

ACTIVITY HANDOUT: FEEDING SCREENING SCENARIOS (ANSWERS)

[MODULE 4: Feeding Difficulties in Infants and Children with Disabilities]

For each scenario, consider: Is it appropriate for the child's age? Is it appropriate for the child's stage of development? Does it affect the child's safety?

Feeding Scenario	Is this appropriate for the child? Explain
1. A two-year-old child eats independently with some help from a caregiver.	<i>Answer: Yes.</i> <i>Notes: A child this age should eat independently, or with some help. They will benefit from opportunities to practice self-feeding to continue developing independence</i> <i>Why might a 2-year-old not yet be independent?</i> • The child may not yet have the skills to eat more independently. • If the child has never been given the opportunity, skills may be delayed. • If the child has other conditions that have interrupted typical development, skills may be delayed. • The child may have deficits due to a condition that affects body structures or limits body function.
2. A three-month-old infant is being fed food from a spoon.	<i>Answer: No.</i> <i>Notes: A child this age should be exclusively breastfed until 6 months of age. Infants who are unable to breastfeed may be fed breastmilk using an alternative method, like cup, spoon, or, if proper sanitation is possible, infant bottles. Complementary foods should not be introduced until 6 months of age and when the child can sit with minimal or no support. Spoon feeding foods at this age may suggest difficulty with breastfeeding. This would be a good opportunity to counsel the child's mother on breastfeeding and responsive feeding that supports optimal growth and nutrition.</i>
3. A three-year-old child has not yet been offered liquids from a cup.	<i>Answer: No.</i>



	<i>Notes:</i> A child this age should be able to drink liquids from a cup. You can offer support to caregivers to introduce cup drinking and practice skills, but more in-depth assessment or observation may be required to help you understand why the child has not yet transitioned to cup drinking. This could be due to limited opportunities, delayed introduction, delayed feeding skills, or other difficulties.
4. A four-year-old child with cerebral palsy eats only puree and mashed food textures. The child has motor delays and cannot yet walk.	<i>Answer:</i> No. And yes. <i>Notes:</i> A child this age should typically be able to eat all food textures. However, we know that this child likely has motor delays. This can affect his ability to move the key parts of his mouth in order to be able to chew foods. In that case, the textures may actually be appropriate for the child's development. That is, the texture matches his feeding skills. More in-depth assessment will be necessary to provide important information about his feeding difficulties and to identify strategies to support safety, efficiency, and build skills for effective and safe eating.
5. A six-year-old child with Down syndrome takes more than 45 minutes to finish a meal.	<i>Answer:</i> No. <i>Notes:</i> Mealtime for all children, regardless of age or stage of development, should last about 20-30 minutes. Anything longer than that would be considered a prolonged mealtime. Prolonged mealtimes reduce efficiency and the child may not be able to meet their nutritional needs. More in-depth assessment and observation will be required to help you understand the reason for prolonged meals. It may indicate that the child does not yet have the skills to eat the food offered. Perhaps the mealtime is prolonged because the child requires more help than is being offered.