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Managing feeding problems in children with Autism

Learning Objectives:

- 1) Review common feeding challenges seen in children with Autism.
 - a. Medical
 - b. Behavioral
 - c. Environmental
- 2) Learn successful behavior management strategies in working with Autistic children.
- 3) Understand how to collaborate with other treatment providers to ensure successful management of feeding in children with Autism.

Strategies for managing feeding problems:

- 1) Gradual exposure and desensitization
 - a. Sequential Oral Sensory (S.O.S.) approach to steps to eating
 - b. Desensitization hierarchy
 - c. Food play and exploration
 - d. Relaxation training to manage anxiety
- 2) Behavior management
 - a. Shaping
 - b. Fading prompts
 - c. Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) or Discrete trial training (DTT)
 - d. Positive reinforcement
 - e. Offering choices
- 3) Mealtime routine and schedule
- 4) Modeling and use of social stories

Autism Speaks Tips:

- 1) Rule out medical factors
- 2) Stay calm and patient with the process
- 3) Take gradual steps toward eating
- 4) Tune into textures
- 5) Play with food
- 6) Offer choices and control
- 7) Appropriate use of rewards/reinforcements