to texture, taste or smell



# ADAPTED PLATES/SILVERWARE

- ✘ Built-up silverware
- ✘ Weighted silverware
- ✘ Curved silverware
- ✘ Non-slip material
- ✘ Suctioned plate
- ✘ Scoop bowls/plates
- ✘ Weighted/cut out cups
- ✘ All available at [www.amazon.com](http://www.amazon.com)



# POSITIONING

Positioning during eating is also key. Here are some things to look for:

- ✘ Feet touch the ground
- ✘ Good trunk alignment
- ✘ Not sitting on feet
- ✘ Table at proper height





# DEVELOPMENTAL FOOD CONTINUUM

- ✘ Mashed table foods (6-8 mos) > Hard munchables > meltable hard solids > Soft mechanical (single) > Mixed texture (12 mos) stage 3
  - + Mashed table foods: stage 1 puree (applesauce, yogurt)
  - + Hard meltables: small enough for mouth, hard to get off (gag reflex)-jaw strength activities (celery, carrot sticks, teething biscuit)
  - + Meltable solids: puffs (gold standard-melt fast-stick on wet finger), veggie straws, saltines, townhouse crackers, Cheetos, puffy/starching balls/sticks
  - + Soft mechanical: mash to puree (soft potato, avocado)
  - + Mixed texture: macaroni and cheese, casseroles

# PRACTICAL STRATEGIES FOR HOME

- ✘ Snack/meal time should be consistent
- ✘ Tables are used for so many different things. Try symbolizing its time to eat by using a placemat, tablecloth.
- ✘ Create a transition for meal/snack time (wash hands, song).
- ✘ Different soaps can make getting ready more enticing. Use different textured rags, sponges during hand washing. This is also gives kids the pre-tactile input prior to eating.
- ✘ Talk about food-color, shape, texture, etc.
- ✘ Try not to present food in original wrapper/bag. Kids can get stuck on specific brands and/or packaging appearance
- ✘ Encourage them to help with food preparation and passing out. When possible, serve "family style." Everybody gets a little of something, even if they don't want to try it.



# PRACTICAL STRATEGIES FOR HOME

- ✘ If a child will not eat a food, encourage them to touch-finger tips, finger pads, whole hand, chin, cheeks, nose, lips/teeth-no taste buds, tip of tongue, full tongue.
- ✘ Model what you would like the child to do with the food.
- ✘ Explore food differently. Crush it, dip it in water, mix it with another, hide it under a napkin, draw with it (purees). If they won't touch purees, put it in baggie and squish it/pour from container to container. If they won't touch, use a fork/spoon/napkin to move it around.
- ✘ Have a rag or napkin available at all times so a child can wipe their hands and face at their own discretion.
- ✘ Washing of hands or face can be traumatizing to kids. Try washing hands and face at a different place than the table.
- ✘ Clean up time: Make the kids pick up their food with their hands to throw it away.
- ✘ Remember: A child won't eat what they won't touch!