A Systems Approach to the Development of Feeding Skills and Feeding Disorders
Rhoda P. Erhardt, MS, OTR/L, FAOTA, Consultant in Occupational Therapy, Maplewood, MN

Abstract
The purpose of this study was to utilize data from two video case studies, comparing comprehensive developmental behaviors during self-feeding of a typical child and a child with special needs. The data will be used to identify needs and plan appropriate interventions for optimal development and feeding disorders.

Overview of Typical Development and Implications for Feeding

Examples of Atypical Development and Implications for Feeding

Research Study

The Older Child at the Knob Stage
Developmental Milestones
- Fine motor skills: ability to grasp and manipulate objects
- Social skills: ability to communicate and share
- Language skills: ability to express wants and needs

Implications for Feeding
- Need for adaptive equipment
- Need for sensory integration
- Need for increased socialization

The Older Child at the Fork Stage
Developmental Milestones
- Fine motor skills: ability to use a fork
- Social skills: ability to interact with others
- Language skills: ability to express thoughts and feelings

Implications for Feeding
- Need for adaptive equipment
- Need for sensory integration
- Need for increased socialization

The Older Child at the Spoon Stage
Developmental Milestones
- Fine motor skills: ability to use a spoon
- Social skills: ability to interact with others
- Language skills: ability to express thoughts and feelings

Implications for Feeding
- Need for adaptive equipment
- Need for sensory integration
- Need for increased socialization

The Older Child at the Table Stage
Developmental Milestones
- Fine motor skills: ability to eat with a knife and fork
- Social skills: ability to interact with others
- Language skills: ability to express thoughts and feelings

Implications for Feeding
- Need for adaptive equipment
- Need for sensory integration
- Need for increased socialization

The Older Child at the Table Setting Stage
Developmental Milestones
- Fine motor skills: ability to set a table
- Social skills: ability to interact with others
- Language skills: ability to express thoughts and feelings

Implications for Feeding
- Need for adaptive equipment
- Need for sensory integration
- Need for increased socialization