

## DAILY EATING/FEEDING OPPORTUNITIES

### 18-24 Months Continued

- I really love naming food, working on naming my colors and shapes, choosing my favorites, and wiping my hands, face and table or highchair space!
- When I am wiping the table, encourage me to wipe “up and down” or even in circles.
- Children love to be little helpers. Allow them to assist with cooking, stirring, serving, pouring from small containers, opening containers, and washing and drying dishes.

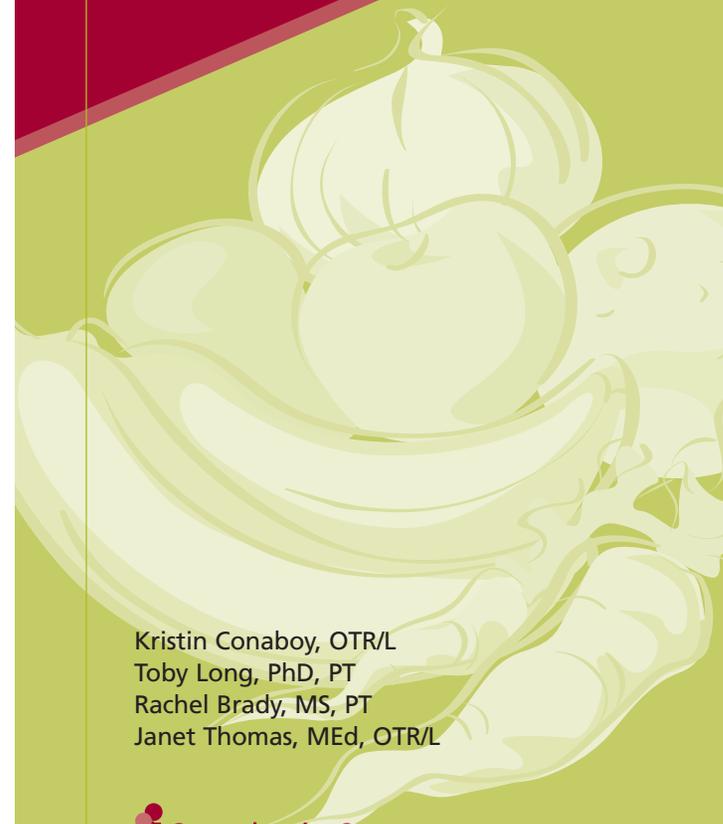
### 24-36 Months

- I am getting so good at this. I want to use bigger sentences to talk about what we are cooking and eating.
- I really like setting up the table, folding napkins, placing silverware. You can teach me about left and right and cleaning up.
- I can even help with washing, drying, putting the dishes in the dishwasher and sorting silverware.



This work was supported by the District of Columbia Early Intervention Program under grant number 9G0003 and the Georgetown University Center for Child and Human Development, University Center for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities.

Everyday  
Experiences  
Make a...



Kristin Conaboy, OTR/L  
Toby Long, PhD, PT  
Rachel Brady, MS, PT  
Janet Thomas, MEd, OTR/L

 Comprehensive System of  
PERSONNEL DEVELOPMENT

EATING/FEEDING

# ...lifetime of Differences.

## DAILY EATING / FEEDING OPPORTUNITIES

Meal time is often a challenging time for families and may seem like a difficult time to incorporate learning. However, think of all the social and sensory experiences we naturally have as we eat. During meals make lots of eye contact. It is a great opportunity for children to start learning about colors, shapes, tastes, and textures.

Remember that some children may go through picky eating phases where they eat very little...this is okay unless the phase seems to persist.

We must eat everyday, so try to use your everyday experiences as a time of learning, social interaction, and enjoyment with your child. You may be surprised at what you can accomplish!

### 0-4 Months

- Support my head and neck.
- Talk and sing to me in your soft soothing voice.
- Look into my eyes, move your face up and down and side to side for me to follow with my eyes.
- Gently stroke my hair and body so I know you are there.
- Recognize my need for a break.

### 4-6 Months

- Talk to me while getting us ready to eat.
- Tell me about how you are fixing my food and what I am eating.
- Keep touching me to soothe me while we are together. Let me play with your fingers or explore the bottle or breast.
- Can I watch you eat? I'll watch while holding a spoon, rattle, or teething ring.

### 6-9 Months

- Let me hold my bottle.
- Let me use my fingers to eat. Let me even try a spoon and sippy cup with your help.
- Please help me learn to eat by myself. Use your hands over mine for feeding or serving.
- I may be messy-don't get concerned. All kids are messy when they are learning to feed themselves.

- I may turn my head to tell you "I am finished". Use those words to help me learn to tell you when I am "all done".

### 9-12 Months

- Encourage me to finger feed myself. My fingers like to hold cookies, crackers, cereal, a little spoon and my sippy cup.
- Help me to prepare my plate by scooping and serving. Maybe I can fix yours too.
- I have favorites, but I feel good when I make choices about what I eat.
- At the grocery store, point out my favorite foods. I like learning the names of them and I love all the colors and sounds.
- Start opening the packages that the treats you give me come in and then let me finish.
- Food is yummy. I love all those sounds we make together "mmm", "yum".
- Talk to me about what you are doing, about feeling full, sharing snacks, basic nutrition, temperature, taste, and color.
- Allow children to play with food-related items like spoons and bowls, and be patient with their desire to experiment, explore, and be messy.

### 12-15 Months

- I love it when you let me keep trying to learn to feed myself.
- When you cook, can I pretend to help? I'll "help" with some pots, pans and a big wooden spoon! Watch—I can stir and pour and bang like a chef.
- I know I am messy. Help me wipe my own face and hands.
- The grocery store is filled with exciting things to learn about. Practice colors, sounds, pointing, picking up heavy objects and putting things "in" and "out" of the basket.

### 15-18 Months

- Food is fun and colorful. Point and label everything on the table. Can I point and try to say it after you?
- I can even try to learn my colors at the table!
- I am learning how to tell you what I want and need. I may point or even say "more" or "all done". Sometimes you may need to ask.

### 18-24 Months

- Eating can be lots of fun! Keep encouraging me to feed myself, help with serving, clean up my mess, and to tell you about what I want and need.

Show me *the way to* achieve my best *each* day!