

The development and use of this discussion guide was supported by the Generalist Physician Faculty Scholars Award from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, Princeton, NJ (Dr. Whitaker).

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Mothers of Preschoolers

Child Feeding Prompting Questions

Version 2.1

Introduction to Users

The following set of focus group prompting questions were developed as part of a research project whose primary aim was to identify maternal beliefs and practices about child feeding that are associated with the development of childhood obesity. The purpose of the focus group study was to identify specific parent eating and child feeding behaviors and any problems parents may have when trying to feed toddlers.

Brief Overview about Focus Group

- What is a focus group?
- How are the results utilized?
- Assurances of confidentiality
- Explanation regarding use of video or audio taping
- Answer any questions from participants

Introduction

The purpose of our discussion today is to talk about feeding your toddler. I am anxious to hear about your opinions and experiences. Everyone here has at least one child between the ages of 12 to 36 months of age. Please remember that there are no right or wrong answers—just your own feelings. I know that you all have important contributions to make today by sharing your thoughts and opinions. I would like to remind you that only one person should speak at a time in order for the rest of us to hear what is being said. Thank you so much for participating. Your time and your input are greatly appreciated. Does anyone have any questions before we get started?

Prompting Questions

1. Challenges moms have experienced feeding their children

- Think about what you thought it was going to be like to feed your child. Now, tell me what things have been difficult about feeding your child?
- What things have been easy?
- What things have surprised you about feeding your child?
- Did things seem to change regarding what your child ate or how you fed your child when he/she child reached a certain age? At what age?

2. Positive “good” meal experience

Tell me about a good meal, or a good day when meals seem to go smoothly.

- What makes it good for you?
- What makes it good for the child?

3. Negative “bad” meal experience

Tell me about a bad meal, or a bad day when meals do not go well.

- What makes it hard for you?
- What makes it hard for the child?

4. Child development and eating

Let's talk about the development of your child's eating,

- At 1 month of age what did you think your child should be able to eat?
- At 3 months?
- At 6 months?
- At 12 months?
- At 18 months?
- At 2 years?
- At 3 years?

5. Recognizing when child is hungry

- Do you think your child knows when they are hungry?
- How can you tell?
- What do you do when you are at home?
- What do you do if you are not at home and are out?
- Are there times when you knew your child was hungry, but you didn't have enough food at the time? What did you do in those situations?

6. Recognizing when child is full

- Do you think your child knows when they are full?
- How can you tell?
- How do you usually handle that situation?

7. Relationship between child's age and recognition of hunger and fullness

- Has it become easier or harder to tell if your child is hungry or full as he has grown older? Or was it easier when he was younger?
- Is “nutrition” or “what kinds of food your child eats” important to you?
- Are what foods your child eats more important to when your child is a certain age?
- How do you make sure your child gets what you feel he or she is supposed to eat?
- Is it easier or harder to make sure your child gets what he or she is supposed to eat when your child is a certain age?

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8. Mom's definition of successful feeding

(May be related to the quantity of food eaten, types of food eaten, or growth)

- How do you know when you are successful with feeding your child?

9. Mom's perception of overweight versus underweight child

- Which one would concern you most, if your child were underweight or overweight?
- Does your concern with your child's weight increase or decrease as your child gets older?
- At what age does a child's being overweight become your concern?
- How much does it depend on if it is a boy or a girl?

10. Mom's feeding style

- What kind of approach do you typically take with feeding your child?
- How often do you plan meals?
- How often do you find yourselves eating on the run?
- What do you do in those situations?
- How many times per week do you find yourselves eating out? (away from home)
- Where are places out that you typically eat with your child?
- What are some of the reasons why you choose these places?
- What gets in the way of eating at scheduled times?

11. Using food to shape behavior

- How effective do you find food as a way in which to improve or change your child's behaviors?
- How often do you use food in this way?
- In what situations?

12. How "competing demands" effects feeding routine

- What are some of the daily hassles in your life that throw your day off?
- How does that influence how you feed your child?
- Do you feel those daily hassles effect the way your child eats on that day? How?

13. Sources of nutrition information

- Who are your sources of information or teachers when you have questions about feeding your child?
- Whose advice are you most likely to depend on?
- Does it depend on what it is?
- Do you ever get conflicting information from friends, relatives, doctors or WIC dietitians about what or how to feed your child?

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14. Causes of overweight

- What do you think are some of the reasons why children become overweight?
- What are some of the reasons why children become underweight?

15. Activity and outdoor play

- How do you and your children spend your free time?
- Explore outside activity and exercise?
- What are some of the barriers to outside play?