

Towards independence series - 3

Feeding on their own

***Train your child
to feed himself !***



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(Funded by UNICEF)

National Institute for the Mentally Handicapped

(Ministry of Welfare, Govt. of India)

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Training in 'feeding'

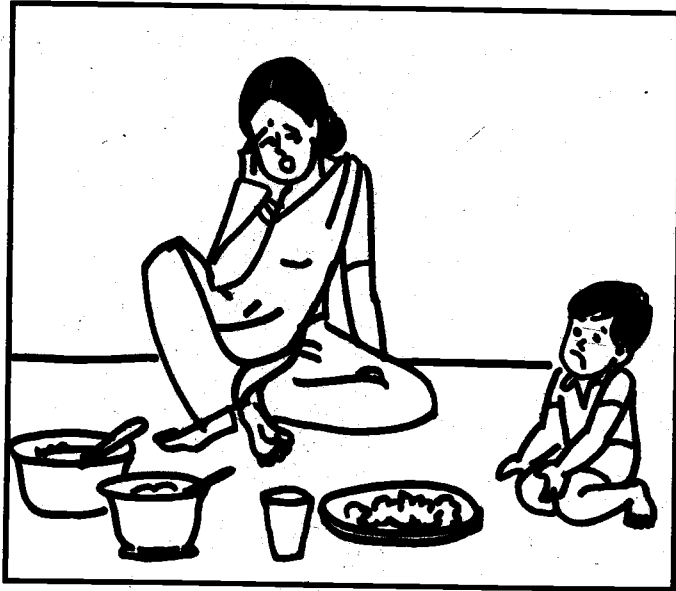
- * provides ability to feed self.
- * enhances social acceptability.
- * leads towards more independence.
- * reduces the workload of the caretaker.

**The longer the child depends on you to feed him,
the more difficult it is to train.**



**HENCE, START
TRAINING EARLY.**

HOW TO TRAIN ?



Check your child's abilities :

- * Can sit in an appropriate posture.
- * Can indicate the need for food
- * Can suck
- * Can swallow
- * Can bite and chew the food
- * Can pick up food with fingers
- * Can direct the picked up food into his mouth

Train the child depending on the area in which he needs training

POSITIONING

The child's head should be tilted slightly forward and the back straight and supported.

For a child who has physical disability

hold him on your lap, supporting him with your body



YOUNGER CHILD

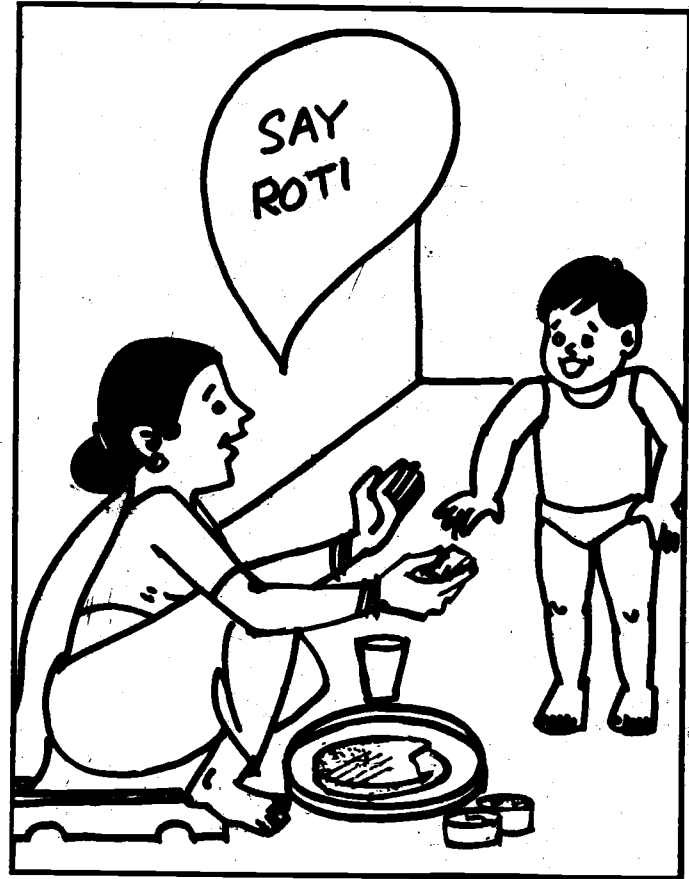
seat him against a wall



OLDER CHILD

INDICATING FOOD NEEDS

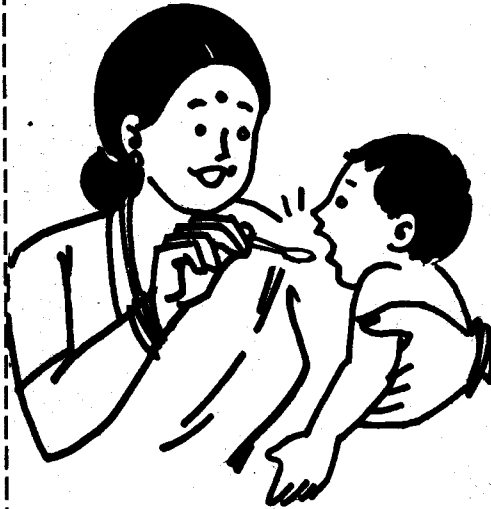
Before you give food each time,
teach him to gesture/say
the word referring to food.



SUCKING



Place a spoonful of fruit juice or any liquid the child likes in the child's mouth, so that he makes an attempt to suck.



Next, place a spoonful of food at the child's mouth, so that he feels the taste and sucks it in.

Use of a straw enhances the sucking ability



Try a straw glass!

SWALLOWING

Indicate swallowing by moving
your finger from the chin
down towards the throat
saying 'swallow it'.



BITING

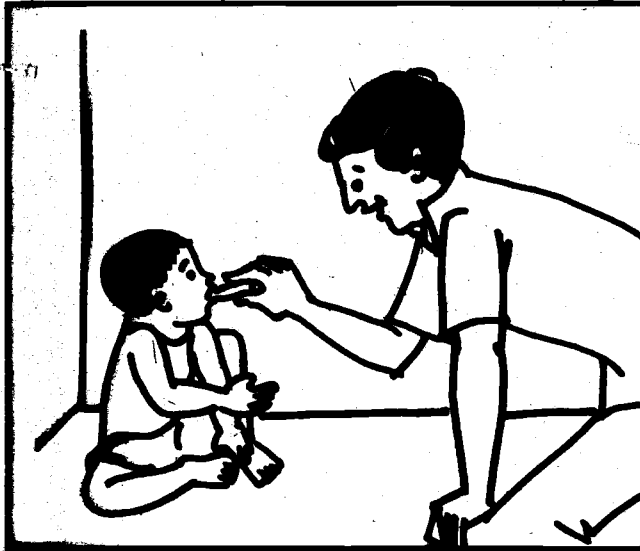


Give a biscuit between meal times.

As her teeth close on it, show her

that we bite off food in portions

CHEWING



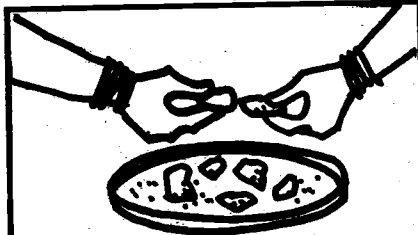
Holding one end of a long piece of carrot, put the other end between the child's side teeth, so that his teeth close on it and he starts chewing.

Let his brother/sister model chewing motions

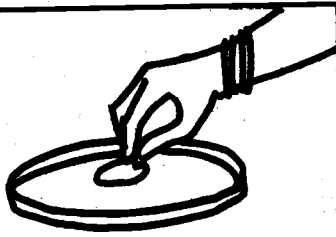
PICKING UP AND DIRECTING FOOD TO THE MOUTH

Start with foods which can be made into pieces, like puri, idli, vada, etc.

Follow these steps :



(a) Make idli into pieces



(b) Put one piece in the plate*



(c) Holding the child's wrist, assist him in closing his fingers round the piece of idli,

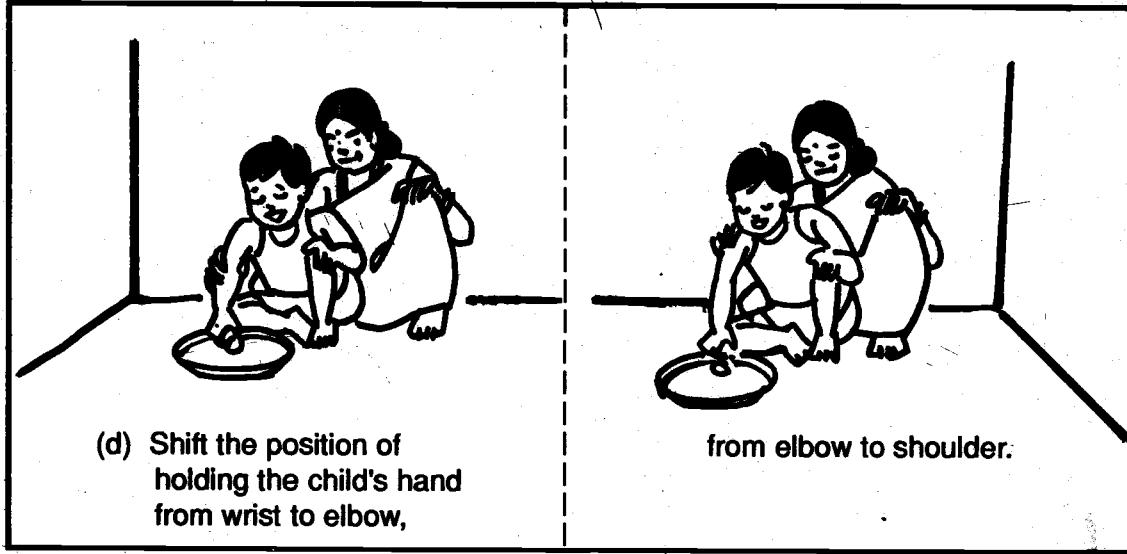


picking it up

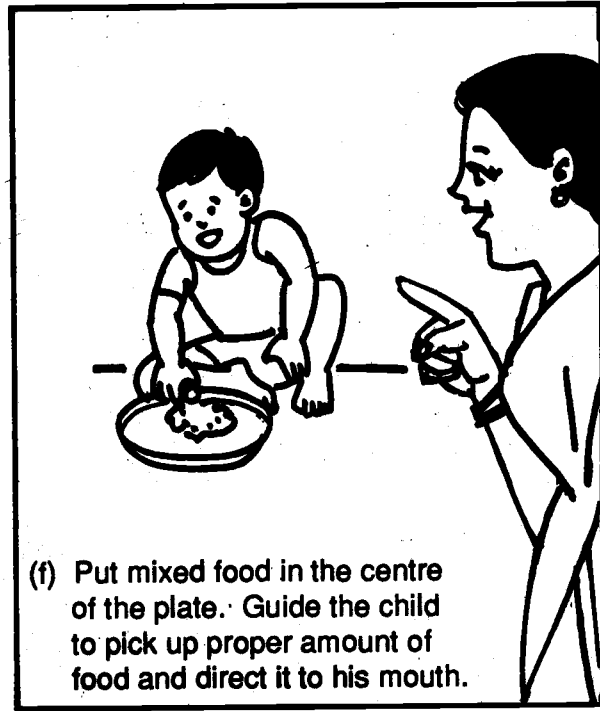
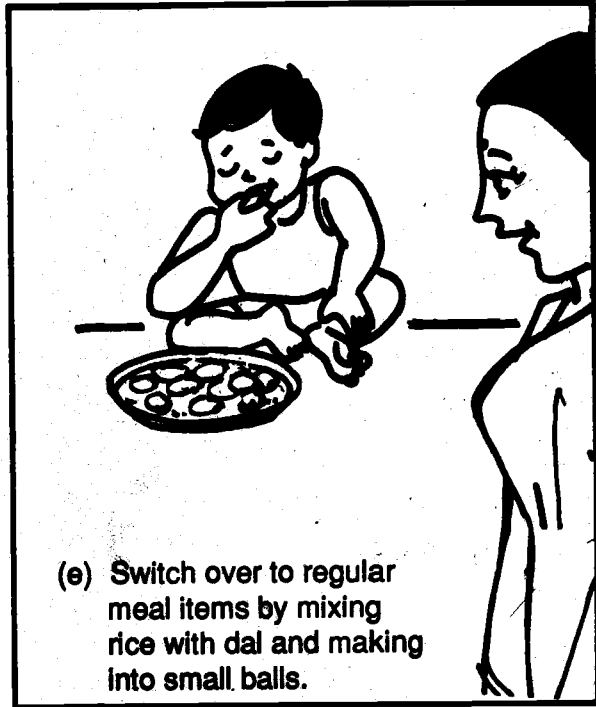


and directing it to his mouth

* If the child tends to tilt the plate or tries to pick up too many pieces at a time, train him by keeping only one piece in the plate initially and after he/she finishes eating, place one more piece. Gradually increase the number



The physical assistance given initially can be replaced by just verbal instructions and finally no assistance at all, when the child has learnt to eat by himself.



DRINKING

- * Fill the glass with quantity sufficient to drink in one gulp.
- * Direct child's hands towards the sides of the glass and assist him physically in lifting it, directing it to the mouth, raising the glass slightly, tilting it towards the mouth and returning it to the table.
- * Increase the quantity gradually.



**Praising the child for every good attempt, is
the key to success of training.**



HINTS TO MAKE 'FEEDING' PLEASURABLE

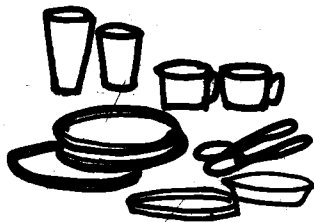
Give importance to food preferences of the child



Present food in an attractive and palatable form



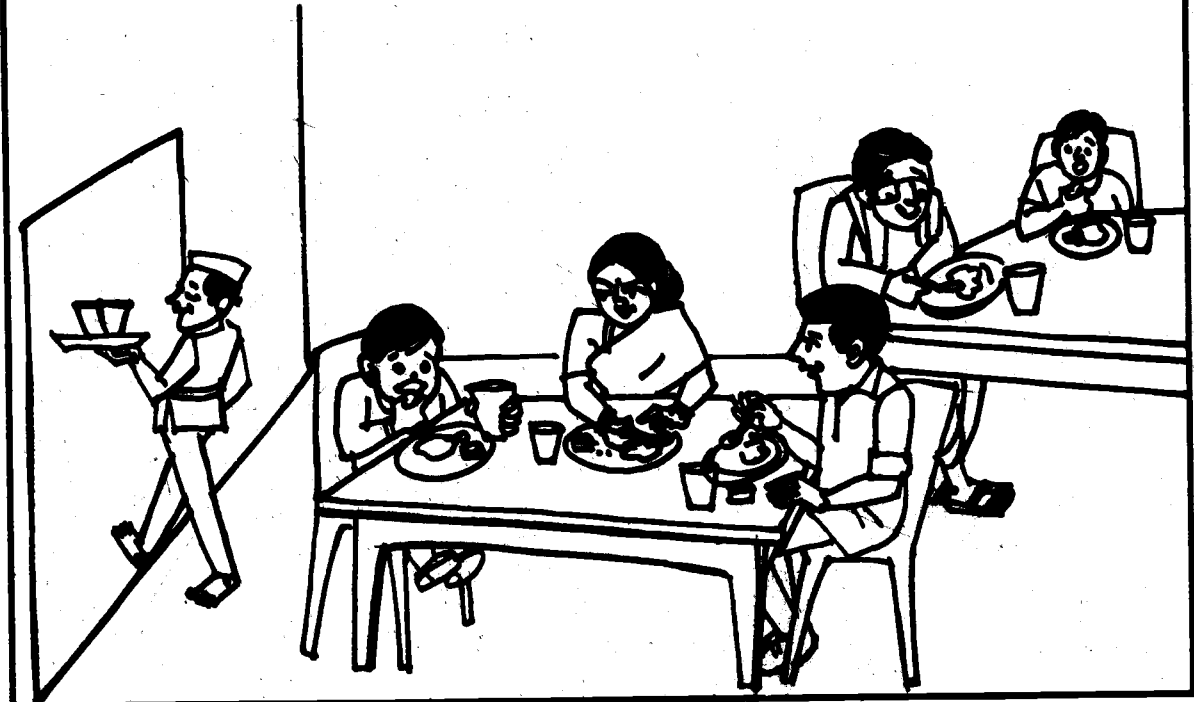
Use glasses, cups, plates made of unbreakable material



As far as possible, let the child eat food along with other family members, in the dining area.



Take him to parties and restaurants, so that he is exposed to 'eating' in different settings.



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