

Feeding Therapy

Feeding therapy focuses on utilizing different strategies of food exploration and play to promote trying novel foods for a variety of reasons! Some reasons include:

- Increasing variety of diet
- Challenges with eating certain textures due to oral motor concerns (muscle movements of mouth, jaw, tongue, and lips)
- Being comfortable in a different environment including school, friends home, restaurants, etc.
- Many More!

Boston Ability Center (BAC) focuses on utilizing a Child Led Play approach in Feeding Therapy meaning BAC would never force a kid to eat a food they are not interested in. Instead, we try to improve tolerance that leads to consuming new food items. This can look like utilizing our different senses and the Sequential-Oral-Sensory (SOS) steps. Here are some examples:

- Sight: Looking at food and comparing it to a food the child likes
- Hear: Having clinician/parent crunch the food to see if it can make a big or small crunch!
- Smell: Smelling the food and asking to take a big or little smell based on comfortability
- Touch: Squishing food and using it to paint an object on a paper
- Taste: Taking a small lick or even bringing it to our lips



Feeding can be anxiety and stress provoking for both the child and parent. Some of the strategies we use to help prepare and throughout feeding therapy to help with those feelings are:

- Body Warmup: Play in the sensorimotor gym to help regulate
- Brain Warmup: Playing board games or online games (i.e wordle, hidden pictures, etc)
- Ghost Hands: Using kleenex to pick up food
- Taste Erasers: Using preferred food/drink to help with the non-preferred taste in mouth



Feeding Therapy

Feeding therapy can be done by both Occupational Therapy & Speech Therapy! Here are the comparisons & differences at BAC:

OT	ST
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Executive Functioning: Sensory regulation, motor planning, etc. • Self-care: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Grasping utensils, bringing food to mouth, etc. • Food Exploration • Messy Play 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Oral Motor: Muscle movements of mouth, tongue, jaw, and lips <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Sucking, tongue elevation and lateralization, etc. • Food Exploration • Messy Play 

Activities to do at Home!

- Using senses to explore food; model and practice positive language!
 - If not wanting to taste, talk about what you see, smell, hear, and feel
- Using food to create a picture
 - Using food coloring and crushing food to paint
 - Stamping with food, e.g., dipping a solid food in a wet food (e.g., apple sauce), edible finger paint, etc.
 - Make a funny face with food, etc.!
- Can use food to build a tower or make a pattern!
- Can use food to play Pictionary!
- Adding food to a game
 - Shooting food into a plate or trash can for points!
 - Using a straw or mouth to blow on food and see how far it goes
 - Food tic-tac-toe, explore food while playing a game
 - See if food items "sink" or "float" in a bowl of water
- Making Recipes together!
 - Finding a fun food to make with practicing foods. They don't need to eat it; they can just explore!
- Planning out what foods they may be interested in trying
 - What is something they are interested in trying?
- Wanting to try eating at a restaurant?
 - Have your child pick out 1 preferred food and 1 interested item to eat at the restaurant!



Resources

- SOS- Parents & Caregivers Feeding
- SOS Feeding Difficulties in Children
 - Youtube
- How to Get A Child to Try New Food
 - Play-Based SLP- Youtube (The Speech Scoop)
- Game Visual Placemats for Feeding
- Sensory Exploration with Food!
 - Finding Small Wins within Feeding
 - MeBe Family- YouTube

