

ACTIVITY HANDOUT: CAUSES OF MALNUTRITION CASE STUDIES

[MODULE 3: Nutrition Considerations for Children with Disabilities]

Why are these children at risk for malnutrition? Identify potential causes within the following categories: *what* the child eats, *how much* they eat, or how their body *uses* nutrients.

Case Scenario 1: Musa – 18-month-old boy with cerebral palsy

Musa has significant motor impairments and his muscles are always tense. He cannot sit or feed himself on his own. His mother finds it difficult to feed him and reports that it can take over an hour. Musa is fed mashed foods and drinks thin liquids from a spoon. During meals, he often coughs or gags, which makes feeding stressful for him and his mother.

Case Scenario 2: Miriam – 4-year-old girl with autism

Miriam has become extremely selective about food over the past six months. She will only eat five specific foods: white bread, plain rice, chicken nuggets, apples, and plain yogurt. Her father is concerned she refuses fruits and vegetables. Her growth is currently normal, but she is often constipated.

Case Scenario 3: Joseph – 7-month-old boy with Down syndrome

Joseph was born with a heart defect, which was repaired one month ago. He is recovering well but still tires easily. He recently started complementary feeding and currently drinks expressed breast milk from a bottle, along with small amounts of pureed cereal and fruit. His mother reports that he often falls asleep during feeding. He is not yet sitting up independently.

Case Scenario 4: Amina – 3-year-old girl with developmental delays

Amina lives with her grandmother and three young brothers. The family has limited income and often struggles to afford enough food. Amina is small for her age and has had frequent colds this past year. Her grandmother says Amina eats less than her brothers and tends to spit out food or refuse to eat unless she's given biscuits, juice, or cereal with a lot of sugar.

Case Scenario 5: Omar – 5-year-old boy with spina bifida

Omar uses a wheelchair to move around but spends most of his time lying down. His mother says that he struggles with constipation and often goes several days without a bowel movement. His constipation got worse after he started iron supplements for his anemia. His mother says he has a good appetite but only for high-fat, high-sugar snacks.