

**Eating/Mealtime Concerns in Children (Early Childhood)  
with Suspected Autism Spectrum Disorder: Screening, Assessing and Planning**

**\*Conditions: At Risk for Autism (0-3 year olds) & Educational Diagnosis of Autism (3 years+)**

**Informal Screening** of eating or mealtime concerns by Early ACCESS team (e.g., Service Coordinator) or IEP Team members.  
(Interview to determine if there is a concern about eating/feeding or nutrition).

No concerns  
(document)

Yes, concerns in  
this area. Use  
PEACH Survey.

Yes, concerns  
present but not a  
priority for family  
Team documents  
concerns.

**Problem screened** and result documented (e.g., record review, parent interview, observation, PEACH Survey, **Food Preference Inventory**)

Not  
validated  
(document)

Significant validation  
(Problem exists)

Formulate hypothesis  
(What is the cause?)

**Assessment**  
**Rule out: Medical Concerns, Oral-motor & Feeding Concerns, Sensory Concerns, Motor Concerns, Nutrition Concerns, Behavior Concerns.**

**Possible sources of professional input (as needed):**

- \*Medical: AEA nurse, child's physician or other medical specialists
- \*Oral-Motor & Feeding Concerns: Occupational Therapist, Speech-Language Pathologist
- \*Sensory Concern: Occupational Therapist
- \*Postural Tone/Motor Development: Occupational Therapist
- \*Nutrition: assessment with registered dietitian.
- \*Behavior: FBA on significant issues (Psychologist, Consultants, Social Worker, Autism Resource Team)
- \*Other team members, as appropriate (e.g., teacher)

No specific  
plan is  
needed

Specific plan  
is needed

Specific plan is needed,  
but not a priority.  
Discuss monitoring.



**Plan** is developed by the appropriate team members.  
Considerations include:  
IEP, IFSP, Health Care Plan, Intervention Plan, Behavior Plan

HO: Common Issues in Autism:

- \*Limited family mealtime
- \*Adverse reactions to new foods
- Self-limited food selection
- \*Self-limited food groups
- \*Food jags
- \*Oral-motor and feeding delays
- \*Limited tolerance for change
- \*Decreased sensory tolerance for food properties
- \*Self-limited liquid intake
- \*Delayed hand skills
- ...

HO: Tools  
Linking To  
Categories of  
Eating/Feeding  
Concerns