

PHYSICAL, BEHAVIORAL & DEVELOPMENTAL SKILLS

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feeding matters

*Conquering pediatric feeding struggles
to nourish healthy futures*

Typically, feeding skills develop naturally and when they don't, it is important to know that it is not a reflection of the parent. Children often don't refuse to eat without reason – they are not choosing to be difficult. Eating is a fundamental life skill for survival and their behavioral response to eating is a way of saying that something may be wrong.

medical or developmental issues

Whether diagnosed or not, medical or developmental issues are often the starting point for feeding struggles. Unfortunately, it can be difficult to diagnose, particularly when the child is masking the problem by avoiding eating. Early treatment and intervention is important as it may decrease the chance of lifelong feeding struggles.

developing feeding skills

Feeding skills usually develop fairly quickly between newborn and 2 years of age. Just like any other milestone, feeding skills happen in a hierarchy and at a progression. When this development is interrupted by a medical condition, feeding skills are missed, and often become delayed. As a child gets older, it may no longer be their discomfort that causes food aversion, but rather the lack of skills to eat the food. It is important to provide food that the child has the skills to eat.

the behavior rut

Parents can find themselves in a balancing act of keeping their child nourished as well as listening to their child's cues. It sometimes can be a "no win" situation when faced with the magnitude of behavior outburst such as; pushing the spoon away, crying, gagging, vomiting, or an increase in anxiety. A parent might find themselves in a rut of not knowing what to do. Should you push the child to eat more or do you withdraw?

finding the right feeding therapy

Getting an early start to feeding therapy is not the only important factor. Feeding struggles can affect a child's medical stability, nutrition, and behavior. You need to find a therapist or team that can address all of you and your child's needs. The medical issues need to be addressed before your feeding therapy will really work. Once medically stable, your therapist can help guide you towards positive mealtimes.

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