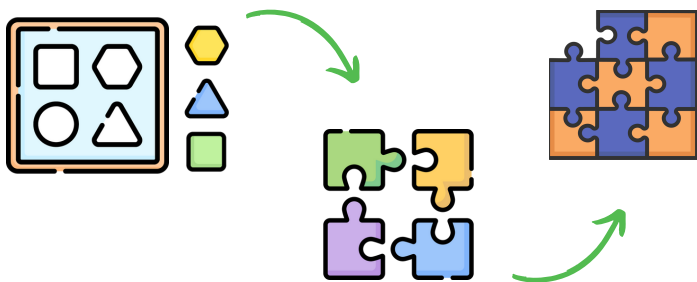


Behaviour Strategies to Support Feeding

How to use motivation

Motivating children with neurodevelopmental conditions (e.g., autism, cerebral palsy, global developmental delay) can be different than motivating neurotypical children.

Even if motivation doesn't seem connected to feeding, it will help to build your child's skills. Identifying motivators for your child will take time and creativity.



Eating is a difficult task to learn. Tasks that are difficult to learn require higher levels of motivation to complete. For example, putting together a more complex puzzle will require more motivation than matching shapes in a shape sorter.

To support your child's learning, take the following steps to identify powerful motivators to use as rewards:

- Spend time learning what your child already enjoys and is motivated to engage with or accomplish on their own (e.g., toys, activities, environments, people).
- Over time, as your child learns or experiences more positive feelings about completing a task, you can try to reduce rewards while maintaining words of encouragement.
- Check-in with your child to see how they are reacting and how they are feeling in order to adjust which motivators are being used. Rewards may change.



This handout is part of the NDD Restrictive Eating Clinic Information Series:
www.hollandbloorview.ca/RestrictiveEatingInfo

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