

An Overview of the SOS Approach to Feeding

What is the SOS Approach to Feeding?

The SOS (Sequential Oral Sensory) Approach to Feeding is a play-based, child-centered therapy designed to help children learn to eat in a relaxed and fun way. Developed by Dr. Kay Toomey, this approach addresses the sensory, oral-motor, and psychological aspects of feeding. It gradually introduces children to a variety of foods using step-by-step strategies tailored to each child's comfort and ability.

Who Can Benefit?

The SOS Approach is suitable for children who:

- Have limited food preferences or extremely picky eating
- Gag, vomit, or become distressed around certain foods
- Have oral motor difficulties or sensory sensitivities
- Struggle with transitioning to textured or solid foods

Tips for Parents at Home

- Offer a variety of foods without pressure to eat
- Encourage messy play to explore textures
- Follow a calm, predictable mealtime routine
- Avoid food battles—respect your child's pace
- Be a model: eat a variety of foods with your child

What is a Food Jag?

A food jag is when a child eats the same food repeatedly, often at every meal, and then suddenly stops eating it. This is common in children with feeding difficulties.

Why Are Food Jags a Problem?

They can lead to even more restricted diets, making nutrition and mealtime routines more difficult.

Prevention Strategies:

- Rotate preferred foods
- Introduce small changes in preparation
- Pair familiar foods with new ones

Final Thoughts

Feeding difficulties are complex and affect many areas of a child's development. The SOS Approach offers a gentle, effective way to support children and families in building healthier mealtime habits. With patience, consistency, and guidance, progress is possible.