

# Feeding and Mealtimes

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**Dadman Walking**

@dadmann\_walking

Fact: kids have 2 stomachs. One is the meal stomach. It's about the size of a pea. This is why children cannot consume a full breakfast, lunch, dinner. The second stomach is the snack stomach. This stomach stretches and has infinite amount of space.



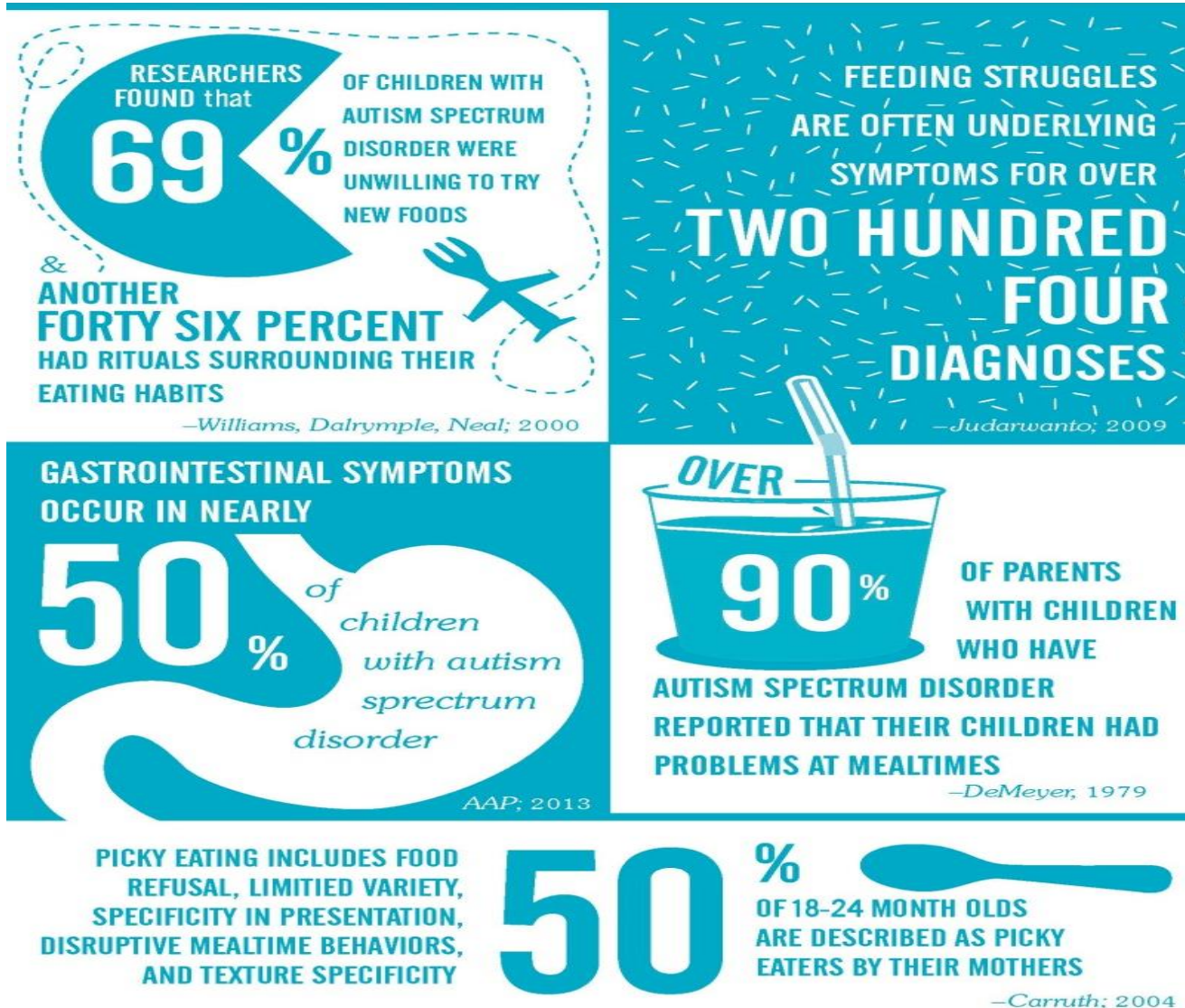
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# Outline

- Introduction
  - Common Myths of Mealtimes
  - Types of Eating Concerns
- Model for Why Picky Eating Develops
  1. Physiology
  2. Motor Skills
  3. Mealtime Behaviours
- General Strategies



# Statistics



# 10 Myths of Mealtime

1. Eating is the body's #1 priority
2. Eating is instinctive
3. Eating is easy
4. Eating is a two-step process
5. It is not appropriate to touch or play with food



# 10 Myths of Mealtime

6. If a child is hungry, they will eat. They will not starve themselves
7. Children only need to eat 3 times a day
8. If a child won't eat, they either have a behavioural or biomedical problem.
9. Certain foods are only to be eaten at certain times of the day.
10. Children need to “mind their manners” at meals.





# Eating Concerns

## Picky eater phase toddler to 5 year old starter pack:

Breakfast:  This every day only butter on white bread 

Snacks:  or  or 

Lunch:  or  <= Grape Jelly and smooth PB only or  <= Only American cheese

Dinner:  +  Plain with no meat or seasoning. or  + 

<https://knowyourmeme.com/photos/1922876-starter-packs>



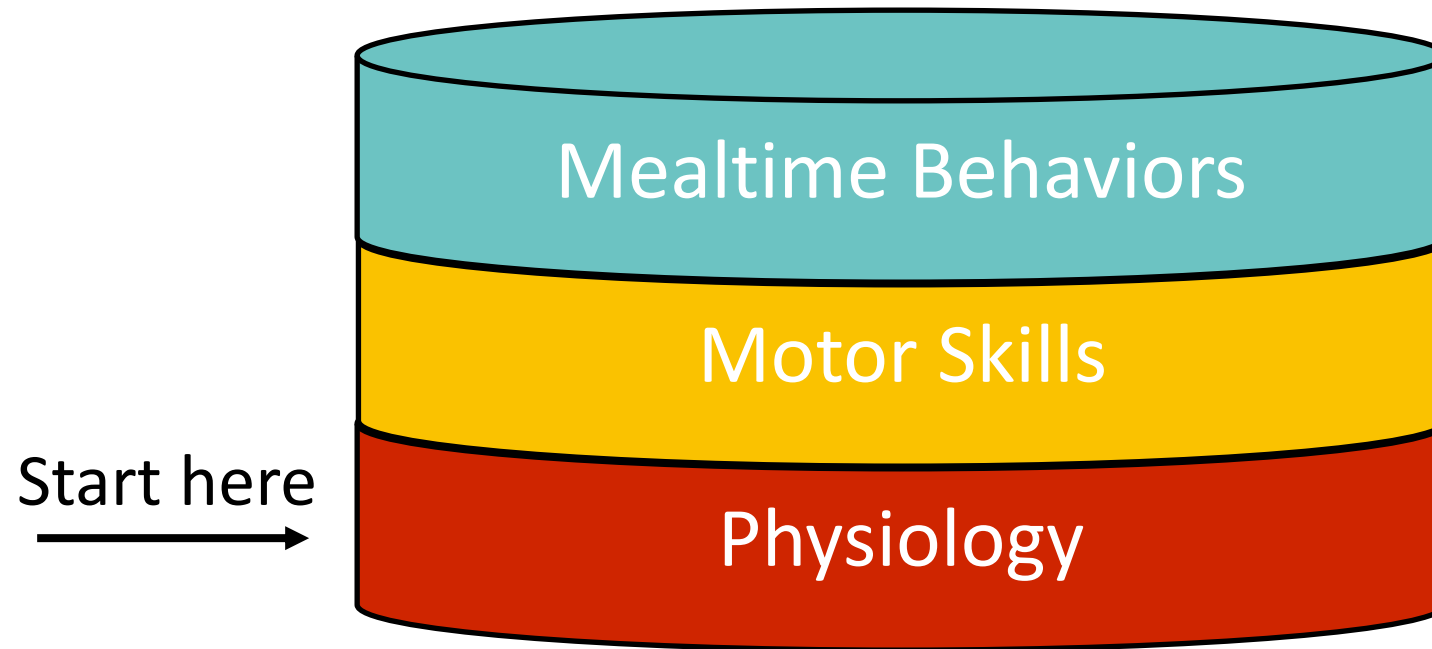
# Model for Why Picky Eating May Develop



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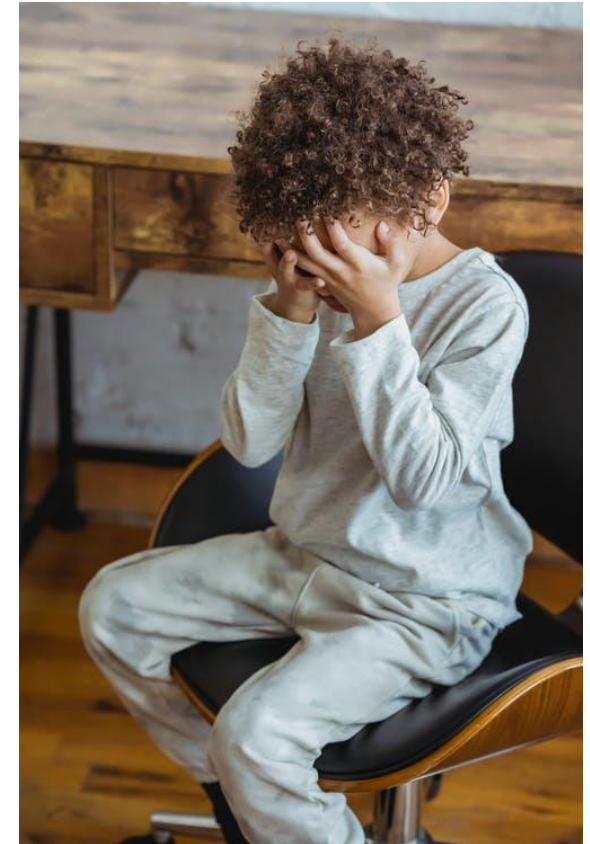
# 3 Key Pillars



# Physiology

## Physiology

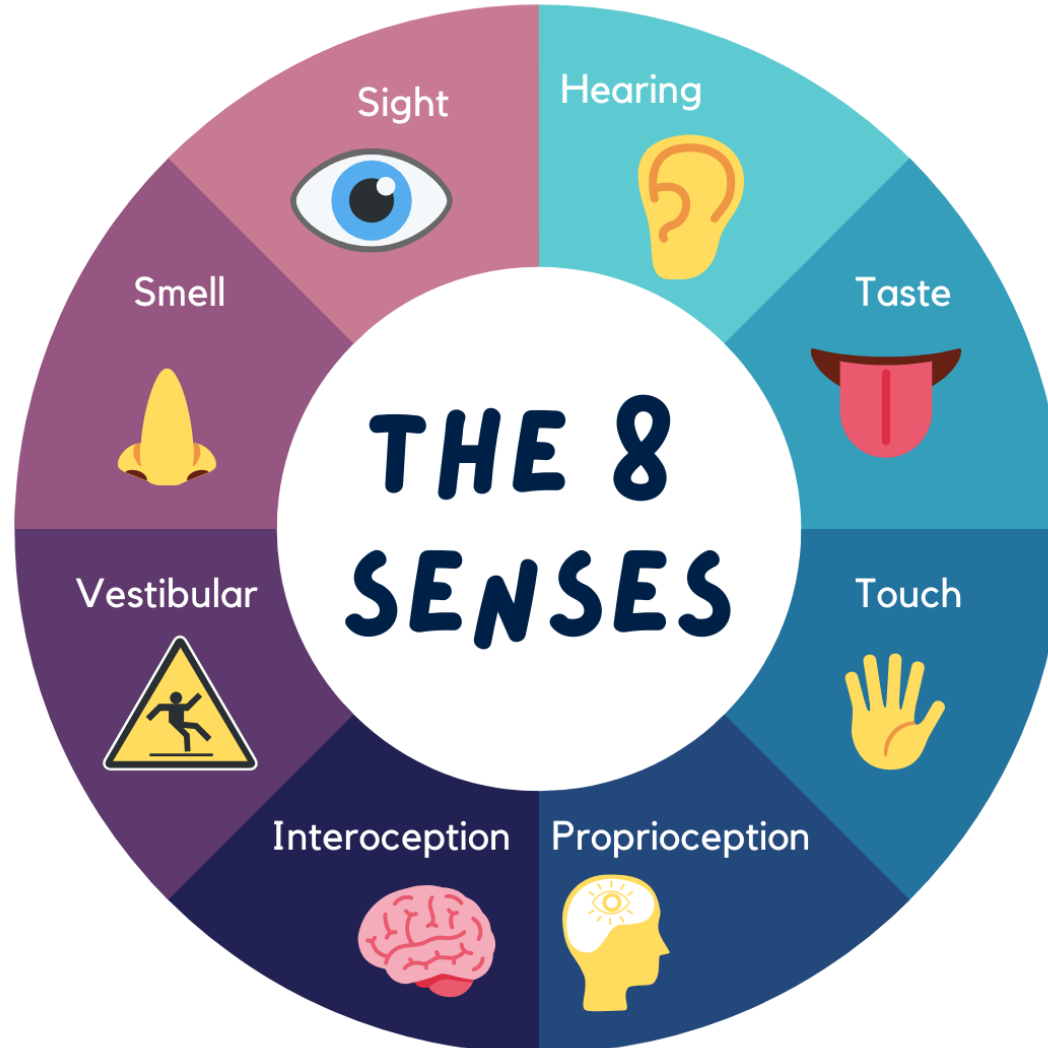
- Allergies/Food Intolerances
- Genetics
- Difficulty swallowing
- GI Issues
  - Constipation
  - Reflex
  - Poor Motility
- Medication
- Taste Aversion
- Sensory Processing



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# Sensory processing

Physiology



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<https://sensorystreet.uk/about-the-project/the-eight-senses/>

# Exploring foods through senses

Physiology



# Case Study: Abdi

- Client: Abdi
- Age: 4.5 year old
- What we knew:
  - very sweet and engaging boy
  - Parents said he was very picky eater and mealtimes were lasting longer than an hour
  - Sometimes vomited after meals and had a lot of chest infections
  - The family said that there was also a lot of running away during meals.





# Summary

## Physiology

- Eating is the most complex physical task humans engage in
- How we interact with food is affected by our physiology, our motor skills, and our learned behaviours
- We must address underlying physiological issues BEFORE (or concurrent to) engaging in other feeding interventions.





# Motor Skills

- Fine Motor Skills
- Oral Motor Skills
- Gross Motor Skills



# Taking a bite



- Progression of skills from infancy to toddlers
- Multi-step process
- Why is this sometimes delayed?



# Seating and Positioning

Motor Skills  
Physiology



Stability!



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# Case Study: Connor

- Client: Connor
- Age: 5 years 11 months
- Presenting Problem:
  - Limited food variety, however ate food from most food groups
  - All food was cooked till a porridge consistency
  - Would rub items on his lips, but would only open his mouth when eating
  - Anytime parents tried to change his food he would refuse to eat.



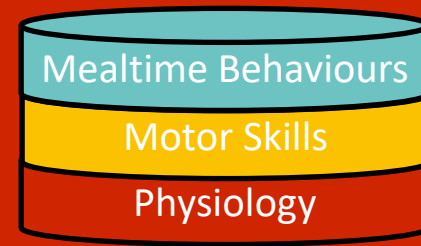
# Summary



- Need a balance between rate of maturation and positive practice
- Increase textures of food to build oral skills
- Consider readiness for self-feeding
- Open cups or straw cups to build oral motor skills
- Gross motor skill development can affect ability to eat



# Mealtime Behaviours

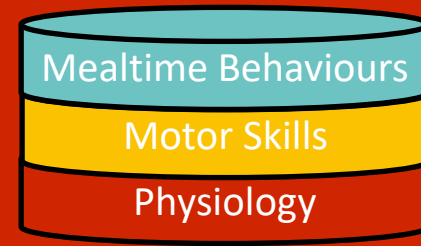


- The word “behaviour” gets a bad rap.
- Everything we do is behaviour.
- Not saying your child is “bad,” “trying to be naughty,” or wants your attention.





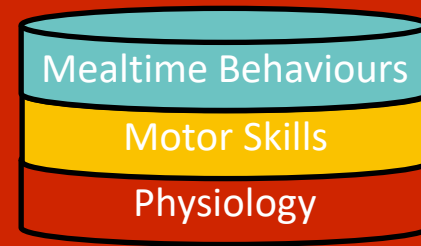
# Mealtime Behaviours



- Common mealtime challenges:
  - Frequently leaving the table
  - Pushing food away
  - Throwing food
  - Pocketing food in their mouths/not swallowing
  - Gagging
  - Crying
  - ...etc.



# Mealtime Behaviour



- Why do these challenges start and continue?
  - Likely start because of one of the earlier domains
    - Physiological or motor challenge
    - Unclear mealtime routine
    - Unclear or inconsistent expectations or instructions
    - Caregiver concerns or stressors
  - Likely continue because your child, not necessarily on purpose, gets something they want or something they don't want is removed.



# What should our goals be?

- Acceptance that people eat different things
- Be able to eat in the same room as others
- Have a balanced, nutritious diet
- Learn how to try new food
- Learn how to refuse food
- **A peaceful meal**

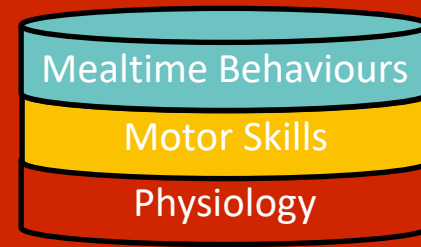


# A note on dinners



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# General Strategies



- Creating peace
- Routine
  - Structured meal and snack times- 3 meals, 2-3 snacks, no eating in between, no milk or juice between meals
- Say what you mean and mean what you say
- Gradually increase expectations
- Rewards
- Modelling



# The Satter Division of Responsibility in Feeding in our experience

## **Your Job with Feeding**

- What
- When
- Where

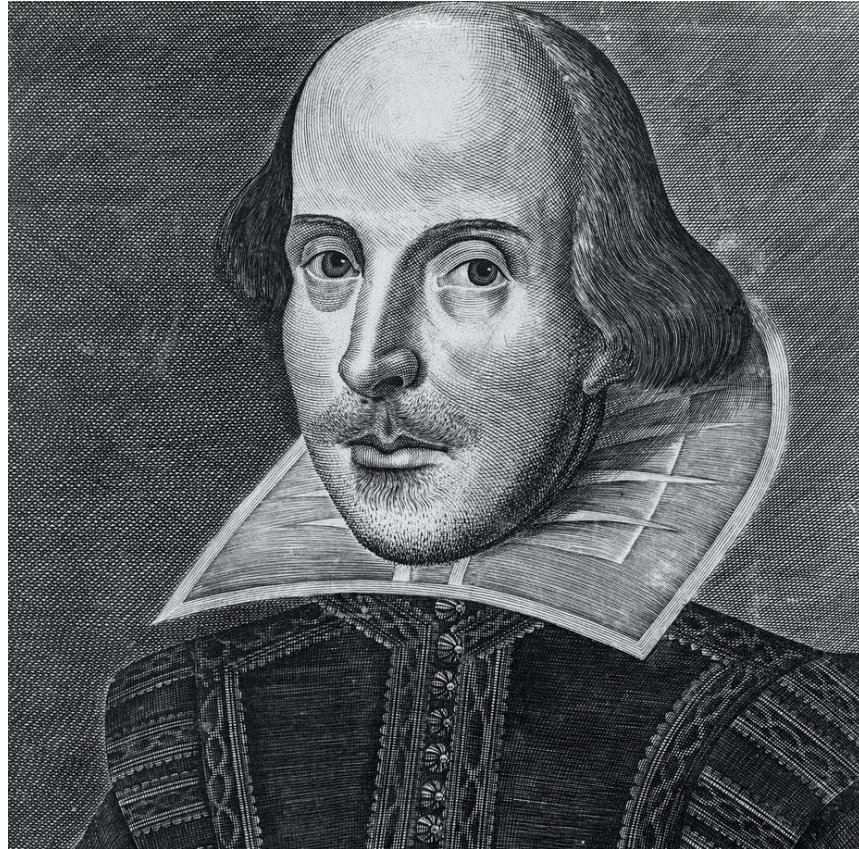
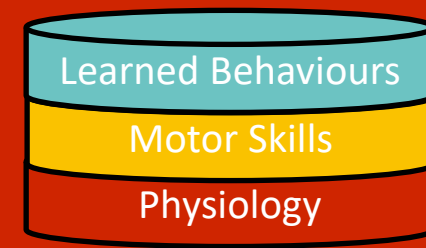
## **Your Child' Job with Feeding**

- How Much
- Whether





# Reinforcement aka rewards



To reward or not to reward?  
That is the question.



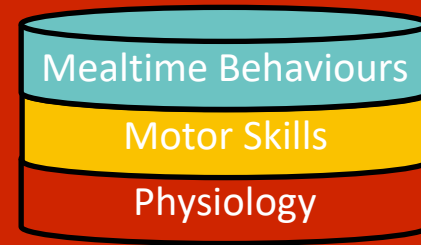
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# Stacking the Deck



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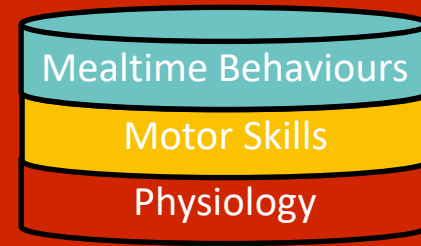
# When to celebrate?



- Depends on the child, but may include:
  - Remaining seated
  - Taking a bite
  - Chewing
  - Swallowing
  - Touching the food
  - Finishing the whole meal
  - ...etc.



# Sitting at the Table



- Things to consider:
  - Why is your child not sitting at the table?
  - Has a mealtime routine been established?
  - What are your family goals around sitting?
  - Sitting is a skill that needs to be learned
  - Environment

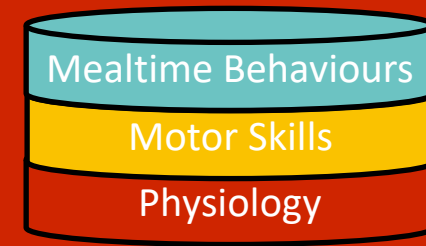


# Case Study: Able

- Client: Able
- Age: 6 years
- Presenting Problem:
  - Did not sit at the table to eat and couldn't feed himself.
  - Parents would follow him around the house to feed him or feed him while sitting on the couch.
  - Did not indicate when he was hungry or ask for snacks.



# Expanding Food Repertoire



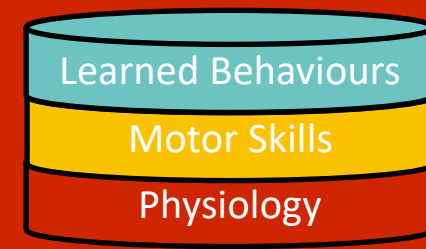
- The 3 Es
  - **Exposure:** present a variety of new foods
  - **Explore:** interact with foods without the expectation of eating
  - **Expand:** broaden opportunities beyond family meals

Adapted from My Munch Bug LLC. By Melanie Potock





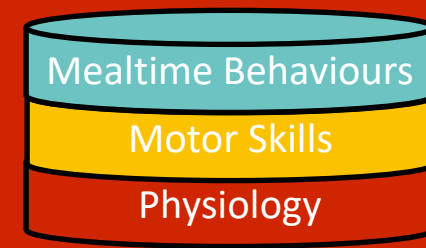
# Expanding Food Repertoire



- Hiding Foods
  - Not a great long-term strategy
  - Does not address the 3 Es (child doesn't know)
  - Doesn't build trust and comfort with the food



# Expanding Food Repertoire



## Stretching the Familiar

- Making small changes to a familiar food to help your child manage a comfortable level of change
- Building flexibility into the routine

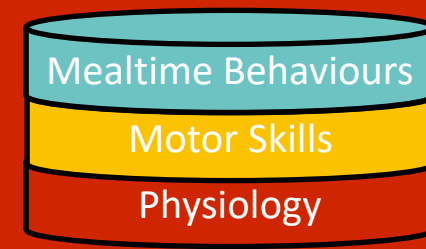


Many of these strategies are adapted from Mealtimes Connections by Marsha Dunn Klein



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# Expanding Food Repertoire



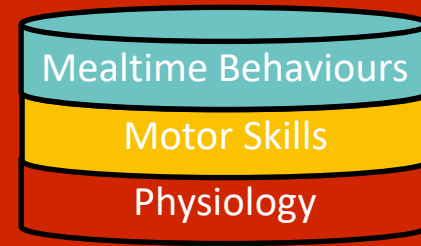
## Graduated Exposure or “Taste Sessions”:

- Increasing interaction with new foods before eating the food
  - In personal space
  - Touch
  - Smell
  - Kiss
  - Lick
  - Take a bite and take out
  - Chew 2x and take out
  - Chew 5x and take out
  - Chew and swallow

These might change according to where your child is at (smaller or bigger steps)



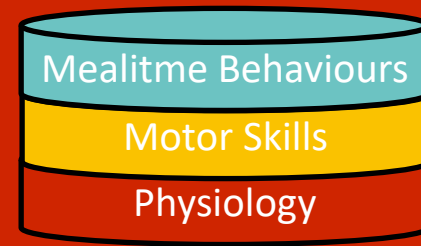
# Taste Sessions



- What should your child already be able to do?
- When and where to do a session?
- What food should we choose?
- How are we motivating them to work hard and be brave with food?



# Taste Sessions



So he is eating a grape with you, in a snack, what's next?



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# Case study: Mohammed

- 8 years old
- Presenting concerns:
  - Very limited food repertoire (10 foods including: fries, pizza from Panago)
  - Ate in front of the tablet
  - Milk and juice between meals
  - Family did not eat together and he ate separately at school



# Summary

- Rule out medical and motor skills before looking at behavioural strategies
- Make gradual changes to the foods they are already eating
- Increase your child's interaction with new foods before expecting them to eat the new foods





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