

ACTIVITY HANDOUT: APPLYING STRATEGIES DURING FEEDING (ANSWERS)

[MODULE 5: Strategies to Address Feeding Difficulties for Infants with Disabilities]

Condition	Anticipated challenges during feeding	Recommended position or strategy	Reason for recommendation
Down syndrome	Low muscle tone May tire quickly A weak seal and uncoordinated sucking May need support for positioning. Reduced sensation may make it difficult for the infant to feel the milk in their mouth and impact their ability to swallow at the right time, which can increase the risk for aspiration.	Cross cradle position Underarm position Dancer hold Breast compressions	A cross cradle position could provide good support for positioning. An underarm position may give mother a good view of the infant's attachment and provide good support for positioning. The dancer hold supports the jaw and cheeks and helps maintain a lip seal around the breast Breast compressions may encourage continued sucking if the infant's suck is weak or fatigues quickly.
Cleft lip	If associated with a syndrome, there could be further complications. May have difficulty achieving a good latch with a complete seal around the breast. The opening in the lip causes air to escape and feeding can be inefficient. May lose milk from the mouth frequently due to the opening.	Dancer hold Upright position Breast compressions	The dancer hold supports the jaw and cheeks and helps maintain a lip seal around the breast The upright position may help direct the flow of the milk and reduce the amount of milk the infant loses out of the mouth or nose Breast compressions may encourage continued sucking if the infant's suck is inefficient and fatigues quickly.

Cerebral palsy	Likely to have issues with muscle tone. For high muscle tone, the stiffness may impact how the infant moves their tongue, jaw, and lips Infant may need support to achieve a stable and safe position. Difficulty opening the mouth wide enough or opening it too wide, making it difficult to achieve and maintain a good latch. May be at high risk for aspiration.	Cross cradle position Underarm position Dancer hold	A cross cradle position could provide good support for positioning for an infant with high tone that makes it difficult to maintain body position. Underarm position may improve jaw opening for a jaw that is tight due to high tone. For excessive jaw opening, use the dancer hold to support the jaw and cheeks and help maintain a lip seal around the breast.
Spina bifida/ hydrocephalus	The impact of spina bifida and/or hydrocephalus can vary widely. Infant's movement skills may be impacted, which could mean the infant requires support for body positioning. Infant may have difficulty achieving and maintaining good attachment and to suck effectively. Frequent vomiting or reflux possible.	Cross cradle position Upright position Side-lying position	A cross cradle position could provide good support for positioning the infant's body. An upright position could be helpful for an infant with frequent vomiting or reflux. A side-lying position may be helpful for an infant with hydrocephalus because it provides support to an infant's head.