



# Functional Mealtime Strategies

Encouraging Your Child to Enjoy a Family Mealtime Experience

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# Rehabilitation Services

- Team members:
  - occupational therapy
  - physical therapy
  - speech therapy
  - speech therapy assistant
  - restorative aid



## What Is “Lunch Bunch”

- A therapeutic feeding program at the Center for Medically Fragile Children
- A skilled therapy staff with an interest in collaborating specialties to benefit the children holistically
- Children experience the benefits from OT, PT, Speech, Dietician, in a fun, natural environment



# Learning Objectives

- increase engagement and positive social experiences during meal time
- participate in a meal when unable to orally eat
- decrease oral aversion and tactile hypersensitivities
- create a multi-sensory environment to improve quality of life through every day activities surrounding food



# Goals for Children

- Expand food repertoire
- Expressive/receptive language
- Family inclusion
- Decrease oral/tactile aversion
- Increase social interaction



# Aims of Lunch Bunch

## A. Orthopedic

- postural alignment
- ROM
- normalize tone
- proprioceptive input
- visualmotor development  
(head control)

## B. Neurologic

- sensory processing
- tactile sensitivity
- spatial awareness

## C. Psychological/ Psychosocial

- decrease anxiety/agitation
- modify behavior
- emotional outlet
- improve self image



# Aims of Lunch Bunch

<b>D. Social</b>	<b>E. Developmental</b>	<b>F. ADL</b>
-new surrounding	-motor learning	-hygiene
-sharing space	-sequencing	-dressing
-develop relationships	-explore movement	-self feeding
-recreation w/ family & peers	-expressive/receptive language	-oral care (toothbrushing & tastes)
-community integration		



# Schedule????

Individualize for your family!

Suggestions:

- decrease stress
- snacks good starting point
- utilize siblings as model
- integrate into existing meal plan



# What is a sensory diet?

Created by Patricia Wilbarger, OTR/L

- “It is a carefully designed, personalized activity plan that provides the sensory input a person needs to stay focused and organized throughout the day.”
- We all have favorite activities to help us feel more calm and organized (i.e., drink, move, change tasks).
- We all have forms of a personalized sensory diet.



# Sensory Diet

- Incorporating timed activities throughout the day. It is NOT a specific technique
- Strategy for developing individualized home programs
- Incorporates controlled sensory input to affect functional abilities
  - Patricia Wilbarger (1984)



# Sensory Diet:

## Stimulation Theory for Readiness to Learn

- Goal: decrease sensory defensiveness to increase mealtime participation
- Optimal Level of Stimulation to achieve ideal level of arousal necessary for cognitive, motoric activity, and positive affect
  - Patricia Wilbarger & Julia Wilbarger (2001), Zuckerman (1979)



# Sensory Diet Components

Power activities-effects last 2-3 hours afterwards.

1. Deep pressure touch
2. Joint Compressions
3. Movement
4. Heavy work

Timing – inputs utilized throughout day



# Activities Prior to Mealtime

- Touch: tactile play, beans rice fabric, sponges, bean bin, dress up play, painting on paper or body, hide objects in clay, cookie cutters with clay, water play, bath time, messy meal play outside for easy clean up, squish



# Activities Prior to Mealtime

- Oral Motor: whistles, blowing through a straw, bubbles in a bucket, chewing gum, suckers
- Heavy work: rough tumble play, wrestling, play outside, obstacle course, trampoline, animal walks
- Vestibular: log roll, jump, rocking, roll over large therapy ball, swing in blanket, spin



# Set-up

## ■ Environment

- Natural kitchen setting
- Family dining
- Guests
- Dining utensils
- Lighting
- Soft sounds (white noise, noise cancelling headphones, rhythmic music)

## ■ Child

- Hand washing
- Facial prep
- Aroma therapy
- Food choices
- Positioning/Posture



# Create Mealtime Routine

- Pre-meal set up:
  - Wash hands
  - Wash face with cloth
  - No thank you plate
  - Serving family style meals



# Create Mealtime Routine

- Clean-Up:
  - Wash table
  - Scrape plates into garbage
  - Put tupperware lids on
  - Place leftovers in fridge



# Incorporating Assistive Technology (AT)

- Allowing the children to participate in the preparation of the meal at the least restrictive level
- Giving the child control to request, protest, and comment throughout the entire experience

# Tools

- Switch adapted pourer (modified independence)
- PowerLink for blender, mixer, etc. (modified independence)
- HOH for mixer (allows for sensory input as well as participation given physical support)



# AT used for baking





## Incorporating Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC)

- Meal times are traditionally a time for families to come together, socialize, and share ideas and opinions.
- Children or adults with communication impairments should have the same opportunities, they may just look a bit different. The availability of genuine and motivating communication opportunities...is at least as important to the success of the Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC) system or strategy selected for the communicator. (Beukelman & Mirenda 2005).

# AAC Systems and Strategies Used

## ■ Systems

- Speech Generating Devices (SGDs)
- Communication Books
- Color Line Drawings (CLDs) as modified PECS; Mayer-Johnson symbols seen here.
- Modified Sign Language
- Voice Output or “talking” Switches; BigMaks, Step-by-Steps, Sequencers

## Strategies

- Choice making, Requesting, Rejecting

## Selection Techniques

- Eye-gaze, direct selection, auditory scanning, visual scanning



# Video Clip of AAC Systems and Strategies



# Opportunities to Expand Receptive Language.

- Meal time provides natural environment to teach functional vocabulary.
- Assess learned vocabulary
  - Use individual communication systems and strategies to test learned vocabulary





# Why Provide So Many Opportunities?

- We all learn through experience. Beginning communicators need continuous repetition and feedback for their communicative attempts
- The kids need to experience “natural consequences in order to learn, even if this means that sometimes they do not get what they want...” (Bukelman & Mirenda 2005)
- Meal time is social, interactive and most importantly....IT’S FUN!!!!!!



# Primary Goal of Tastes: Safety

- Monitor signs/symptoms of aspiration
  - Cough
  - Decreased alertness
  - Fever
  - Fatigue
  - Wheezing
  - Wet vocal quality
  - Shortness of breath



# Positioning

- Goal: symmetry
  - Upright: pelvis at 90 degrees
  - Stability: trunk support & feet secure
  - Head & trunk alignment
  - Shoulders down & arms forward
- 
- Feeder's position: eye level or below



# Diet Textures

- Offer least restrictive
- Solids: Puree, Mechanical Soft, Regular
- Liquids: Honey, Nectar, Thin
- Majority are smooth puree
  - (safest & easiest food to swallow)
- Speech pathologist evaluate safest diet texture
  - clinically
  - and/or modified barium swallow study



# Decrease Aversion

- NEVER force feed!!!
- Respect child's cues
- Regulate/monitor reflux (GER)
  - If on medication, give consistently
  - Talk with pediatrician re: concerns
  - Consider history of previous negative associations with eating
  - Remain upright 30 minutes after eating



# Steps to Eating

by Kay Toomey, Ph.D.

## Eating

### Taste

chew & swallow independently  
chews & swallows w/ drink  
bites, “x” chews, then spits  
bites small piece, holds, then spits

### Touch

licks (tip of tongue & full tongue)  
teeth  
lips  
hand

### Smell

leans down or picks up to smell  
odor directly in front of child  
odor in room

### Interact

assist in preparation  
uses utensils, cup, plates

### Tolerate

will look at food when directly in front of child  
at at the table with food on other side  
being in the same room



# Facial Prep

by Gay Lloyd Pinder, Ph.D., CCC/SLP

## ■ Helps organize

Action:

- Firm deep pats from cheek bones to lips
- Always moving toward midline
- Pat upper lip, using firm pressure to slowly stretch upper lip downward toward closure with lower lip
- Pat the chin using firm deep pressure that moves bottom lip toward upper lip

# Video Clip: Facial Prep





# Variety of Foods

- Kid Friendly Options
  - Don't get stuck in rut
  - Strong scent (increase child interest)
  - salty, sweet, sour, bitter and savory taste sensitivity
- Some of our lunch bunch foods:
- Garlic bread
  - Chocolate chip cookies
  - Hummus
  - Bacon
  - Cinnamon crumb cake
  - Fruit smoothie

# Adaptive Utensils/ Equipment

## ■ Bowls/Plates

- suction bottom
- scoop bowl/plate



## ■ Cups

- cut out
- sippy
- bottles



## •Spoons/Forks

- depth
- texture
- curve
- handle



# Example Adapted Feeding





# Recreational Feedings

- Based on quality of experience, not quantity of intake
- Supplement to gtube feeding
- 2 different flavors of purees
- ½ oz portions of each
- 3 days/week

If you make the mess....





# Generalization

- Carry-over to school & community
  - Grandparents
  - Nanny
  - Restaurants
- Children progressing in self feeding
  - Individualized utensils
  - Modifications in diet texture
- Strengthen social relationships
  - Practicing functional communication in natural setting



# Parent Ideas for Carryover

- Flexible schedule/adaptability
- Placemat
- Dining Kit/Lunch box
- Outdoor picnic
- Learn typical family routine
- Present at table & have models of eating
- Passing food
- Sensory diet



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