



# Feeding Matters!

## What is feeding therapy?

Feeding therapy focuses on helping a child learn how to eat and/or expand the variety of developmentally appropriate foods in their repertoire.

## Intervention Strategies

### Sensory hierarchy

- Exploring food from distal to proximal, least invasive to most invasive
- EX: tolerating food in vicinity, looking at the food, smelling the food, touching the food, tasting the food, taking a bite and swallowing

### Age-appropriate food prep

- Involving the child in food preparation that is safe and appropriate prior to or during meal or snack time.
- EX: chopping food, spreading nut butter, putting bread into toaster, adding fruit and mix-ins to blender

### Modeling

- Doing the action expected of the child prior to them doing it
- EX: modeling exaggerated chewing, model kissing the food, model playing with the food

### Full disclosure to child

- Announcing new or non-preferred foods as they are introduced or combined with preferred foods to encourage long-term growth toward acceptance.
- EX: not hiding or sneaking vegetables into a smoothie or sauce

### Pleasant experiences around food

- Creating positive food experiences with child in zone of proximal development to associate food and mealtime with positive feelings
- EX: using child-led, playful interactions to explore food and during mealtimes

### Choice making

- Support child-led approach and decrease pressure by allowing child control over feeding activities
- EX: choosing food to explore, choices between dippers or drink to go with meal/snack

### Food chaining

- Determining new food to explore based on their current food repertoire and changing sensory properties of preferred food. Altering food introduced based on sensory properties.
- EX: finding common characteristics of foods (color, shape, size, texture), flavor maskers,

### Home programs

- Activities for parents, child, and family to do related to feeding therapy interventions and goals to support carryover at home.
- EX: having parents use same language when presenting new foods, parents modeling playfulness during mealtime

### Consideration of food quantity presented

- Considering how much food is presented to the child, using age-appropriate portion sizes.
- EX: using appropriate portion sizes of preferred foods to support child learning about their fullness and hunger cues