

FEEDING PRESENTATION “EXTRA STRATEGY TIPS”

- ASK THE PARENTS LOTS OF QUESTIONS. THEIR INPUT IS VALUABLE AND WE’RE ALL ON THE SAME TEAM. THEY ARE THEIR CHILD’S EXPERT.
- Observe the child and determine “where” the child is most ready to make changes/work on. (i.e. if the child loves spoons – give them many different types of spoons with different colors, shapes, textures, etc.)
- Children are born with the gag in the very front on their mouths, just behind their teeth. About 4-6 months, when spoon is first introduced, the gag is moved backwards.
 - Mouthing journey
 - 0-6 months - generative mouthing
 - 6-12 months discriminative mouthing using their fingers, toys, etc. to move the gag backwards.
- If children never mouthed, they need an opportunity to mouth a variety of toys, utensils, etc. to move their gag back and explore different textures, sizes, etc. for sensory exploration.
- Adding weight versus pieces to purees is better to decrease the gag. Thicker foods encourage more tongue movement.
- Anything can be a spoon – a duck’s beak, the trunk of an elephant, vibrating toys, a teething ring, mom’s/dad’s finger.
- If children are rigid with eating they are probably ritualized in other aspects of their life. Try to change things up (i.e. “How many ways can you get to the door”? Walk, crawl, jump, rolls, etc., “How many ways can you sit in a room?”) The child needs structure that will work for them but they also need flexibility. Make gradual changes the child will accept.
- Work towards 4-5 different foods within each food group. Mealtime choices with a variety of dietary choices will have greater success in the long run.
- Division of responsibility:
 - Mom/dad decides “when” it’s time to eat and “what” food choices are offered.
 - The child decides “if” they will put the food in their mouth and “how” much.
- Prepare the child for expected occurrences with regards to eating. This will also come in handy with tooth brushing later on.
 - Always feed in the same place (i.e. highchair, booster seat, floor, lap).
 - Try to keep same mealtime and snack daily schedule.
 - Don’t allow grazing or snacking in-between scheduled snacks/meals.
 - Decrease oral hypersensitivity by tapping rhythmically and counting, or saying little rhyming phrases (i.e. “1-2-3-4-in” and wait for the child to open his/her mouth; “okey-dokey artichoke” and wait for the child to open his/her mouth; or “see you later alligator, after while crocodile” and wait for the child to open his/her mouth).
- If the family eats at the dinner table together, let the child play with “safe” foods or plates, cups, bowls, utensils, etc.
- Allow the child to play with anything food-related like play food, songs, books, etc.