

**The FEEDING group** **act** Autism Community Training

**TAKING STEPS TO OVERCOME  
RESTRICTIVE EATING AND  
TRANSFORM MEALTIMES**

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*Disclaimer: These approaches have not been selected for your specific child so consultation with a feeding therapist may still be beneficial.*

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foundations of MOST treatment approaches

- Children learn best *through play*
- Food serves as a tool to teach eating skills, considering the food's sensory qualities and motor demands, and the child's oral motor, motor, sensory and cognitive skills, along with their past food experiences and ideas.
- Incorporating the child's interests at the 'just right' level of interaction with the food improves their intrinsic motivation and helps them learn to manage the qualities of that food adaptively.

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**Food Chaining**

- Food Chaining is one method to start with to help your child make changes to preferred foods
- This method does not work on your goals food first BUT working on making changes to their preferred or sometimes foods in the hopes that we foster flexibility, changes, small changes, positive experiences!

**How to Start Food Chaining**

- Pick a food your child already accepts
- Start with a small change that you think your child may be okay with.
- Offer these changed foods along with other foods your child likes and will eat.
- Once your child accepts the changed food, he or she has added this 'new' food to the list of foods they can accept and eat.
- You can then move on to make another change.

**Food Chaining**



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**Examples of Food Chaining**

<p><b>Example: French Fries to Cauliflower</b></p> <p><b>Step 1:</b> Fast-food French fries, french fries</p> <p><b>Step 2:</b> Homemade fries (made with french fries)</p> <p><b>Step 3:</b> Homemade fries (made with french fries)</p> <p><b>Step 4:</b> Cooked potato wedges</p> <p><b>Step 5:</b> Roasted chickpea potatoes</p> <p><b>Step 6:</b> Soft-baked potato wedges</p> <p><b>Step 7:</b> Firm roasted soft-baked potato wedges</p> <p><b>Step 8:</b> Roasted potatoes</p> <p><b>Step 9:</b> Cooked chickpea potatoes</p> <p><b>Step 10:</b> Soft-baked chickpea potatoes</p> <p><b>Step 11:</b> Roasted chickpea potatoes</p>	<p><b>Example: Strawberry Yogurt to Cauliflower</b></p> <p><b>Step 1:</b> Strawberry yogurt (with strawberry sauce)</p> <p><b>Step 2:</b> Strawberry yogurt (with strawberry sauce)</p> <p><b>Step 3:</b> Strawberry yogurt (with strawberry sauce)</p> <p><b>Step 4:</b> Add a small amount of cooked cauliflower to strawberry yogurt in a bowl</p> <p><b>Step 5:</b> Add larger pieces of cauliflower to the bowl</p> <p><b>Step 6:</b> Use yogurt on the cauliflower</p> <p><b>Step 7:</b> Use yogurt on the cauliflower</p> <p><b>Step 8:</b> Use yogurt on the cauliflower</p> <p><b>Step 9:</b> Use yogurt on the cauliflower</p> <p><b>Step 10:</b> Use yogurt on the cauliflower</p> <p><b>Step 11:</b> Use yogurt on the cauliflower</p>	<p><b>Example: Chicken Nuggets to Chicken Breast</b></p> <p><b>Step 1:</b> Fast-food chicken nuggets</p> <p><b>Step 2:</b> Store-bought baked chicken nuggets</p> <p><b>Step 3:</b> Homemade chicken nuggets (made with chicken)</p> <p><b>Step 4:</b> Cooked chicken breast</p> <p><b>Step 5:</b> Roasted chicken breast</p> <p><b>Step 6:</b> Soft-baked chicken breast</p> <p><b>Step 7:</b> Firm roasted chicken breast</p> <p><b>Step 8:</b> Firm roasted chicken breast</p> <p><b>Step 9:</b> Firm roasted chicken breast</p> <p><b>Step 10:</b> Firm roasted chicken breast</p> <p><b>Step 11:</b> Firm roasted chicken breast</p>
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Example: try it at home	Example: try it at home
Step 1:	Step 1:
Step 2:	Step 2:
Step 3:	Step 3:
Step 4:	Step 4:
Step 5:	Step 5:
Step 6:	Step 6:
Step 7:	Step 7:
Step 8:	Step 8:
Next Steps:	Next Steps:

Let's try it out!

Food Chaining



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- **Developmentally Appropriate**
  - Based on theory that feeding is a developmental process involving sensory, motor, oral-motor, behavioral, learning, and environmental components.
  - It must consider child's developmental stage and skills to guide intervention.
- **Systematic Desensitization**
  - Systematic exposure or progression of steps to gradually introduce and expand the child's acceptance of different foods.
- **Sensory Integration**
  - SOS recognizes the role of sensory processing in feeding difficulties.
  - It addresses sensory issues that may contribute to food aversions or selective eating, such as sensitivity to texture, taste, smell, or temperature.

Sequential Oral  
Sensory Approach  
(SOS)



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EATING

- shows and practices eating independently
- chews, swallows whole foods with drink
- chews, swallows sponges and soft solids
- bites, chews "X" pieces & soft ice
- bites pieces, holds in mouth for "X" seconds & spits out
- bites soft pieces & spits out immediately
- all stages 1-5
- licks, licks or licks

TASTE

- tip of tongue, tip of tongue
- lips
- chin
- chin, undermouth nose
- chin, cheek
- tip of hand
- neck, neck
- arm, shoulder
- whole hand
- fingertips, fingertips
- any finger

TOUCH

- alone, direct, indirect to mouth
- alone, indirect, forward, open
- side of table
- side of mouth

SMELLS

- with visible or invisible to view self, others, non-practice
- uses utensils or a container to stir or pour food/drink outside of own space
- uses utensils or a container to stir or pour food/drink for others
- uses the spoon/utensil up with food

INTERACTS WITH

- looks at food when directed "look at food"
- bring it the table with the food just outside of child's space
- bring it the table with the food, away across the table
- bring it the table with the food on the other side of the table
- bring it to the same space

TOLERATES

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**STEPS TO EATING**

**EATING**

- ☑ identify and swallow whole bites consistently
- ☑ chew, swallow whole bites with drink
- ☑ chew, swallow whole and soft bites
- ☑ bite, chew "V" bites & spit out
- ☑ bite, chew, swallow mouth full "V" around 8 months
- ☑ bite off pieces & spit out immediately
- ☑ full range bite
- ☑ spit up or cough

**TASTE**

- ☑ tip of tongue, tip of tongue
- ☑ teeth
- ☑ lips
- ☑ nose, underneath nose
- ☑ chin, cheeks
- ☑ tip of head
- ☑ elbow, neck
- ☑ arms, shoulder
- ☑ whole head
- ☑ neck, throat
- ☑ one high tip

**TOUCH**

- ☑ bare chest or poke up to wrist
- ☑ side or back of hand
- ☑ side or back
- ☑ side or wrist

**SMELLS**

- ☑ use utensils or containers to get self into best position
- ☑ use utensils or containers to get or pour food into a portion of own space
- ☑ use utensils or a container to sit or your food/bite for others
- ☑ watch a preparation for an adult

**INTERACTS WITH**

- ☑ looks at the table with the food in view or mouth open
- ☑ bring at the table with the food in view even for table
- ☑ look at the table with the food on the other side of the table
- ☑ bring in the same room

**TOLERANCE**

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**Looking Activities**

Activity	Example	Developmental Examples
Invite your child to grab the focus food in one family room now on use the same they grabbed for the food. They further and still, the table.	"My sister carried" "Sister's basket" "Whisper game" "Jiggler" "High-roller" "Georgia basket"	Babies: "Happy Playpen" Toddlers: "Get There! Get There!" Preschoolers: "Friends, Friends!" Middle Grade: "Tommy's Adventure" Older Kids: "Show Your Best!"
Read a children's book that contains the focus food or food in fun videos to watch that includes the focus food. Or try out Food Color Activity	"Veggies with wedges" "How do different eat food?" "Chopped Kids" "This one's not a Cheese" "There's no Ham in Hamburger"	Younger Kids: Take the food in that book and use it throughout the activity, pretend play with it Older Kids: Talk about the show or book after. What was cool about it? Would they want to try it out at home?
Go to your shopping with your child and other family and name items. You put the focus food in your cart.	"Look! Look! Look!" "Watch, can you?" "Can you find items in our cart. What other words do we see?"	Babies: Show & name foods. Toddlers: Point and name items. Preschoolers: Name the different categories of items in our cart. Older Kids: Name a "hamburger" without the food that contains items.

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Read a children's book that contains the focus food or food in fun videos to watch that includes the focus food

"Veggies with wedges"  
"How do different eat food?"  
"Chopped Kids"  
"This one's not a Cheese"  
Cooking Channel on YouTube  
Food Science

**Younger Kids:** Take the food in that book and then use it throughout the activity

**Older Kids:** Talk about the show or book after. What was cool about it? Would they want to try it out at home?




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Activity	Examples	Developmental Examples
Put 2 different foods in a bowl. Invite your child to close their eyes and smell. They can guess what the foods are by smelling them. You do it too!	Put oranges, bananas and cornflakes in a bowl.	Younger kids: Get them to guess, have them identify particular items. Older kids: Make it to be a surprise experiment. Create 'hard-to-find' items.
Present the food in a phone and your child needs to be in a conversation to eat it. There's a funny conversation.	Banana phones, cucumber phones, cornflake phones - all great options	Younger kids: Will think its funny! Older kids: You can get them to talk to it and eat it
Play a conversation game. Take different foods and talk about each!	You can use words like "loud", "soft", "strong", "weak", "crunchy", "soft", "sticky", "salty", "sour", "sweet", "bitter" and "spicy".	Younger kids: You can use words like "loud", "soft", "strong", "weak", "crunchy", "soft", "sticky", "salty", "sour", "sweet", "bitter" and "spicy".

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### Smell Experiment

Collect several items that have distinctive smells such as: Lemon, orange peel, cedar wood, perfume soaked cotton, banana, pine needles, chocolate, coffee, dirt, vanilla, garlic, onion, vinegar, moth balls, rose flowers, saw dust, ginger, peppermint, pencil shavings, potato chips

Keep the items separated and enclosed in plastic containers so that the odour do not mix.

Put a blindfold on the child (or punch holes in the top of the containers to eliminate the need of a blindfold):



**Questions and Comparisons:**

1. Guess the item by smell
2. Rate the odour

Strong, pleasant, neutral, Sweet, Sour, Strong, Mild

1-5 from favourite to least favourite

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Activity	Examples	Developmental Examples
Food artwork - put paper, art supplies (crayons, water colours, glue, etc.), and food in the bowl and invite them to create something using all of the items.	"What can you draw with what?" "Can you draw something that's crunchy?" "Can you draw something that's sticky?"	Task: Finger paint or smear a food like beans or chicken on paper. Task: Use foods as colours on paper. Task: Use foods as colours on a card. Age: 2+ (use more elaborate art with food items).
Invite your child to do food play with you. Give them a job that's age-appropriate and teach them how to do it safely.	Peel Foods Use a hot water bottle. Use a crunchy coffee. Use really heavy. Use food items. Use food items. Use food items.	Task: Use really heavy. Task: Use really heavy. Task: Use really heavy. Task: Use really heavy. Task: Use really heavy. Task: Use really heavy. Task: Use really heavy.
Play a counting game with foods. Invite them to take the foods out of a bowl or put them into a bowl as you count them together.	"How many apples in this bowl?" "How many bananas here?" "How many carrots in the bowl?"	Task: Count the number of items in the bowl. Task: Count the number of items in the bowl. Task: Count the number of items in the bowl. Task: Count the number of items in the bowl. Task: Count the number of items in the bowl. Task: Count the number of items in the bowl. Task: Count the number of items in the bowl.

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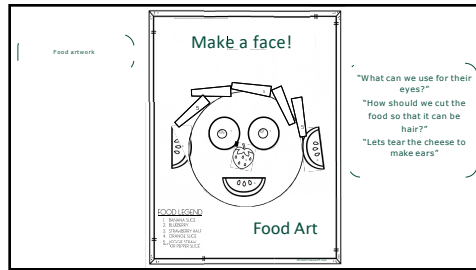
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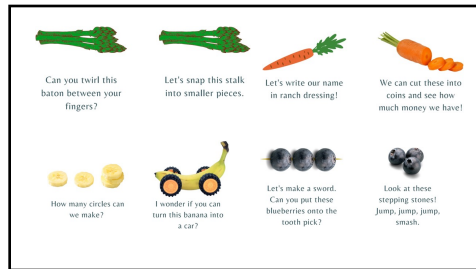
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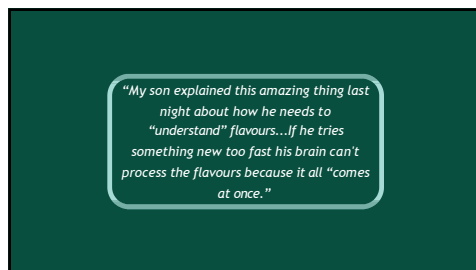
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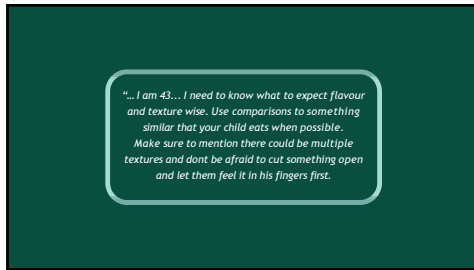
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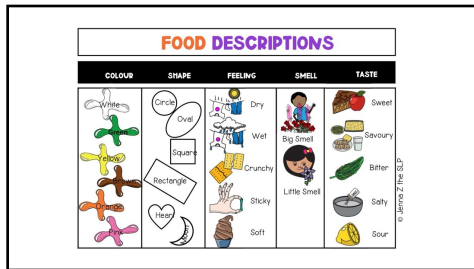
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LOOK	SMELL	TOUCH	TASTE
Smooth	Strong	Hard	Cold
Lumpy	Mild	Soft	Hot
Wet	Spicy	Crumbly	Warm
Dry	Savoury	Sticky	Spicy
Dull	Sweet	Firm	Bitter
Shiny	Citrus	Fluffy	Sweet
Stringy	Bland	Crisp	Sour
Colours*	Acidic	Sandy	Tangy
Shapes*		Chunky	Salty
		Rubbery	Creamy
		Crunchy	Mild
		Thick	Strong
		Thin	Smoky
			Savoury

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**treatment plans**



- Can be done at a mealtime (we recommend the last 5-10 min of the meal)
- Can be done outside of mealtime
- Aim for 2-3 times a week of food-based activity for consistency and progress

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**Discussion & Reflections**



Did any of these treatment concepts resonate with you?  
Thoughts about how you think these will go over with your children?

How did your progress go with the goals you set last week?  
Would anyone like to share one of their goals?

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**Assignments**

**Treatment strategies**

- Look, Smell, Touch**
  - Pick 1-2 activities you think you could do at home with your children
  - How would you adapt it for your own child's developmental stage as well as your lifestyle and routine
  - Plan out this week to trial 2 activities using a goal food, meeting your child at the step they are at.
- Sensory Properties**
  - Trial one of these activities at home with your child.
  - Modify if needed based on your child
- Food Chaining**
  - Continue to write out any food chaining ideas that you may consider
  - Trial 1 food chaining step this week

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