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**The Problem Eater: Picky Eating, Oral Sensory
Issues, and Behavior Modification**

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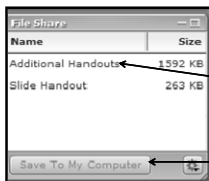


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The Problem Eater: Picky Eating, Oral Sensory Issues, and Behavior Modification

Jennifer Dahms, MS/CCC-SLP

Course Objectives

- ▶ To list the developmental milestones of feeding related to problem eating
- ▶ To identify associated medical and developmental diagnoses that can lead to problem eating behaviors
- ▶ To identify symptoms related to problem eating
- ▶ To list strategies to assist with introducing new foods and adding new foods to a child's diet repertoire

Let's Start Eating!



Developmental Milestones for Food Textures

- ▶ 0–4/6 months
 - Formula vs. breast milk, not bottle vs. breast feeding
- ▶ 4–6 months – critical period
 - First exposure to another texture
 - At 4 months for formula-fed infants, at 6 months for breast-fed infants
- ▶ 6–10 months
 - Stage 1 and Stage 2 foods
 - Dilemma of Stage 3 foods

Developmental Milestones for Food Textures, cont.

- ▶ 10–12 months
 - Transition to table foods
 - Dependent on number of teeth
- ▶ 12–16 months
 - Increase in variety of foods
 - Eating with the family
- ▶ Critical point of 18 months
 - Research needed for Autism Spectrum Disorders
- ▶ Discussion of volume

Oral Motor Milestones Related to Food Texture

- ▶ Bottle and breast
 - Suckling predominant
 - Up to 16 months
- ▶ Spoon
 - Mouth opening and lip functioning
 - Suckling still evident
- ▶ Cup
 - Very wide mouth excursions
 - Biting on cup

Oral Motor Milestones Related to Food Texture, cont.

- ▶ Straw
 - Biting for stability
 - Suckling moves to sucking
- ▶ Fork
 - Texture-dependent
- ▶ Finger feeding
 - With table foods
 - Tactile component

When Things Go Wrong

- ▶ Medical and developmental history
 - Medical intervention can lead to aversion
- ▶ Transitional periods
 - If missed, many opportunities for development are also missed
- ▶ Difficulty pressing on
 - When to challenge a child
- ▶ Overwhelming dilemma
 - Parents feel out of control

Diagnoses

- ▶ Prematurity / FTT
 - Signs of feeding difficulties with infants
- ▶ Autism Spectrum Disorders
 - Related to sensory processing difficulties
- ▶ GERD
 - Pain and discomfort
- ▶ History of tube feedings
 - Pain, loss of hunger
 - Missed opportunities

Diagnoses, cont.

- ▶ Sensory Integration Disorder
 - Outside of ASD
- ▶ Behavioral Feeding Disorder
 - Underlying sensory issues
- ▶ OCD/Anxiety
 - Fear, worries
 - Referral to psychology

Therapy Definitions

- ▶ Picky eater
 - Flavor preferences, limited diet
- ▶ Problem eater
 - Very limited diet
 - Refusal to try foods
- ▶ Established foods
 - Consistent foods
- ▶ Unestablished foods
 - Refused or foods that have not been attempted
- ▶ Refused foods
 - Exposure to but have not eaten

Therapy Definitions, cont.

- ▶ Preferred foods
 - Favorites
 - Subject to food jaggging
- ▶ Non-preferred foods
 - Eaten but reluctantly
- ▶ Challenge foods
 - Difficulty level
- ▶ "Eat", "Try" and "Helper" foods
 - Use with younger children

Problem Eater Symptoms

- ▶ Child's sensory history
 - Medical procedures, GERD
- ▶ Limited diet repertoire
 - Food/Texture categories
- ▶ Rigid eating behaviors
 - Mealtime routine, food preparation, utensil use
- ▶ Levels of gagging and vomiting
 - Based upon sensory systems
 - Compensatory patterns

Problem Eater Symptoms, cont.

- ▶ Food characteristics
 - Dense, crunchy
- ▶ Behavior
 - Compensatory
- ▶ Food jags
 - Love and hate
- ▶ Environment
 - Distractions, hyper-mobility
- ▶ Inconsistent
 - Consistently inconsistent

Strategies

- ▶ Re-establish the relationship
 - Positive interaction
- ▶ Desensitization
 - Oral brushing
- ▶ Systematic changes
 - One aspect at a time
- ▶ Sequential Oral Sensory (SOS) approach
 - Kay Toomey, PhD

Strategies, cont.

- ▶ Food chaining and mapping
 - Cheri Fraker CCC-SLP and Laura Walbert CCC-SLP
- ▶ Branching
 - Linking foods to established ones
- ▶ Successive approximations
 - Hierarchy of exploring foods
 - Non-threatening

Strategies, cont.

- ▶ Distractions
 - Based on sensory systems
- ▶ Positive reinforcement
 - Difficult for parents
 - Promotes positive eating behaviors
- ▶ Behavioral approach
 - No questions
 - Prompt the behavior
 - Dealing with negotiations

Strategies, cont.

- ▶ Mealtime approach
 - New Visions
 - Based upon tube weaning
- ▶ Environment manipulation
 - Furniture proximity
 - Controlling the food
- ▶ Locus of control
 - A shift
- ▶ For all approaches – consistency!

Research

- ▶ Most research on behavioral approaches
- ▶ Kerwin (1999)
 - Article review on behavioral techniques (attention, positive reinforcement, extinction)
- ▶ Linscheid (2006)
 - Application of behavioral intervention to the real world
- ▶ Laud et al. (2009)
 - Retrospective study on 46 children with ASD with behavioral approach

Research, cont.

- ▶ Woods et al. (2010)
 - Pairing parental attention with child behaviors at meals
- ▶ Roth et al. (2010)
 - One child with autism
- ▶ Binnendyk & Lucyshyn (2009)
 - Family-centered positive behavior support approach
- ▶ Angell (2010)
 - Need for classification system
 - Sensory and anxiety

Research, cont.

- ▶ Casey et al. (2009)
 - Bite acceptance vs. food refusal behaviors
 - Importance of limiting food refusal opportunities
- ▶ Luiselli (2000)
 - Antecedent controls with positive reinforcement

Related Fields

- ▶ Psychology / Counseling
 - Thought process around eating, irrational
- ▶ Dietician
 - Nutritional support
- ▶ Gastroenterology
 - Manage, diagnose and rule out GI problems

Related Fields, cont.

- ▶ Developmental pediatrics
 - Measure developmental level related to feeding level
- ▶ Occupational Therapy
 - Assistance with child's overall sensory needs

Example: Christian



▶ Example: Eliot

▶ Example: Nicholas

Questions?
▶ Thank you

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