

Tip-sheet for caregivers

Safe eating and drinking for children with severe disability

WHY?

Safe eating and drinking is important:

- ✓ To prevent coughing and choking during eating. And to prevent disease like chronic cough, pneumonia, or even death. To prevent for obstipation and unnoticed aspiration,
- ✓ To decrease the stress during feeding for caregivers and child.
- ✓ To provide the child adequate nutrition to grow, develop and feel comfortable









HOW?

- ✓ Consult a specialist if available
- ✓ Choose food matching age and possibilities child



- ✓ Observe how the caregiver feeds the child

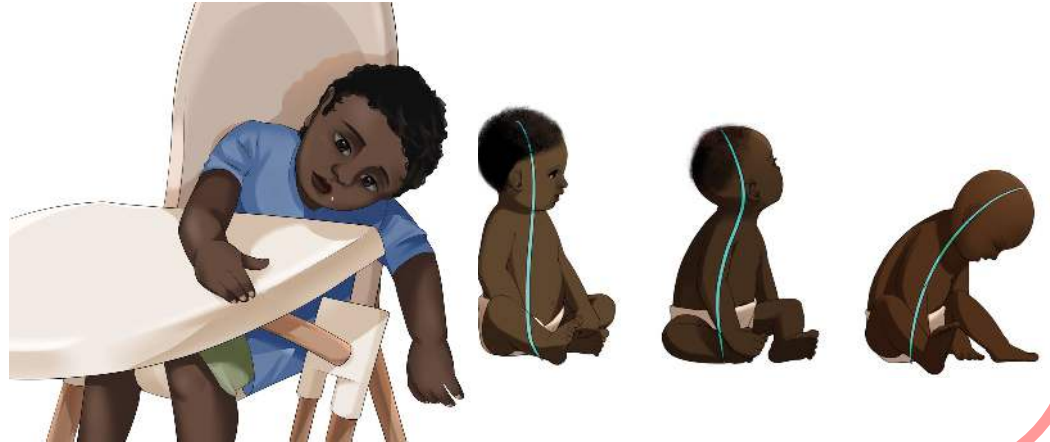
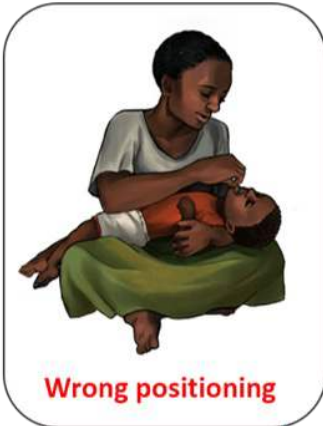
8am	Porridge	
8am	Cookies ₂	
12pm	Banana	
12pm	Water	
12pm	Eggs x2	
2pm	Cassava _{x1}	

- ✓ Keep track of what and how much the child eats and drinks during a day

WHAT?

Positioning: During eating and drinking the child needs to be in an almost upright, supported position with also support for the head. The head needs to be in one line with the trunk.

X Not good:



✓ Good:



Choose adequate food and drink.

X More difficult to eat/drink

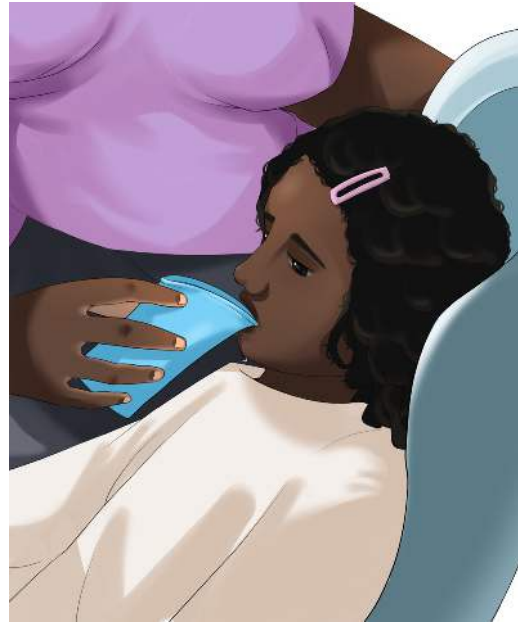


✓ Easier to eat/drink



Materials:

The **cup** needs to be wide on top. If a cup has a lower rim on the side of the nose, the child will be able to empty the cup without bending the head backwards. It also enables the caregiver to observe the way the child drinks.



The **spoon** should be from plastic, and has to fit in the mouth of the child, so the spoon should not be too wide, too deep or too long.



When you have to feed the child:

- ✓ Tell the child what you are doing (e.g.: here comes the next bite)
- ✓ Try to sit at the same level as the child so you can look in the eyes of the child.



- ✓ Wait with the next bite until the child is ready for it



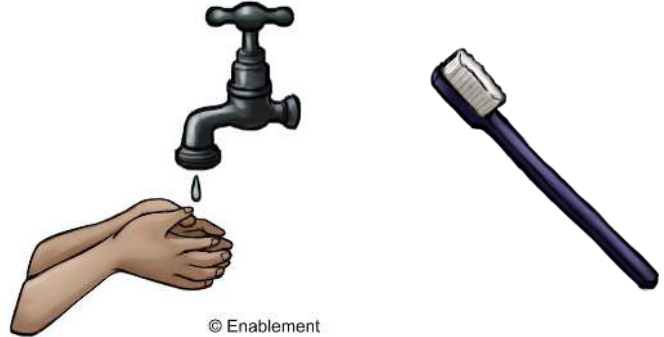
✓ Offer the spoon straight in front of the mouth



✓ Put pieces on the side of the mouth

WHAT?

- ✓ Wash hands before and after feeding your child.
- ✓ Check the temperature of the food
- ✓ Clean the mouth and teeth after eating and drinking.



If the child chokes: stay relaxed. Bend the head of the child forward and if necessary, also the trunk. When head and trunk are bended forward, gently pat on the back.

- ✓ Feeding a child with severe disability takes extra time and energy.
- ✓ Feeding a child more often small portions can help, or asking other family members to help.

