

The development of feeding skills

Emily Jones

Speech-Language Therapist

Clinical Educator

Massey University



The journey

- ✓ Normal feeding development.
- ✓ Specific risk periods
- ✓ Parent child interactions
- ✓ What to look out for



Successful feeding development



- ✓ Acceptance
- ✓ Efficient and safe oral motor skills.
- ✓ Child-caregiver interactions at mealtimes



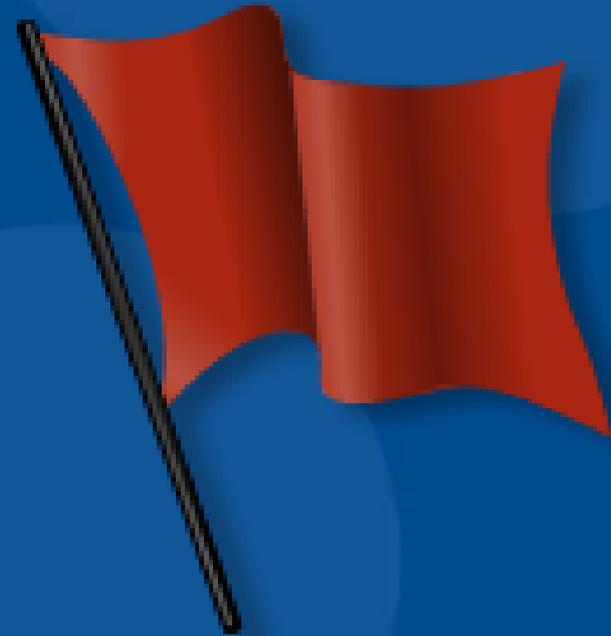
Give & Take

- Feeding and communication to develop successfully require give and take exchange.



Risk periods

- Weaning
- Self feeding
- Learning to walk/neophobia



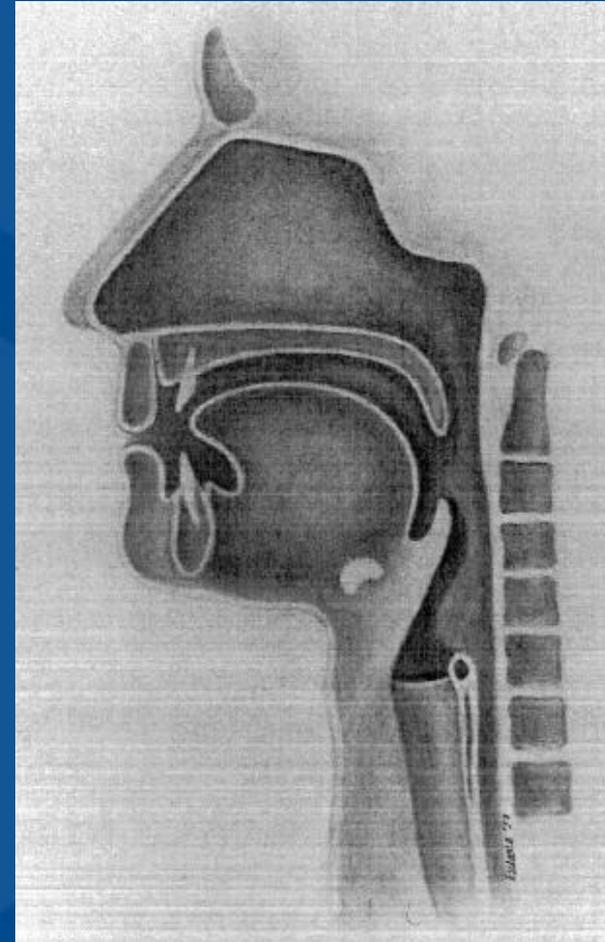
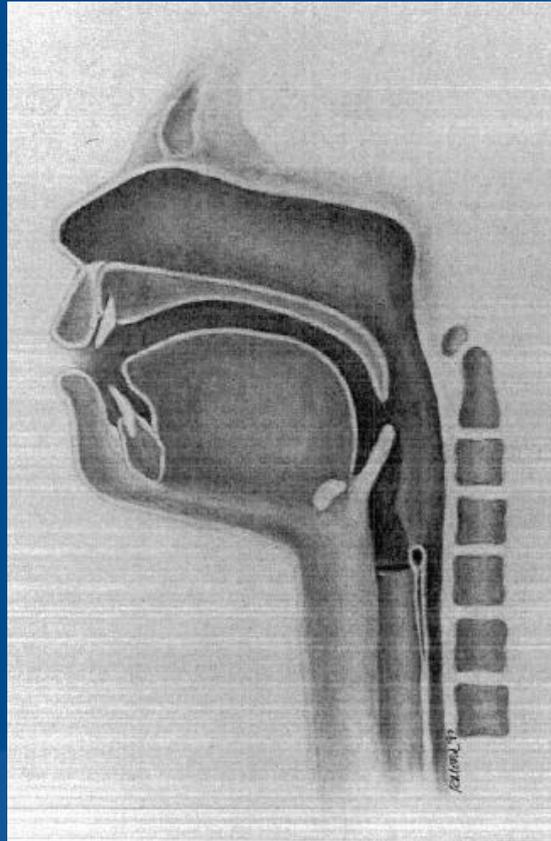
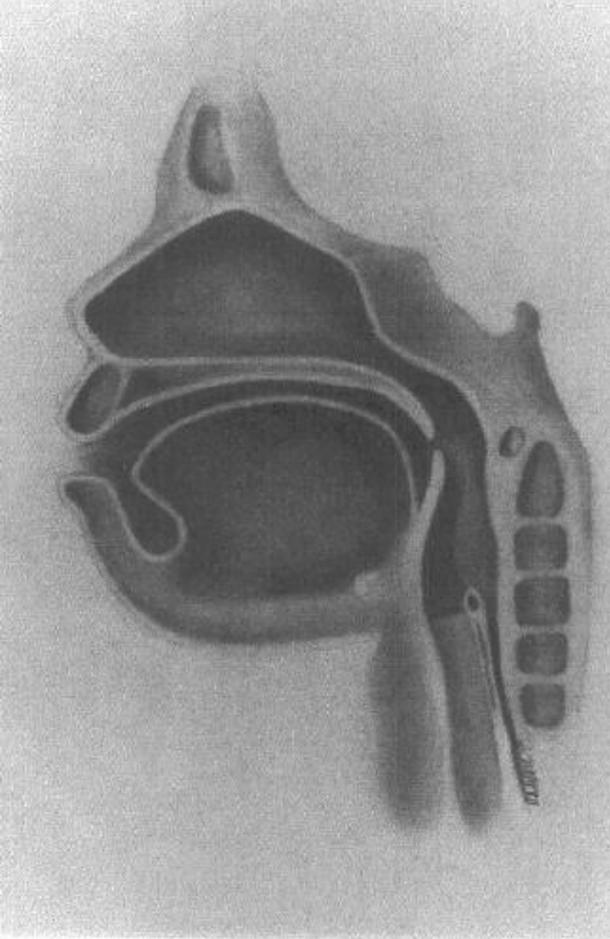
Foetal development



- Swallow (by 12weeks GA)
- Suckling (18-24)



Infant, toddler, adult



Early Feeding: 0-4 months The reflexive feeder

- ✓ Adaptive Reflexes:
 - ✓ Rooting
 - ✓ Suckling
 - ✓ Phasic bite
 - ✓ Crawling
 - ✓ Stepping

- ✓ Protective oral reflexes
 - Cough
 - Gag



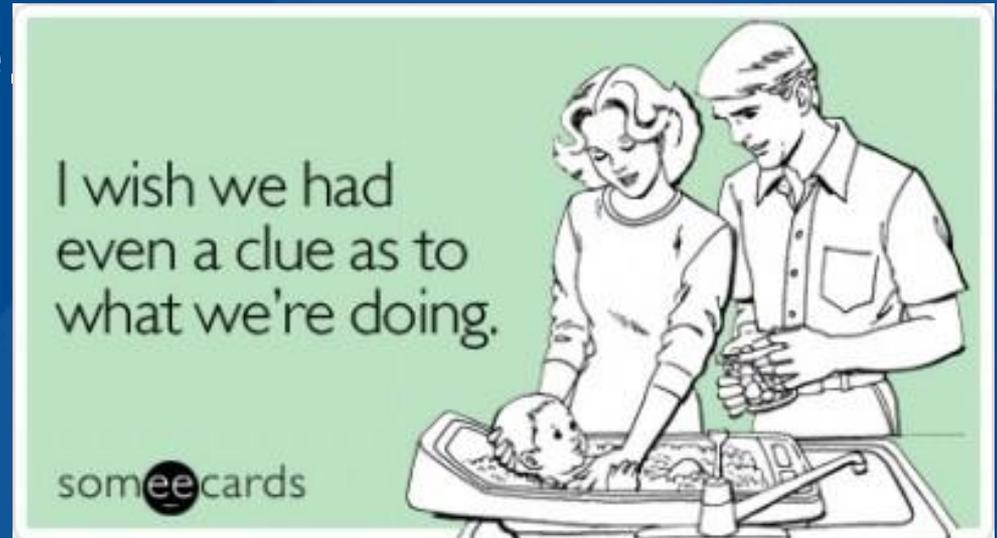
Feeding: the first interaction

- <http://Breastcraw/>

Homeostasis: 0-3 months

State regulation

- ✓ Feeding occurs in a quiet alert state
- ✓ Responsive and early feeding to ↑organise behaviour.
- ✓ Distinct roles begin



Caregiver must organise state
infants take what they need

EARLY CUES - "I'm hungry"



- Stirring



- Mouth opening



- Turning head
- Seeking/rooting

LATE CUES - "Calm me, then feed me"



- Crying



- Agitated body movements



- Colour turning red



Attachment: 3-6 months

- Primary emotional task for infants.
- Infant learns to love and to engage.
- Feeding becomes social.
- The effective caregiver maintains an active state of reciprocity with the child.
- Mealtime routines-spoon feeding.



Parent and baby roles during infancy



PARENTS

- type of feeding.
- Flow rate.
- feed promptly when baby is hungry.
- Supported feeding environment.
- Breast and bottle at appropriate angle.
- Minimise sensory interruptions



INFANTS

- Permission for nipple to enter mouth
- Set the pace
- Stop feeding when satiated.



4-6 months-weaning The Developing Feeder

- Significant developmental step.
- Oral reflexes diminish
- Sucking starts to emerge.
- Solid foods and textures challenging
- Critical period for new tastes.
- Phasic bite present
- Chewing practice



6-8 months: Eating becomes a learned behaviour Stabilising Feeder

- Reflexes gone
- Spoon feeding-first & 2nd stage solids.
- Cup drinking
- Vertical chewing/munching
- Gag moves back.
- Routine meals expected



Separation/individuation

Self feeding



- ✓ Increasing control over environment.
- ✓ Coincides with changes to foods and textures.
- ✓ Intimate dynamic → family meal.



9-12 months Controlled Feeder

- ✓ Mouthing
- ✓ Lip seal with vertical jaw
- ✓ Cup drinking ↑stability
- ✓ 3 meals & 2 snacks
- ✓ High chair
- ✓ Consistent tongue lateralisation.
- ✓ Biting through
- ✓ Rotary action beginning.



12-18 months

Mobility-Neophobia

Refining Feeder

- ✓ Tongue lips jaw independent.
- ✓ Rotary chew – open mouth
- ✓ Tongue tip and teeth to clean lips
- ✓ Controlled bite
- ✓ Straw drinking
- ✓ Neophobia



Parent and baby roles 6-12 months

Parents

What , when and where

- ✓ Offer food
- ✓ Read cues
- ✓ Present new foods.
- ✓ Positioning.
- ✓ Listen and respect choice
- ✓ Modelling

Babies

- Indicate hunger
- **How much**



18-24 months Independent Feeder

- ✓ Pointing and thinning of tongue tip
- ✓ Rotary chew with lip seal
- ✓ All textures eaten without loss
- ✓ Drinking in long sequences without loss
- ✓ No drooling



3 years

Fine tuner Feeder

- ✓ Foundation is set
- ✓ Circular rotatory chewing.
- ✓ Intake governed by intrinsic cues – hunger
- ✓ Extrinsic cues – social
- ✓ Preferred foods
- ✓ Conceptual categorisation – will eat biscuits even if broken



What to look out for from 0-3 years



- ✓ Nocturnal feeding
- ✓ Mechanistic feeding
- ✓ Force feeding
- ✓ Prolonged meals
- ✓ Any physiological factor unresolved?

- ✓ Refusal of previously liked foods
- ✓ ↑emotion responses to feeding
- ✓ Sensory sensitivity



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