



## **Trouble Transitioning to Solid Foods**

### **Why do some children have difficulty transitioning to pureed, chunky or solid foods?**

Just like the muscles in our arms and legs, sometimes the muscles in our lips, cheeks and mouth lack the strength or coordination to participate in eating and talking.

Some children have muscles that are too tight, weak or lack coordination to learn how to eat new foods. Other children have difficulty controlling their responses to touch, texture, taste and temperature. They may gag easily, spit out food or refuse to try foods presented to them. This may not be just their demonstration of food preferences but an actual feeding problem.

Your doctor may recommend that a feeding evaluation be completed to determine if therapy would be beneficial to improve your child's eating experience and abilities.

### **Why is my child being referred for a feeding evaluation with occupational, speech and physical therapy?**

At Courage Kenny Kids, our pediatric occupational therapists and speech-language pathologists are skilled at evaluating the different components of your child's feeding abilities.

Our therapists will assess your child's ability to coordinate the use of lips, tongue and cheeks to move food around in his/her mouth for safe swallowing. They also will look at your child's physiological ability to tolerate different textures, temperature and tastes, as he/she begins to broaden his/her diet. If recommended and your doctor approves, a videofluoroscopy swallow study will be ordered.

A physical therapist may also be included in the evaluation to help determine if positioning, trunk control and muscle tone are interfering with your child's feeding abilities.

### **What can I do at home?**

Begin to observe your child's eating habits. Pay attention to the type of food, amount eaten, length of time it takes to eat, and the feeding environment. Courage Kenny Kids will send you history forms where this information can be recorded. Please complete these forms prior to your child's initial evaluation.

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## How Courage Kenny Kids can help

Once your child is referred by your physician for a feeding evaluation, our therapists will perform an intake evaluation with an occupational therapist and a speech language pathologist. Our therapists will help determine if the underlying causes of your child's difficulty are related to his/her oral motor or sensory processing skills.

After the evaluation, the therapists will provide recommendations regarding treatment or activities for you to do at home with your child. If direct therapy is recommended, therapy activities will include play and eating activities presented in a fun way to advance your child's eating abilities. If your doctor also recommends other caregivers related to his/her feeding difficulties, we will work with them to provide a holistic approach to treating your child.

Reviewed by: Sara Rohde, OTR/L, manager, Courage Kenny Kids

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