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ABOUT YOU

- What is your experience with feeding assessment and treatment?
  - 1: This area is new to me
  - 2: I have some experience
  - 3: I am very experienced
- Who are you?
  - 1: I am a BCBA or RBT wanting to learn more
  - 2: I am a parent of a picky eater with ASD
  - 3: I am both
- If you have a picky eater with ASD in your life, tell me a little bit about their eating.
- What is something you are really hoping to learn from this presentation?

3

OBJECTIVES

- Participants will describe what causes and maintains feeding challenges.
- Participants will name foundational strategies for supporting kids with feeding challenges.
- Participants will list strategies for identifying culturally appropriate foods for the child's assessment.
- Participants will identify one child-led approach for selecting foods for treatment.

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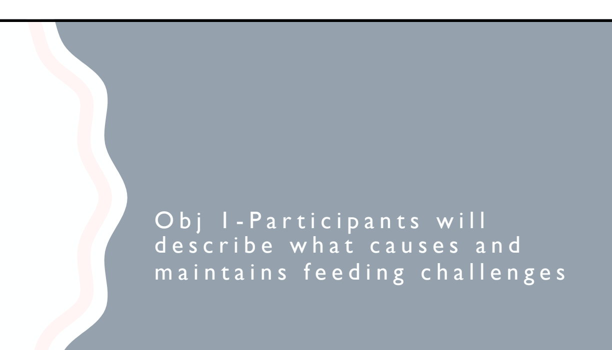

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WHY DO SO MANY KIDS WITH ASD HAVE FEEDING DIFFICULTIES?

- Estimated prevalence of feeding difficulties in children with autism is 90% (Kodak & Piazza, 2008)
- Does a child have picky eating BECAUSE they have autism?
- **Why one child might struggle with eating could be very different than another child.**
- The presentation of a feeding challenge can vary from child to child.

Kodak T., Piazza C.C. Assessment and behavioral treatment of feeding and sleeping disorders in children with autism spectrum disorders. *Child and Adolescent Psychiatric Clinics of North America.* 2008;17:887–905.

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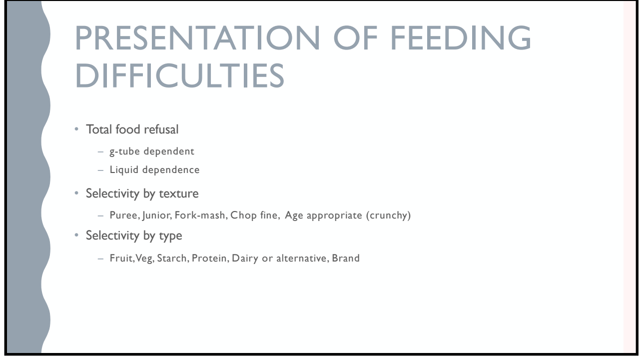

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SO WHY IS *THIS* CHILD WITH AUTISM A PICKY EATER?

- To understand a feeding difficulty for any individual, we need to do some good detective work.
- There are many systems in the body impacted by eating.
- There are many unique reasons why a child has feeding challenges.

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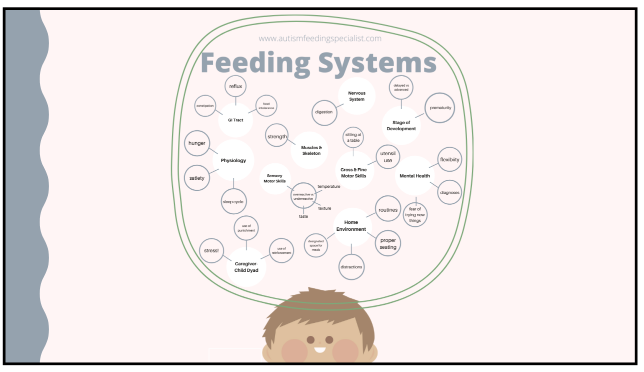

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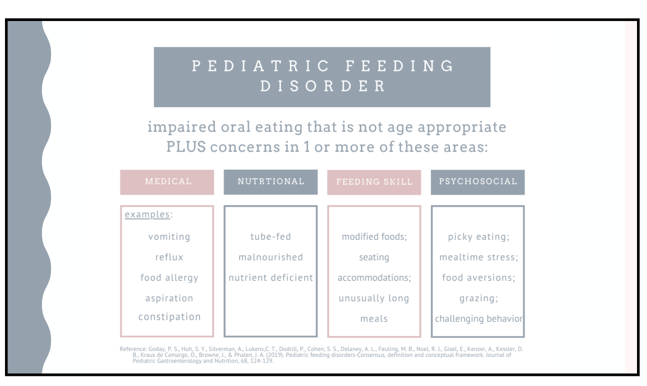

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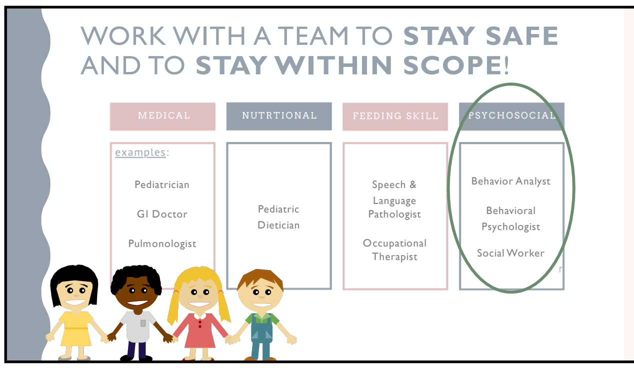

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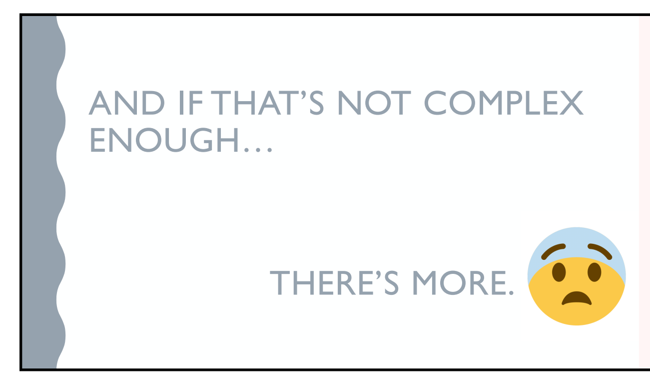

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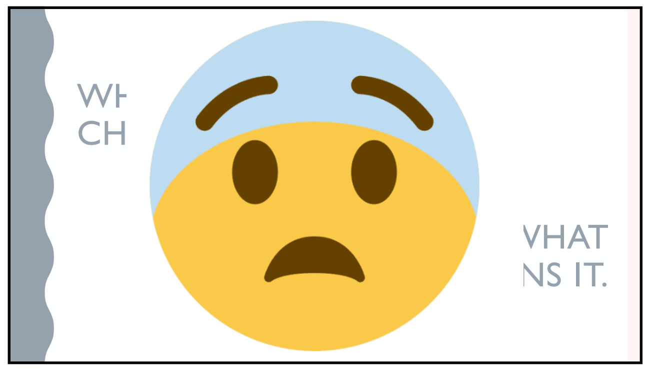

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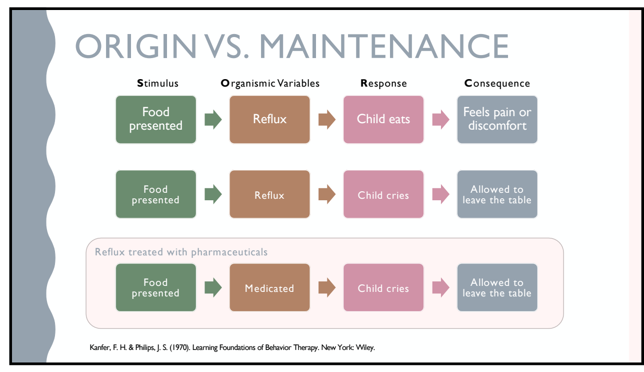

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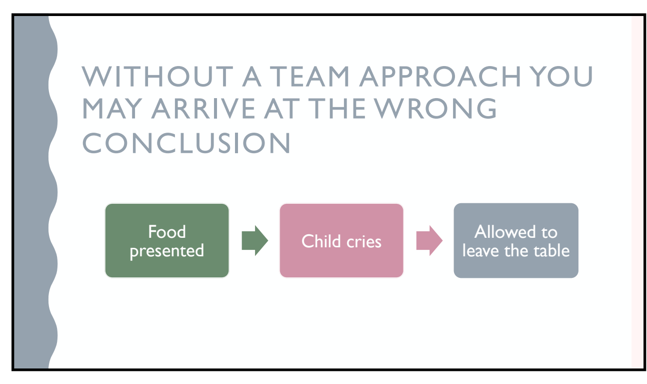

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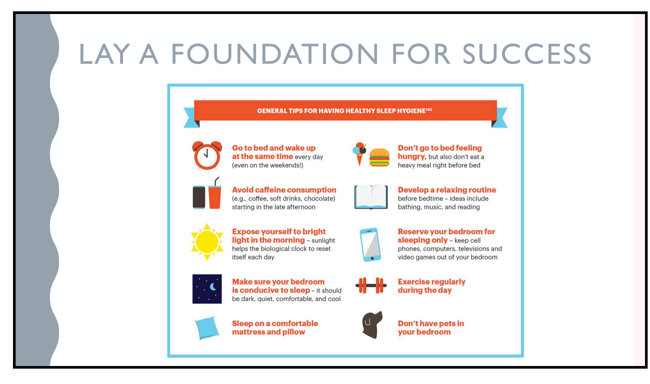

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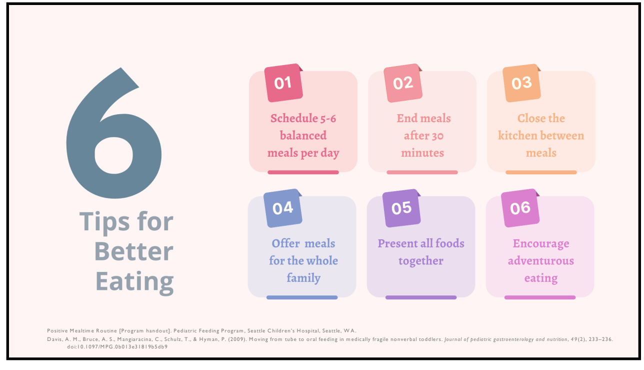

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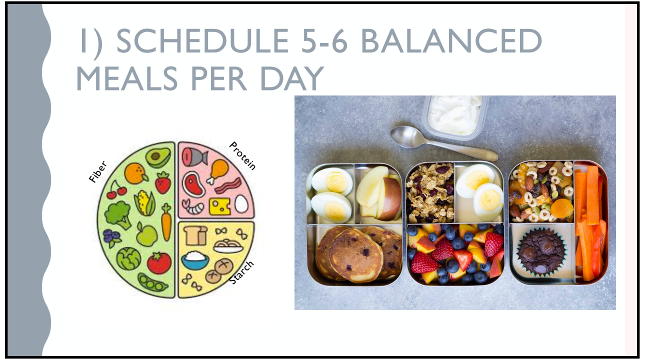

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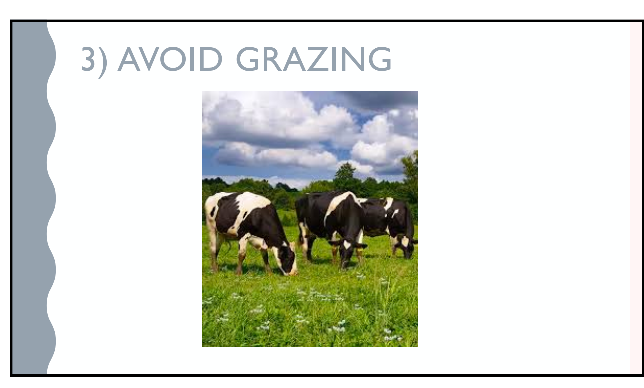

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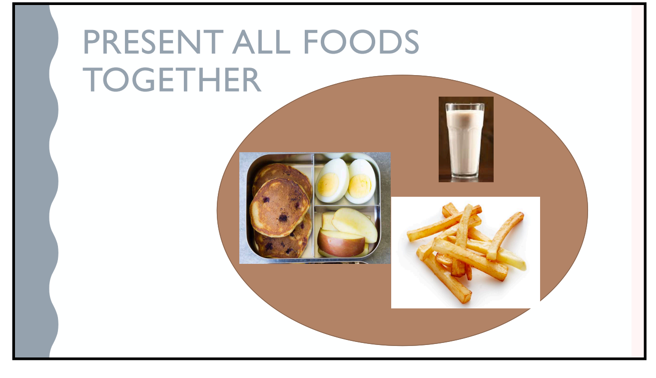

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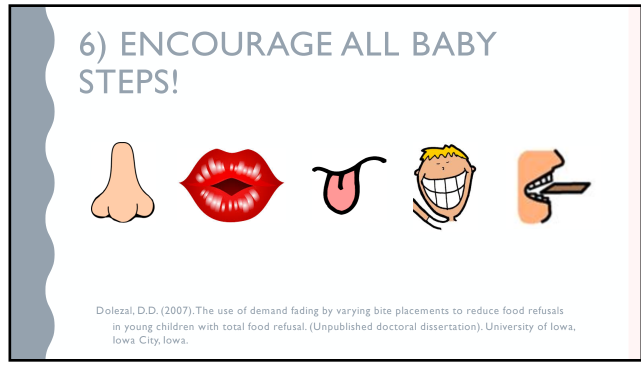

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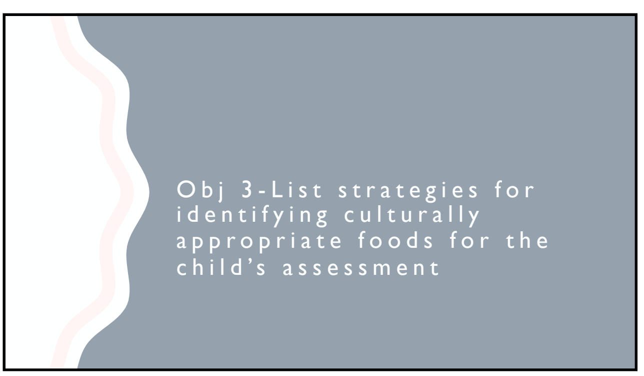

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FUNCTIONAL ASSESSMENT

- First, conduct a functional assessment interview and mealtime observation.
- Include foods the child currently eats and some novel target foods.
  - We'll discuss selection of target foods next.
- Descriptive assessment (Borrero et al., 2016)
- Functional analysis (Piazza et al., 2003)
  - Negative reinforcement: Plays primary role in up to 90% of cases.
  - Maybe we can ask a more interesting question…

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SECOND GENERATION QUESTION

"What makes the demand to eat so aversive for this child?"

Credit to Dr. Danielle Dolezal.

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DEMAND ASSESSMENT LITERATURE

- What demand stimuli are associated with more challenging behavior?
  - Presenting novel starch foods vs novel fruits/veg (preference)
  - Presenting novel pureed foods vs novel table foods (effort)
- Is demand presentation an establishing operation for challenging behavior?
  - Presenting 1 bite of yogurt vs a whole bowl of yogurt

Avery SK, Akers JS. The Use of Demand Assessments: A Brief Review and Practical Guide. Behav Anal Pract. 2021 Feb 22;14(2):410-421. doi: 10.1007/s40617-020-00542-8. PMID: 34150456; PMCID: PMC8149772.

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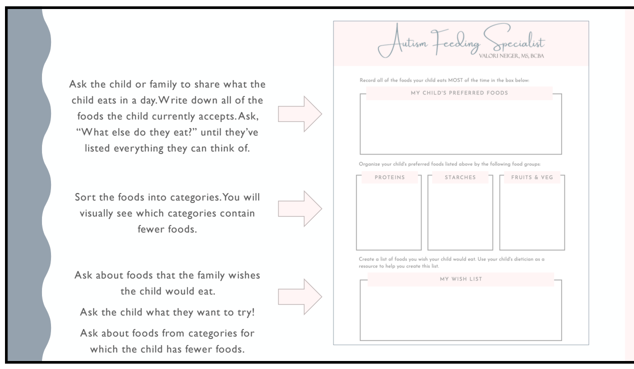

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CREATING OR EXPANDING THE WISH LIST WITH INTERVIEW QS

- What places or activities does the family avoid because there's nothing there for the child to eat?
  - Vacations (McDonald's, Red Robin)
  - Birthday parties (birthday cake, pizza)
  - Sleepovers (pizza, chicken nuggets, mac and cheese, PBJ, cereal)
  - Auntie's houses (what does she like to eat or serve?)
  - Restaurants (chicken nuggets, mac and cheese, quesadilla)
  - Day trips (nearby restaurants, museum deli, etc.)
- What traditions is the family skipping or avoiding?
  - Birthday cake
  - Traditional holiday foods in their family
- What does everyone else in the home like to eat?
- What does the family always have in stock in the fridge or pantry?
- What would make packing school lunches easier?

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GIVE THE PARENT A COPY OF THEIR CHILD'S MASTER FOOD LIST!

- Grocery shopping and meal planning for kids is hard.
- Doing it for a selective eater is even harder.
- Having all of the child's preferred foods listed in one place is a game-changer for a lot of families and reduces the mental load.
- They can distribute this list to other family members and caregivers.

SCAN ME

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GET TO KNOW THE FOODS ON THE MASTER LIST IF THEY ARE NOT APART OF YOUR FOOD CULTURE

- You may or may not be familiar with the child's preferred and/or wish list foods.
- Seeing, tasting and experiencing these foods can be REALLY HELPFUL in understanding what the child's preferences and feeding skills are.
- Find out how you can get familiar with the foods:
  - Ask the parent where you can buy the foods or where you could order a similar dish at a restaurant.
  - Ask for the recipes so you can make them or, at minimum, read the food lists.
  - Ask the parent to serve the food to the child or another family member when you are present so you can see a portion of the food. Smell it, look at it, squish it with a fork.
  - Ask about the food! Is it bland? Is it flavorful? What is the texture?
  - A friendly reminder: Don't assume you can eat the family's food. Buying food is costly. ☺

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GOING BEYOND THE MASTER LIST TO IDENTIFY PERSON-SPECIFIC FOODS

- Work with the child's dietician to identify foods or supplements the child would benefit from eating or taking.
- Ask the family what foods the child USED to eat. This could go back a couple of years or a couple of months. WRITE THESE DOWN. ☺ These are really good leads!!
- Ask the family what foods the child SOMETIMES eats. These are foods you might be able to treat to gain consistent acceptance.
- Work with the child's SLP or OT to identify foods that are appropriate based on the child's feeding skill or sensory needs (hyper or hypo, etc.)
- Go to the grocery store and look at foods that are similar to what the child currently eats, but has something novel about them.

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ANALYZE THE FOOD LIST YOU HAVE CREATED

- Look for patterns in taste: This can tell you about preference
  - Sweet
  - Savory
  - Likes berries
- Look for patterns in texture: This can tell you about preference AND effort
  - Puree
  - Dry
  - Crunchy
  - Crumbly
  - Chewy
- Think about how you want to assess your hypotheses.

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- You've confirmed the function(s) of the child's food refusal
- You have a master list of foods
- You can use that list to support the family in a variety of ways
- You have a culturally sensitive wish list of foods you can look at targeting
- You have already done a lot of analysis to answer the second-generation question: What makes the demand to eat so aversive for this individual?

…BUT WE ARE STILL IN ASSESSMENT!

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Obj 4: Participants will identify one child-led approach for selecting foods for treatment

Safety check: The introduction of new foods should only occur after ruling out medical concerns by an M.D. and swallow concerns, typically by an SLP.

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4 CHILD-LED APPROACHES TO IDENTIFY FOODS FOR TREATMENT

- Preference Assessment
- Fear Ladder
- Food Changes
- The Values Matrix

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PAIRED STIMULUS PREFERENCE ASSESSMENT

- Allows you to create a hierarchy of the child's preferences (so helpful for parents with shopping lists!!)
- Works well for many kids because they only need to scan/choose between 2 items; it's highly visual, etc.
- For very skilled kids, you could just make flash cards with food names and ask which they like better
- Child can consume their most preferred item-which reduces negative bx associated with taking items away in a preference assessment
- Very accessible for kids with limited communication
- Can be time consuming due to the number of trials required

Chazin, K.T. & Ledford, J.R. (2016). Paired stimulus preference assessment. In *Evidence-based instructional practices for young children with autism and other disabilities.* Retrieved from http://ebip.vkcsites.org/paired-stimulus

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DATA COLLECTION & PROTOCOL

1) Ask the child: Which would you rather eat?
2) Record the number of the item selected by the child. Or, record NC if the child made No Choice for the trial. Move on.
3) If child makes a choice: Offer the item to the child. Self feeder- Offer on a plate Not a self feeder- Offer to lips
4) Circle the number if the child accepted the bite. (Acceptance includes expulsions.) Move on if child refuses.*
5) Offer reinforcement for acceptances.

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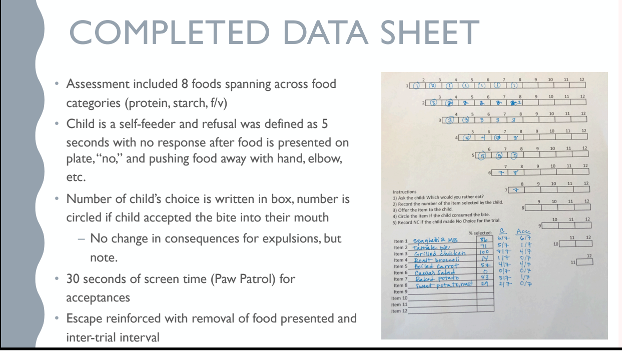

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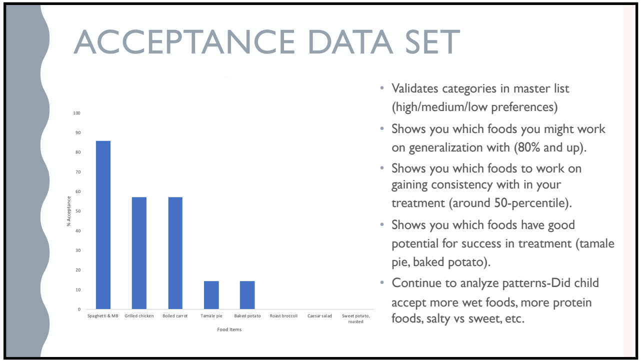

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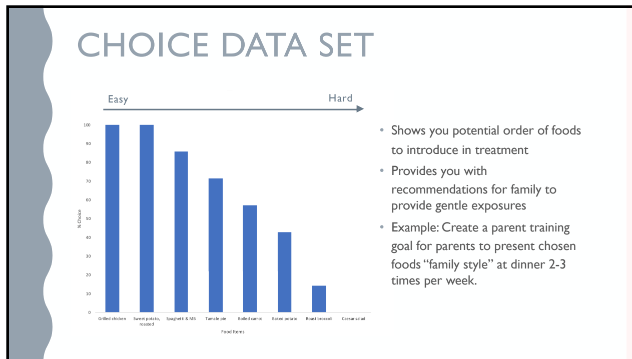

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PAIRED STIMULUS PREFERENCE ASSESSMENT DATA SHEET, 12 ITEMS

SCAN ME

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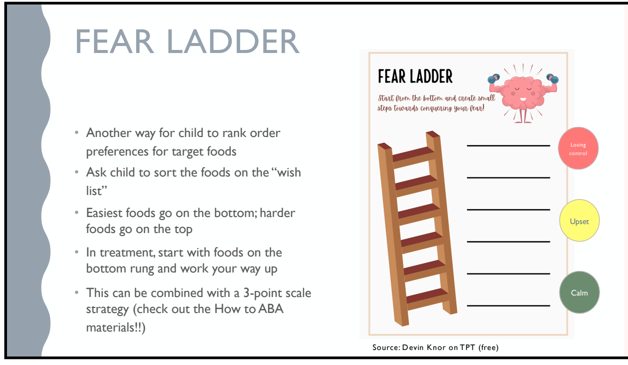

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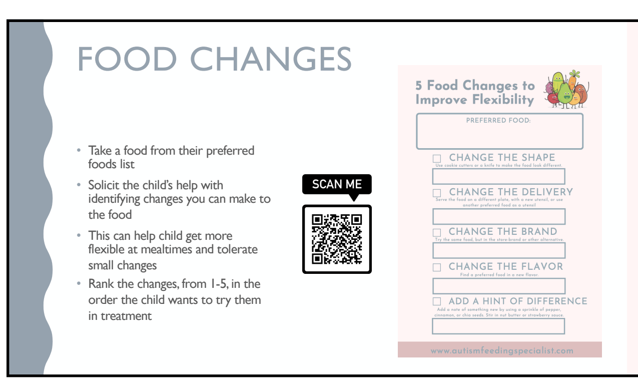

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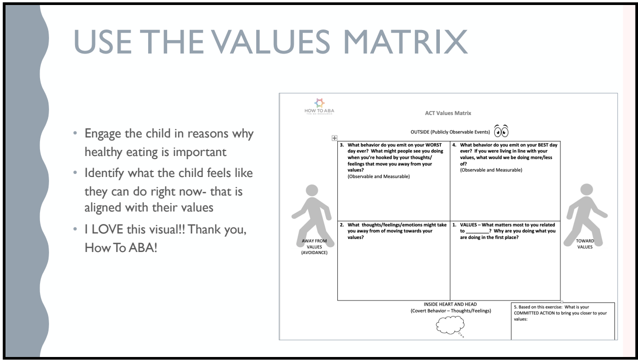

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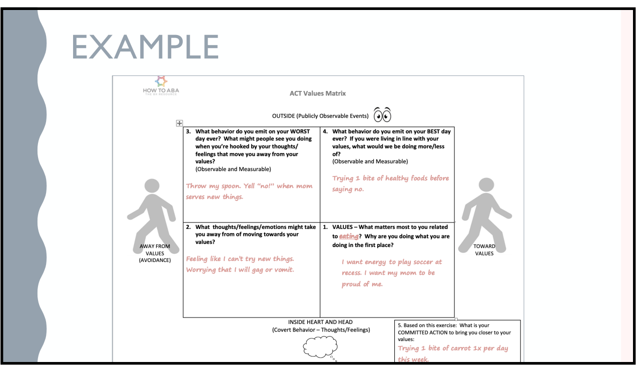

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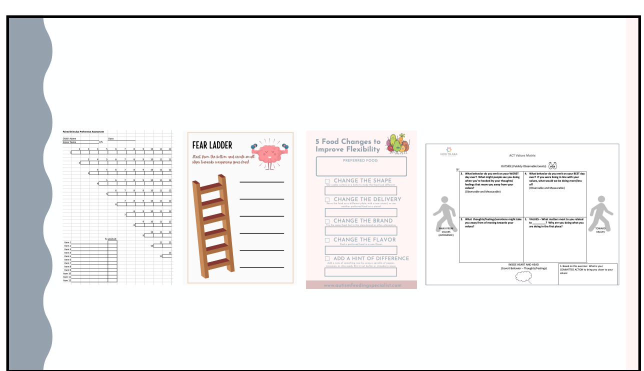

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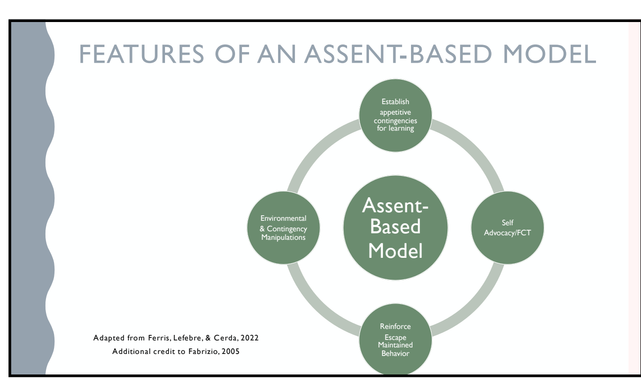

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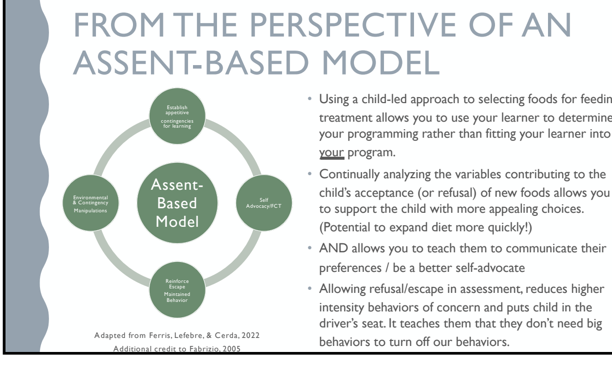

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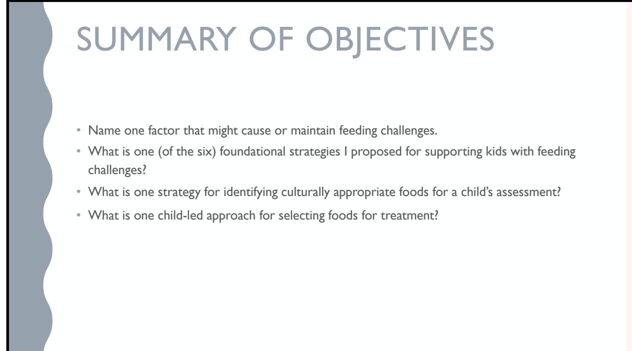

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