



MEALTIME INTERVIEW

When a parent expresses concerns about their child's mealtime behaviors a mini-assessment of the mealtime activities and routines could help to identify some areas that you could provide coaching.

Begin by telling the parents that you are going to review each mealtime step by step. In order to do this assessment, you will need to ask open-ended questions. These are some examples of open-ended questions about mealtime.

- Tell me more about breakfast.
- How does your child know that it is time for him to eat?
- What happens first?
- So when you tell him it is time to eat, what is the first thing that he does?
- What is everyone else in the house doing at this time?
- Who usually helps your child get breakfast for your child?
- If you have stairs to go down, how does your child get down the stairs?
- Where does your child typically eat his breakfast?
- If he is at a table, what type of chair does he sit in?
- If it is somewhere else, what else is going on (i.e. TV on, other children around)?
- Are there other children around when you child is eating breakfast?
- Once you provide your child with his food, does he sit for the entire meal?
- Does he eat everything that you give him?
- Does he pick the food or do you?
- Are there certain foods he likes better than other?
- How does he eat his food (fingers, utensils)?
- Are lunch and dinner the same? Or do thinks go better/worse at these meals.
- If they are different, ask the same types of questions about each meal.
- Paint me a picture of what it looks like at breakfast time.

Once you have exhausted all of your questions, identify those things that the parent has sounded concerned about, or things that sound to you like it is a concern. Make a list of these things, and tell the parent, if we had to choose one thing to focus on, what would it be? After this is identified, then number in priority order the other items.

This will help to identify if it is a behavioral need, a communication need, or perhaps a need related to textures and feeding that would require input from an Occupational Therapist.