

East Sussex Children's Integrated Therapy Service

Occupational Therapy Team

IDEAS TO ENCOURAGE DEVELOPMENT OF SPOON FEEDING

N.B. Be selective with activities used, if your child is likely to put anything into their mouth do not use items they may choke on or which will make them sick or ill if swallowed.

Activities to encourage the practice of scooping.

1. Scoop wet or dry sand with a large spoon, wooden spoon, small spoon, measuring scoop or small spade.
2. Scoop soap suds, shaving cream from a pan or bowl with a large or small spoon.
3. Scooping uncooked macaroni, rice, lentils, or split peas in a large box with a large spoon.
4. Scoop sand over various objects to hide them and then encourage your child to find them. Your child does the scooping.
5. Scoop sand/rice over hand/foot to hide body part then "unearth" body parts.

Activities to encourage pronation and supination of wrist.

1. Pour water from one container to another.
2. Tip lentils, rice etc out of narrow necked bottles.

Tips to encourage self feeding.

1. Let your child experiment and practise self feeding with a spoon. Do not scold or fuss about spills or messiness. Spread an old sheet or plastic sheet on the floor to catch spills.
2. Scooping and bringing it to his/her mouth.
3. Help your child and do not allow him/her to become frustrated in his/her efforts to feed him/herself. Give him/her as much opportunity to do as much as possible by him/herself.
4. Let your child practise at the beginning of the meal when he/she is hungriest.
5. Use a bowl with a high edge or a scoop plate with a high curved edge on one side. Position the scoop plate so the higher edge is on the side toward which he/she is scooping.
6. Place a wet cloth under the bowl to prevent the bowl from slipping.
7. Serve foods which are easy to handle with a spoon. Foods which will stick to the spoon will make scooping easier.