

Eating Skills: Feeding Defensiveness

Question:

Is it common for children who are blind or visually impaired to have eating delays and what can you do for them?

Answer:

Many children who are blind or visually impaired develop sensory defensiveness. This can create oral sensitivities which may result in extreme aversions to the smell, taste and textures of food. It is common for parents to recognize an aversion to food at about the time when a toddler moves from the stage 2 baby foods (smooth) to the stage 3 baby foods (chunky).

Your child's speech therapist and occupational therapist can work with you on creating a sensory integration plan for your child. A sensory integration feeding plan begins with giving your child experiences of touch throughout their entire body, then providing opportunities of touch around the mouth and then working up to smelling, touching and tasting. Also, many local therapy centers for Speech and Occupational Therapy now offer feeding groups for children. There is a lot of research available to help you create a feeding plan.

Additional Resource Links:

- [Feeding Issues in Young Children – Kay A. Toomey, Ph. D](http://www.infantrefluxdisease.com/feeding_tips.php)
(www.infantrefluxdisease.com/feeding_tips.php)
- [Texas School for the Blind- Expanding Children's Diets](http://www.tsbvi.edu/Outreach/seehear/summer03/diet.htm)
(www.tsbvi.edu/Outreach/seehear/summer03/diet.htm)
- [Building Bridges Therapy Center in Plymouth, MI- Fun with Food Group](http://www.bridgestherapy.com/bridgesnew_files/Page385.htm)
(www.bridgestherapy.com/bridgesnew_files/Page385.htm)
- [Picky Kids, Eating](http://www.tacanow.com/Picky_Kids_Eat.htm)
(www.tacanow.com/Picky_Kids_Eat.htm)
- [Mealtimes by New Visions](http://www.new-vis.com)
(www.new-vis.com)
- [Speech Dynamics Inc. \(SDI\)](http://www.speechdynamics.com/)
(www.speechdynamics.com/)
- [The Out of Sync Child Website: Sensory Integration](http://www.out-of-sync-child.com/)
(www.out-of-sync-child.com/)

Catalog Information:

- [APH Products Catalog, American Printing House for the Blind, Inc.](#)
(www.aph.org)
1-800-223-1839

Pages 153-162 are dedicated to the Expanded Core Curriculum are of Daily Living and Social Interaction. Some affordable and useful items are: Talking Thermometer \$12.95, Talking Calculator \$17.95 (adding up purchases in the store), EZ Fill Pouring Aid \$12.95, EZ Track Book and Calendar, Money Handling and Budgeting: Print edition \$30.00-Braille edition \$45.00, 20/20 Pens (Pack of 5 \$6.50), APH Signature Guide \$5.00

- [LS&S \(Learning, Sight & Sound\)](#)
(www.LSSproducts.com)
1-800-468-4789 Toll Free

Items located on pages 32-35 are ideas for cooking aids, measuring and cutting, timers, opening containers and sewing. Prices vary in the catalog and need to be considered as to how useful the items will be for your child. Some inexpensive but useful items we have found are: the Microwave Omelet Cooker \$5.95, Boil Alert \$2.95, Long Oven Mitts \$3.50, Sunbeam Hot Shot Beverage Maker \$27.95 (you can also find it at Target & Sears), Inner Lip Plate 5.95, Jar Pop \$3.95, Four in One Opener \$4.95, Easy Threading Needles \$1.89, Needle Threader \$2.75, Hem Tape \$2.50

- [MaxiAids](#)
(www.MaxiAids.com)
1-800-522-6294 Toll Free

Items located on pages 99-115
Microwave 2 -Egg Poacher \$2.95, Flame Tamer/Simmer Ring \$2.95, Boil Control Disc \$2.29, Splatter Guard \$3.95, Pot Strainer \$2.75, Scorch Resistant Oven Mitt \$2.25 or any of the oven mitts on page 101 &102, 3 Section Plate \$7.50 (for younger children), Double Spatula \$8.95, Safety Food Turner \$3.95, Large Tongs \$ 3.75, Tomato/Onion Slicing Holder \$7.95, Egg Slicer \$1.35, Big Number Measuring Cups \$4.49, Big Number Measuring Spoons \$1.99, Measuring Spoon Set \$1.39 (Bendable aluminum for easier carrying), Adjust-A Measure 3 pc. Set \$9.95, Big Number Funnel Set \$3.95, Bold Print 2 Cup Measuring Cup \$3.95, Cooking Bottle Pouring Spouts \$2.95, Lettuce Knife \$5.95 (Safe for cutting food), Low Vision Cutting Board \$6.95, Make & Shake Ice Tray \$3.95, Non-Slip Grip Mat \$4.95, Dycem Non-Slip Multi-Purpose Pads \$ prices vary depending upon the size, Hexe Needle Threader \$2.49, Fiberglass Measuring Tape \$6.50

- [Independent Living Aids](#)
(www.independentliving.com)
1-800-537-2118 Toll Free

This is not an inclusive list of all items which might be helpful to your son or daughter in developing independent living skills. Work with them and decide which areas they need assistance and then explore items together that proves beneficial.

Collette Bauman, Special Education Consultant, Michigan Department of Education, MDE-LIO



Low Incidence Outreach
702 W. Kalamazoo St.
PO Box 30742
Lansing, MI 48909

Phone: 888-760-2206 Toll Free
Direct: 517-373-2887
Email: msdb-outreach@michigan.gov
Website: www.mdelio.org